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MegaMUN 2023

Special Session on the Ogaden Crisis, 1977

Freeze Date – 31st July, 1977

Executive Board

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Executive Board's Address

Greetings Delegates !

It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you to the Special Session on the Ogaden Crisis

Started in 1977, this conflict was one of the turning points for foreign relations and regional control in the Horn of Africa, and that is precisely why we chose it. Setting aside the international involvement and the so-called “proxy war” in the region, the humanitarian impacts were numerous. From Ethiopia’s Red Terror Campaign to the violations that the Western Somali Liberation Front committed as soon as they entered Ogaden are simply endless. Throughout the duration of the conflict it was the people, whether they wanted liberation or not, were the ones that suffered immensely. As the Executive Board, we expect you to focus on both aspects of the conflict – the humanitarian and the global.

Constructive debate, formal paperwork, and Kanye West references are what we as the EB wish to see in this committee, which will be fast-paced and detailed. Delegates have to come up with creative and innovative ideas to solve the conflict and minimize its implications on the region and the international forum. The crisis this continent is facing is never-ending and perilous, and as representatives of great nations, it is your responsibility to co-operate and collaborate.

The conference shall convene on 31st July 1977. Please note that events after this date shall not be applicable in committee, and no such references will be taken into account. The Executive Board has the discretion to decide all updates in committee that take place post this date. Additional research on the topic and individual country policies that are not provided in the guide are highly recommended to ensure the delegates an enriching and fruitful experience. We hope this guide provides you a fair understanding of the agenda, and helps you understand the committee and its agenda better.

- The Executive Board,
The Special Session on the Ogaden Crisis,
MegaMUN 2023, DPS Megacity Kolkata,

Chairperson's Address

It is with immense fulfillment and gratitude that I welcome you to be a part of the Special Session on the Ogaden Crisis 1977 here at MegaMun'23. I, in my capacity, am going to serve as the chairperson of this dynamic committee as well as the Co-Secretary General for the conference.

I have been a part of the MUN circuit for nearly 6 years now and the maximum of my delegatory endeavors have been in the midst of African geopolitics and thus it was only apt that for my last MUN as a part of the Executive Board at MegaMun would be as the chair of an African committee. While researching and thinking about how exactly do I want to go about things for the conference and moreover what should I have as the focal discussion point for my committee I came across the crisis of Ogaden, a conflict which despite being one which is quite grave and complex in nature has somehow managed to find itself buried in the crevices of global polity and diplomatic books and resolutions. The conflict never quite ceased to exist and it led to cascading events in the region which is also termed as the cradle of human civilisation. From a MUN perspective this agenda and committee seemingly strike gold, it has global importance, varied stakeholders and parties involved and provides the delegates attending the committee with the opportunity to put their cognitive talents to use and reshuffle the cards of history and enact peace as the one possible outcome of the crisis. In the three days of the conference, I expect my delegates to not just debate but deliberate and come to plausible solutions, and to make things interesting they would have to tackle crisis and find their way out with vigour and diplomatic brilliance. This committee wont just be a blast from the past but it plans to be a committee which will make u feel as if you are a part of the past itself , and the books of history are being penned down with every sentence you articulate out in the four walls of the committee room. I, in my capacity as the chairperson promise you of one thing , and that is to make the three days of committee memorable for the entirety of your lifetime as together we will discuss issues, contemplate solutions , plan out actions but most importantly have an insane amount of fun.

PS: I am partnered by the best EB in this year's Secretariat :))

-Adwitiyo Das

Chairperson of The Special Session of the Ogaden Crisis 1977,
Co-Secretary General of MegaMun'23.

About the Agenda

“The Somali people are, by race, color, blood and customs members of the great Ethiopian family”

- Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie

The Ogaden War, a deep rooted ethnic and territorial dispute was a turning point in the Horn of Africa. Somalia sought to incorporate the Ogaden, a region it considered Somali territory, into Greater Somalia, a pan-Somali nationalist idea. The conflict started in the 19th century, when empires fought for what would become the next gem in Africa – land. A goldmine of resources and human right abuses, this continent has grappled with crises and calamities for centuries.

The Cold War context played a role, with Somalia initially receiving support from the United States and the Western bloc, while Ethiopia was backed by the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. Ethiopia had historical claims to the area, which it considered an integral part of its territory. These claims were based on historical governance and imperial expansion. As a neighboring country to the west, Somalia sought to unite all Somali-speaking populations into a Greater Somalia, which included the Ogaden. The region has been inhabited by ethnic Somalis for centuries. It was part of the Somali territories inhabited by Somali clans and pastoralist communities. Known for its nomadic way of life, the people and clans traditionally moved their livestock across the arid landscape in search of pasture and water.

Control of the region was strategically important due to its proximity to the Red Sea and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, a critical maritime chokepoint. The region was also believed to have valuable resources, such as grazing land and potentially oil. The Somali government, led by President Siad Barre, sought to bolster its legitimacy and divert attention from domestic challenges by pursuing the Ogaden issue.

In July 1977, a full-scale invasion of the region was launched by Somalia, triggering the Ogaden War. It is a multifaceted issue which requires a multifaceted approach from the delegates, and the guide covers all the basic causes and events over the years.



Causes Behind the Conflict

1. Ethnic and Territorial Disputes

Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic country with a significant Somali population residing mainly in the Ogaden region in the eastern part of the country. The Somali ethnic groups in Ethiopia, such as the Ogadeni and Issa, share cultural and historical ties with the broader Somali population in neighbouring Somalia. Reuniting these groups with the Somalis was one of the reasons for the Ogaden war. The presence of a great number of ethnic groups, along with the Ethiopian government over them led to discontent. Claims of human rights abuses, issues regarding political representation, and grievances over discrimination and marginalization led to growing hate towards the Ethiopians. The Horn of Africa, including what is now Ethiopia and Somalia, was subject to colonial rule by European powers during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This colonial division laid the groundwork for later territorial disputes.

In the Horn of Africa, the Somalis have some religious and cultural similarities to those of the Arabs live just to their north across the Red Sea. (The Arabs and the people of the Horn traded for millennia). The contact intensified with the spread of Islam after the 7th Century. On the other hand, the Ethiopians, now mostly Christians, are believed to be descendants of Afro-Asiatic speaking peoples who migrated from the north along the great rift valley.

Background

In the late 19th century, Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia, took advantage of European rivalry to extend the borders of his empire at the expense of the Somali speaking people of the Ogaden. The eventual demarcation of boundaries between Ethiopia and the European colonial powers imposed an artificial separation between closely-related Somali peoples who never recognized the authority of the colonizers.

In 1936 Ethiopia was captured by Italy to form Italian East Africa (uniting all territorial colonies of Italy in Africa - Ethiopia, Eritrea, Italian Somalia). In 1940 this grew to include

British Somaliland via an invasion by Italy - which was the British protectorate of modern Somaliland established in the 1930's. The Italian colonial administration united primarily Somali speaking populations and paved the way for the formation of the republic of Somalia. In 1941 during the British East African campaign the Italians were defeated and Britain took control. In 1942 the Anglo Ethiopian agreement removed British troops from most of Ethiopia (this was a major contributor to Somalia's hate towards Ethiopia who did not gain independence until 1960) . After World War 2 Somali leaders in the Ogaden region repeatedly put forward demands for self determination, only to be ignored by both Ethiopia and the UN.

Somalia refused out of hand to acknowledge in particular the validity of the 1954 Anglo - Ethiopian treaty recognizing Ethiopia's claim over the Ogaden or in general the relevance of treaties defining the common border between the two countries. Its position was based on three crucial issues. First, the treaties disregarded the agreements made with the clans that put themselves under British protection. Second, Somalis were not consulted on the terms of these treaties and as far as they were concerned they had not been informed of their existence. Third, these treaties violated the principle of self determination of the Somali people.¹³ Therefore, the new Somali republic set itself the task of recovering the "lost territories". These included the Ogaden which was and still is part of Ethiopia, Djibouti which is an independent sovereign state and the Northern Frontier District which was and still is part of Kenya. In the mid-20th century, the idea of a Greater Somalia began to gain momentum. This concept called for the unification of all Somali-inhabited territories, including those in Ethiopia, Kenya, and the French and British colonies

British Somaliland became independent on 26 June 1960, Italian Somaliland followed suit five days later and they merged to form the Somali republic. After the independence and unification of British Somaliland and the Trust Territory of Somaliland, one of the major goals of the Somali Republic was the unification of Greater Somalia, which included the Ogaden region. Following the establishment of the Republic of Somalia, the Ethiopian government, sensing the looming Somali threat, immediately dispatched troops to setup military bases in the Ogaden, displacing and killing hundreds of Somalis in August 1960, who made up the ethnic majority of the territory. Minor clashes between Ethiopian police and armed parties of Somalia nomads began within six months of Somalia's independence. Hostilities grew steadily in scope,

eventually involving small scale actions between the Somali and the Ethiopian armed forces along the common border. The foreign policy of Somalia since independence consists in large part of her attempts to achieve more than symbolic unity between the republic and three fragments of the Somali nation still considered to be under "foreign" control.

2. Historic Tensions and Border Clashes

Ogaden Rebellion – 1963

In 1963, Somalians living in the Ogaden region revolted against Ethiopia. The constant attempts at taxation and cultural assimilation under the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie led to an insurgency which at its peak controlled 70% of Ogaden. Long suppressed tensions came to the surface as this rebellion lead to the 1964 border war. The Somali-inhabited regions were divided among Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia after colonial powers drew the borders in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This division left ethnic Somalis separated by national boundaries and contributed to ethnic tensions and desires for reunification.

Also called the famous Al Jayash insurgency, this rebellion was led by the Somali youth league, the first political party in Somalia who also played a big part in its independence. It was the foundation of the Western Somali Liberation Front. The Ethiopian government, under Emperor Haile Selassie, launched counterinsurgency operations to suppress the rebellion. These operations involved the use of the Ethiopian military.

After the 1964 war Ethiopian violence against Somalia began again. 22,000 domestic animals were killed or confiscated in Ogaden destroying the lifestyle of Somalian nomads. The rebellion left a lasting impact on the region's politics and contributed to ongoing tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia.

Kanone massacre - Most infamous of these reprisals was on the town of Degehabur in what became known locally as the "Kanone Massacre". Degehabur was bombarded by artillery from nearby high ground, which was followed by a killing spree when army troops later entered the settlement.

The 1964 Ethiopia-Somalia border war

The Ethiopians claimed that bandits armed by Somalia had assaulted a police convoy and station killing numerous personnel, while the Somalis counter charged the Ethiopians with violating Somali airspace and launching airstrikes. The border dispute in the Ogaden eventually erupted into open conflict in 1964 when Somali Shifta rebels began launching attacks on Ethiopian military and civilian targets.

The Al Jayash insurgency turned into a full blown war. On 8 February both nations declared a state of emergency and started their fight against each other. The might of the Ethiopian imperial army greatly overpowered that of the Somali national army. Somalia took most of the hits in the war, with clashes occurring mainly on their side of the border. Multiple urban centres like Hargeisa and Galkayo were bombed by the Ethiopian Air Force

Ideology played a role in the conflict. Ethiopia, under Emperor Haile Selassie, was a monarchy with a traditional feudal system. The Ethiopian government was seen as aligned with conservative Western interests. In contrast, Somalia, under President Siad Barre, embraced socialism and pursued Marxist-Leninist policies. This alignment with communism appealed to the Soviet Union and other communist states, which provided military and economic aid to Somalia. The Ethiopian Imperial Army was initially tasked with responding to the Somali Shifta insurgency in the Ogaden region, which began in 1964. These rebels, who sought to detach the Ogaden from Ethiopia and integrate it into Somalia, launched attacks on Ethiopian military outposts and infrastructure. The Ethiopian Imperial Army conducted counterinsurgency operations against the Shifta rebels. These operations included efforts to suppress the rebel movement, secure the border, and protect Ethiopian civilians in the Ogaden. The Imperial Army engaged in numerous border clashes and skirmishes with Somali forces during this period. The conflict escalated, and both sides suffered casualties. The Somali National Army was directly involved in the conflict's initiation. The Somali government, led by President Aden Abdullah Osman Daar at the time, provided support and sanctuary for Somali rebels. The SNA's involvement included training, arming, and funding these insurgents. The Army also trained and supported rebels in Kenya. Arab states, particularly Egypt and Syria, expressed support for Somalia during the border war. They offered diplomatic assistance and condemned Ethiopian actions.

The United States was among the countries that provided military aid to Ethiopia during the border war. The US government was initially supportive of the country and supplied military equipment and assistance to bolster their defenses. Western nations generally sympathized with Ethiopia's position and sought a peaceful resolution to the conflict. At that time, Somalia was receiving some Soviet assistance. However, they would later align with Ethiopia during the Ogaden War in 1977

The conflict was ultimately resolved through a ceasefire brokered by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1967. The status quo was largely maintained, but tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia continued

1969 Coup

In October 1969, while paying a visit to the northern town of Las Anod, Somali President Shermarke was shot dead by one of his bodyguards. His assassination was quickly followed by a military coup on 21 October (the day after his funeral), in which the Somali Army seized power. The coup was spearheaded by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre who at the time commanded the army, and they encountered almost no military opposition.

The Supreme Revolutionary Council took charge after the assassination of Shermarke, and Barre became its head shortly afterwards. The SRC subsequently renamed the country the Somali Democratic Republic, dissolved the parliament and the Supreme Court, and suspended the Constitution. This change in power brought about a massive change in politics and foreign relations.

In addition to Soviet funding and arms support provided to Somalia, Egypt sent to the country millions of dollars' worth of arms shipments.

3.Cold War dynamics

The Ogaden crisis became a proxy war for world superpowers like the USA and USSR, as well as Ethiopia and Somalia. Originally nations like the USSR, Cuba, and Egypt supplied Somalia with weapons and money to aid the nation and its economy after its independence in 1960. The geographic location, near the Red Sea and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, made this country strategically important for trade and military operations.

However, under Mengistu Haile Mariam's leadership and the Derg Revolution Ethiopia took on a Communist ideology, and this made the nation an attractive partner for the USSR in the Horn of Africa. The foothold that the USSR would gain in Africa after aligning itself with Ethiopia was of great geopolitical significance, and the main reason for the alliance was to counter the American influence in Africa. The USSR found itself supplying both nations, but as the war started, it cut down the support and aid to Somalia. One of the main reasons for this was Somali aggression and the threat which a military invasion brought to stability in the region, as well as the growing Western influence within Somalia. To counter the growing influence of the USSR, the USA found Somalia a sort of an ally in the Horn of Africa as it fostered good relations with the nation in the 1970's. USA chose to supply and aid Somalia after the USSR pulled its support. For the first half of the war, military bases like that in Berbera were set up all over Somalia by the USA, and the superpower supplied all sorts of arms and facilities to the anti-communist government of Siad Barre.

The beginning of the invasion on Ogaden, and the entire war became a breeding ground for tensions between Somalia, Ethiopia, and their allies the USA and the USSR and Cuba respectively.

To avoid the Cold War coming back to action, and maintain the fragile detente period between USA and USSR, the support and aid for Somalia was eventually stopped. The Somalian government committed increasing human rights abuses inside and outside their territory, and the humanitarian dimension of the conflict led the USA to halt its military support and seek a more peaceful, diplomatic end. This gave a massive advantage to Ethiopia and its allies, as they finally started getting an upper hand in the war.

4.The Shebelle River

The Shebelle river, that originates in the Ethiopian highlands and flows Southeast into Somalia is one of the largest rivers in the region. It is a crucial water source and is vital for agriculture and irrigation, especially in the Ogaden region. By gaining control over Ogaden, Somalia wished to control the Shebelle river and its tributaries as well. The fertile lands around it are used for farming and pastoralism providing a livelihood to many people living in this region, and the economic advantages this river would bring made it a major source of conflict in the Horn of Africa, particularly between Ethiopia and Somalia.

The Horn of Africa is characterised by an arid climate, and growing climate change as well as droughts made it imperative making access to freshwater resources crucial. The transboundary nature of the river made the disputes even worse as political tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia reached an all time high. Both nations lay claim to the river, and the people living in Ogaden got caught in the tension. Lack of an institutional framework for control over the river and the growing need of the people on both sides for better resources contributed to a full blown conflict .

5.Western Somali Liberation Front

In September 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie (Ethiopia) had been overthrown by the Derg military council, marking a period of turmoil. They turned to a Marxist-Leninist form of government . the regime faced various security threats. Key problems included the Eritrea Liberation Front fighting for the secession of the province of Eritrea from Ethiopia and the Western Somalia Liberation Front (supported by Somalia) fighting for the liberation of the Ogaden region from Ethiopia and its subsequent union with Somalia. The Ethiopian regime also found itself opposed by domestic groups such as the Tigray People Liberation Front which was advocating autonomy for Tigray province.

The Derg was comprised of several military officers, and within its ranks, there were power struggles and factionalism. These internal divisions led to instability and changes in leadership within the council. The Derg was notorious for its human rights abuses, and the government's policies, including nationalization of industries and land redistribution, often led to economic

mismanagement and declining living standards for many Ethiopians. These economic hardships contributed to social unrest.

One of the separatist groups seeking to take advantage of the chaos was the pro-Somalia Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) operating in the Somali-inhabited Ogaden. The WSLF was a separatist rebel group fighting in eastern Ethiopia to liberate the Somali region from Ethiopian control and rejoin Somalia . It played a major role in the Ogaden War of 1977-78 assisting the invading Somali Army. The WSLF was founded by a young captain called Yusuf Dheere Mohamed Sugaal. He met the Somali president Siad Barre in 1973 after putting the Somali elders behind his plan, and convinced the Somali President to do something about the Ogaden region. So Siad Barre gave Yusuf Dheere 2 years to give diplomacy a chance and to prepare the Somali National Army, for it was still unproven.

The four brigades were

- Duufaan
- Ahmed Gurey
- Horyaal
- Ciil tire

The WSLF was supported in its rebellion by the Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF), whose sphere of operations was in the provinces of Bale, Sidamo, and Arsi, where it advocated union with Somalia or the creation of an independent state. Somalia equipped both groups with Soviet arms, and in early 1977 sent 3,000 soldiers from the Somali Army to fight as guerrillas with the WSLF. Both groups also received aid and training from various Arab and socialist states, including Cuba.

Course of the War- A brief timeline

May 1884 - British Somaliland was formed when the British government established a protectorate over the coastal region of what is now northern Somalia.

1886 - Abyssinia (old day Ethiopia) ,backed by colonial powers, launched missions to conquest Somalian territory.

1891 - The Anglo-Italian treaties were signed, which established the boundaries of influence that Britain and Italy had in East Africa. Abyssinia benefitted from the treaties and managed to establish a special relationship with Italy in the process.

1893 - Emperor Menelik II founded Addis Ababa

1895- the Italo-Ethiopian war took place. For 13 years after this war, there were tensions between the two nations.

1896 – The Battle of Adowa, where Emperor Menelik II first captured Ogaden and crushed an Italian invasion occurred. Ogaden was then put under his realm, or the Abyssinian Empire.

1897 - through the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1897, UK recognized the full sovereignty and independence of Ethiopia, formalizing diplomatic relations between the two nations

1908 - The Italian-Ethiopian convention of 1908 took place to mend and normalize the relations that were broken after the 1895 war.

1935 - Emperor Haile Selassie visited Ogaden to address the grievances of the Somali population in the Ogaden and to assert Ethiopian sovereignty over the region

October 3, 1935 - in order to avenge the defeat of Adowa, Italy invaded Ethiopia assisted by approximately 40,000 Somalis.

May 1936 - formation of Italian East Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Italian Somalia) after all these territories were annexed.

1940 - Capture of British Somaliland by Italy

1941 - Italian East Africa is replaced by British administration

31 January 1942 - Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement was signed between UK and Ethiopia

1948 - Huad and Ogaden given to Ethiopia much to the dismay of Somalians

1949 - British Ogaden protectorate was created

1950 - As a result of the Paris Peace Treaties (February 1947), the United Nations granted Italy trusteeship over Italian Somaliland.

November 1951 - Ethiopian government troops led by Major Tsige Dibu crushed an ethnic Somali insurrection in Gridida

1955 - British troops withdrawn from Ogaden

1956 - Britain attempts to “buy back” Somali lands (Huad and Ogaden) that it had turned over to Ethiopia.

July 1959 - the Ogaden region was administratively separated into two districts, each with its own governor: Qabridaharre (Kebri Dahir) in the south and Jijiga in the north.

26 June 1960 - British Somaliland became independent as the state of Somaliland

1 July 1960 - trust territory of Somalia (former Italian Somaliland) became independent and the two territories merged to form the Somali Republic

1960 - the Somali national army is created by merging police units in the former trusteeship with northern Somaliland scouts from the former British protectorate.

April 1961 - people flee from Hargeisa to Degehabur reporting that Ethiopia had militarised the area. In retaliation Somalia authorized raids into Ethiopia targeting and destroying military bases.

1962 - outbreak of the Bale Revolt / Bale Peasant movement in southeastern Ethiopia to target the feudal system in place. The movement was rooted in ethnic and religious grievances faced by the local Oromo and Somali population. The very next year, the Somali government started supporting and supplying these insurrections.

16 June 1963 - The Ethiopian government began its first attempts to collect taxes in the Ogaden region, greatly incensing the already discontent Somali population, as they had lived without taxation for centuries

16 June 1963 - Somalians living in Ogaden revolted against the rule of Ethiopia. Garad Makhtal Garad Dahir, staged an uprising against the government in Hodayo, eastern Ethiopia.

August 1963 - Ethiopian forces regrouped and the 3rd Division of the Imperial Army swept back through the Ogaden with relative ease, aided an eight-week-long air campaign against Somali targets on both sides of the border

November 1963 - the Somali government would sign an agreement with the Soviet Union to begin working toward the creation of a 20,000 man force, effectively quadrupling the size of the Somali National Army

January 1964 - border violence escalates as both nations confront each other after the rebellion.

8 February 1964 - national emergency is declared in both Ethiopia and Somalia

6 March 1964 - Both sides agree to a ceasefire

9 March 1964 - signing of the Cairo Agreement or Cairo Accord in Egypt between Ethiopia and Somalia, brokered by the Arab League and OAU.

30 march 1964 - On 30 March 1964, due to the mediation efforts of Sudanese President Ibrahim Abboud, Somalia and Ethiopia agreed to an armistice which led to the full cessation of hostilities

2 April 1964 - A demilitarized zone was established along the border, solidifying the end of interstate conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia until the Ogaden War 13 years later.

1965 - a delegation from the "provisional revolutionary government of the Ogaden visited Syria to protest Ethiopian aggression

October 1969 - Somali President Shermarke was shot dead by one of his bodyguards while paying a visit to the northern town of Las Anod

21 October 1969 - Mohammed Siad Barre and the seized power in Mogadishu in a coup the day after the funeral of former president Shermarke.

1970 - The Eritrean People's Liberation Front emerged as an organization to fight for the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopian rule. For 20 years the EPLF fought and destabilised Ethiopian rule in the region.

1973 - oil and natural gas were being prospected by ARMCO, a US company on the Ethiopian side along the common border. Somalia reacted by moving her troops to the border to shadow the activities of both the Ethiopian army and the prospecting American company.

1974 - Ethiopia requested the delivery of McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom fighters, but USA offered it 16 Northrop F-5E Tiger IIs, armed with AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, and two Westinghouse AN/TPS-43D mobile radars (one of which was later positioned in Jijiga). Due to human rights violations in the country, only 8 F-5E Tiger IIs had been delivered by 1976

April 3 1974 - Somalia and USSR sign a treaty of friendship and cooperation to bring the political and economic wings of the countries closer together.

12 September 1974 - The Derg overthrew emperor Haile Selassie in a coup. This led to the emergence of multiple opposition parties and groups, as well as the outbreak of the Ethiopian civil war that stretched for nearly 20 years

November 1974 - To counter the Derg regime, the Western Somali Liberation Front was formed by Yusuf Dheere Mohamed Sugaal.

21 March 1975 - the Derg abolished monarchy and adopted Marxism-Leninism as their official ideology.

1976 - Ethiopian Red Terror Campaign was started. Thousands of Ethiopians were killed under the guise of "reform" as the Derg violently repressed anyone who was perceived as a rival of the party. Mass killings, torture, imprisonment without trial were common.

1976 - Siad Barre first attempted to negotiate regional autonomy for the Ogaden by sending Somali government representatives to discuss the matter with Ethiopian authorities, but all these efforts were fruitless.

June 1976 - The Somali revolutionary socialist party, created by the military regime of Siad Barre under Soviet guidance, became Somalia's vanguard party after a congress was held.

November 1976 - The new US Administration of president-elect Carter expressed displeasure with Ethiopia's deteriorating human rights record, and consequently sharply reduced its aid.

Early 1977 - Fidel Castro recommended a merger of the two nations to solve ethnic and territorial disputes.

3 February 1977 - Appointment of Mengistu Haile Mariam as chairman of the Derg.

February 1977 - The WSLF launched an insurgency against the Ethiopian government in the Ogaden Region.

March 1977 - Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam expelled US diplomatic and military advisors and turned to the Soviet Union for financial and military support.

March 1977 – When Cuba learned of Somalia’s plans to annex Ogaden, Fidel Castro once again flew in to South Yemen where he suggested an Ethiopian-Somali-Yemeni Socialist Federation. His plan, for the second time, did not get any support.

April 1977 - The United States halted delivery of roughly \$100 million in armaments sold to Ethiopia. As a result, Mengistu travelled to Moscow in May and issued a declaration on the "foundations for friendship and cooperation." .The Soviets agreed to a \$400 million armaments package with Ethiopia.

April 1977 - The Derque notified the closure of the Kagnew Communications Station (EPLF) and other US facilities.

23 April 1977 – Mengistu expelled the US MAAG from Ethiopia, signifying their intention to ally with the Soviets.

May 1977 - Moscow completed its displacement of Washington in Ethiopia

May 1977 - 50 Cuban military advisers landed in Ethiopia to support the government. “Volunteers” from North Korea and South Yemen were also brought in to support the nation. Israel reportedly offered cluster bombs and napalm to Ethiopia, and were accused of allegedly flying combat aircraft for Ethiopia.

June 1977 – Dr. Kevin Cahill, the physician of Siad Barre paid a visit to the USA, and claimed that US officials had told him that the nation was not opposed to a Somali invasion of Ethiopia. This further emboldened Somalia.

June 18 1977 - 35,000 Somali government troops, including 250 tanks and 350 armoured personnel carriers, intervened in support of the WSLF rebels.

July 1977 - USA joined forces with France and United Kingdom, as Somalia consented to get defensive arms from the USA.

July 1977 – WSLF insurgents cut Ethiopia's lines of communication to Djibouti, imposing an additional economic burden.

13 July 1977 - Somali democratic republic invaded Ethiopia to annex Ogaden, which officially triggered the Ogaden War. An army of 35,000 soldiers clashed with an army which was superior in terms of both strength and technology.

14 July - Ethiopian government troops and WSLF rebels clashed near Dire Dawa.

17 July – Somali army stormed Dire Dawa in their first attempt with three mechanized battalions. 79 Ethiopian soldiers died repelling them, and the loss of Somalis is estimated to be twice as much.

The Freeze Date

The Freeze date for the Special Session on the Ogaden Crisis is 31st July, 1977. July was a very significant month for the entirety of the war. It was the one month where neither side had asserted proper control over the region or the war as a whole, and both sides were fighting valiantly to assert dominance.

1. 60% of Ogaden was taken over by the Western Somalia Liberation Front, who were being funded and supplied by Somalia and USA. Ethiopia was being pushed back as the Battle of Dire Dawa raged on. The Somalians were quickly advancing towards the second largest air base in Ethiopia.
2. Gode on the Shebelle River, a major town and strategic region was captured by the WSLF. Before the start of the war, Gode was garrisoned by the 5th brigade of the 4th division of the Ethiopian Army. However, the WSLF broke through the resistance and consolidated their hold on the town. Under the leadership of General Abdullahi Ahmed Irro, Somalia's 60th division emerged successful on 24 July 1977 and on 31st July they had all of Gode under their control.
3. The Ethiopian Air Force however, began to establish air superiority using Northrop F-5s, despite being outnumbered by Somali Mig-21s.
4. Soviet General Vasily Petrov had to report back to Moscow the “sorry state” of the Ethiopian Army.

Major Parties Involved

Somalia

Somalia, a poor country in the Horn of Africa, invaded Ethiopia in the intention of gaining the Ogaden Desert region, which was occupied by ethnic Somalis. What began as a local issue in a far-flung part of the world developed into a Cold War flashpoint when the United States and the Soviet Union took sides. Mohammed Siad Barre seized control in Somalia in a coup in 1969 and declared Somalia a communist republic. In 1974, the Soviet Union and Somalia signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Siad Barre, on the other hand, had ambitions for Ethiopia's Ogaden region and despised the country's expanding ties with the Soviet Union. In response, the Somali ruler approached the US for military assistance and eventually ousted the Soviets from the country. The Soviets chose to back Addis Ababa, retaining the larger prize in the Cold War's zero-sum struggle. When Somalia invaded Ethiopia, the US was actively exploring help to Mogadishu, completing the whole reversal of allegiance. When Siad Barre invaded Ethiopia, he intended to take advantage of the country's fractured society. The Addis Ababa government faced a long-running insurrection in Eritrea, as well as an insurgency by ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden, while Mengistu was still intent on cementing his own position. As a result, Somalia had the upper hand in the early stages of the war and marched toward the region's major Ethiopian cities.

Somalia initially sought military assistance from Western powers. However, it was determined that they did not wish to violate the fundamental OAU concept of respect for current boundaries. Furthermore, they were unwilling to arm it in order to combat Ethiopia, the United States' main partner in the region. Despite Somalia's move to the Soviet Union, both Washington and Moscow preferred to remain in Ethiopia. The strategic prize to be won was Ethiopia. Its temperature, physical size and population, history, development potential in every area, and central African location were all highly appealing. The partnership with Ethiopia, it was said, would provide a great power with some enticing chances for internal political and economic collaboration, as well as a regional power base. Whereas an alliance with Somalia was primarily of importance for geostrategic reasons. It offered as many disadvantages as benefits

Ethiopia

The Ogaden region, inhabited mainly by ethnic Somalis, was historically contested between Ethiopia and Somalia. Somalia had long claimed the Ogaden as part of "Greater Somalia," a vision of uniting all Somali-speaking territories. Ethiopia, a diverse country with various ethnic groups, refused to cede the Ogaden and considered it an integral part of its territory. Ethiopia, under Emperor Haile Selassie and later the Derg regime, aligned itself with the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Emperor Menelik II and the Abyssinian empire first claimed Ogaden in the Battle of Adowa, and for the next nearly 100 years, the region was full of bloodshed and violence.

Ethnic Somali insurgent groups, including the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), operated in the region. These groups sought to overthrow the Ethiopian government and unite the Ogaden with Somalia. Somalia provided support to these insurgent groups, including weapons, training, and safe havens, escalating the conflict.

Ethiopia was ruled by a Marxist-Leninist government led by Mengistu Haile Mariam. The Soviet Union saw Ethiopia as a strategic ally in the Horn of Africa and provided extensive military and economic support. Soviet assistance to Ethiopia included tanks, artillery, aircraft, and military advisors who trained Ethiopian forces in the use of Soviet weaponry and tactics. Cuba, with Soviet encouragement and support, deployed thousands of troops to Ethiopia to fight alongside Ethiopian forces. These troops played a pivotal role in the conflict. Cuban involvement marked a significant escalation and internationalization of the conflict, as their soldiers fought against Somali insurgents backed by the United States.

Ethiopia sought diplomatic support to counter Somalia's territorial claims and military actions. It portrayed the conflict as a defence of its territorial integrity. When Somalia invaded the Ogaden in July 1977, Ethiopia responded by launching a counteroffensive. The Ethiopian military, with Soviet and Cuban support, pushed back against Somali forces.

The Soviet Union

Before the Ogaden Crisis, the Soviet Union did provide some support to Somalia, which was governed by President Siad Barre and his socialist regime. This support was part of the broader Cold War dynamics and the Soviet Union's strategy of cultivating alliances in different regions of the world. At the time, the Horn of Africa was a region of geopolitical importance, and both superpowers sought to gain influence there. Somalia's strategic location along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden made it an attractive partner for the Soviet Union, especially as it sought to counterbalance U.S. influence in the region.

However, this support for Somalia changed dramatically with the outbreak of the Ogaden Crisis in 1977. When Somalia invaded the Ethiopian region of Ogaden, which was backed by the Soviet Union, the Soviet-Somali relationship deteriorated rapidly. The Soviets shifted their support to Ethiopia, which was seen as a more reliable ally, and provided extensive military assistance to Ethiopia during the conflict, effectively ending their support for Somalia. They were a key ally of the government led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, which was facing a rebellion by ethnic Somali insurgents in the Ogaden region, and provided extensive military and economic support to the Ethiopian government throughout the conflict.

The USSR supplied the Ethiopian government with a substantial amount of arms, including tanks, artillery, aircraft, and other military equipment. Soviet military advisers were also present in Ethiopia to train Ethiopian forces in the use of these weapons. Soviet pilots and technicians were involved in providing air support for Ethiopian forces. Soviet-made aircraft, including MiG-21 fighter jets, were used by Ethiopian forces in the conflict.

The Soviet Union diplomatically supported the country in international forums, including the United Nations. They portrayed the conflict as a struggle against "imperialism" and "Somali aggression." Their involvement in the Ogaden Crisis reflected its strategic interests in the region and its desire to support Marxist-Leninist governments, like the one in Ethiopia, against perceived threats

The United States of America

Prior to the Ogaden War, Somalia was an ally of the Soviet Union, and relations with the US were poor.

The strategic placement of the Horn of Africa on the Suez and Cape oil routes drew American interest in the region. The thought of the Soviets dominating both Somalia and Ethiopia caused significant political concern in the United States, however the issue was one of confidence rather than substance. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's National Security Adviser, went so far as to remark that "SALT lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden," indicating the end of détente. Because the Soviet Union supported Ethiopia in the Ogaden War, a US-Somali rapprochement began in 1977 and culminated in a military access agreement later in the future. The Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia involved a web of shifting allegiance, with the US and Soviet Union supporting both sides at various stages. Woodroffe delves into how the battle reflected a greater debate about US foreign policy, leading Carter to take a much tougher stance against the Soviet Union. The American foreign policy establishment was unable to move beyond the prism of competition with the Soviet Union in a critical post-Vietnam test of US strength.

The United States provided military aid and equipment to Somalia during the early stages of the conflict. This assistance included weapons, ammunition, and military equipment. The U.S. support was aimed at helping Somalia in its effort to capture the Ogaden region from Ethiopia. They diplomatically supported Somalia's position in international forums, including the United Nations. While the U.S. maintained relations with both Ethiopia and Somalia, it did align more closely with Somalia during this period.

The Ogaden Crisis took place in the context of the Cold War, and the United States viewed Somalia as an ally in the Horn of Africa. Somalia, led by President Siad Barre, had pursued a policy of non-alignment but received support from both the United States and the Soviet Union at different points in time. Beyond military and diplomatic support, the United States also provided humanitarian assistance to Somalia to address the needs of refugees and internally displaced people affected by the conflict.

It's important to note that U.S. support for Somalia in the Ogaden Crisis was not as extensive as the support provided by the Soviet Union to Ethiopia. The U.S. and the Soviet Union were

both involved in the conflict on opposite sides, reflecting the broader Cold War competition for influence in the Horn of Africa.



Paperwork

Position Papers

Considering the complexities of geopolitical scenarios in this committee, it is imperative for delegates of this committee to submit a position paper by 8th October 2023. This position paper holds great importance as it is through this position paper that each delegation in committee can clearly outline their country's foreign policies regarding the committee. The Executive Board gets a clear and comprehensive understanding of the direction the delegation wants to take during the three days of committee. The Position Paper should consist of three aspects:

1. Statement of the Problem
2. Country Policy on the Agenda
3. Solutions to the crisis

A sample of the Position Paper, as well as other paperwork can be found in the Conference Handbook.

Communiques

Public Communiques: Public Communiques can be used by a delegation to declare a significant step, policy or action that has been taken by their country, pertaining to the crisis in committee, which changes the dynamics of the crisis. Public Communiques are usually read out by the Executive Board to the committee if they are ratified. They can be submitted by a single country or multiple countries through Joint Public Communiques.

Private Communiques: Private Communiques are used by a country to take covert or secret actions through their country's agencies. These communiques need to be realistic and outline the idea behind the action so that the Executive Board can understand the intentions of the delegation. Private Communiques are introduced by the Executive Board to the committee in the form of updates, if they are ratified by the Executive Board. Countries usually act individually through Private Communiques but multiple countries can take covert actions together through Joint Private Communiques.

Presidential Statements

These are statements made by the Head of a State of a particular country to declare a major decision or action which signifies a shift in policy of the country concerned. If deemed pertaining to the crisis in the committee, the Executive Board reads out the Presidential Statements to the committee. It can either be written by the Head of State of one country or can be jointly written by the Heads of State of several countries together in the form of Joint Presidential Statements.

Working Papers

This form of paperwork is used when committee has faced multiple crises and committee has reached consensus over the need to find solutions. With no rigid rules on formatting, Working Papers offer delegates a flexible manner of introducing solutions in the committee. They are usually passed by simple majority.

Draft Resolution

Draft Resolutions are the official form of paperwork for the committee and their legally binding nature is highly dependent on the clauses written in the resolution itself. Draft Resolutions follow a specific format which has to be adhered to by the delegates of the committee, and it has been detailed in the Conference Handbook. Draft Resolutions are used to formally note down the solutions and the decisions that the committee takes to address a particular crisis. They can be passed with the approval of a simple majority.

Action Order

Action Orders in the committee are to be used to conduct military attacks during a state of active war. They are to provide details of the locations being attacked, military resources being used for the armed offensive, time period during which the armed offensive is being conducted and other relevant details that help the Executive Board assess the military actions being taken by the delegation. They will be introduced as updates by the Executive Board of the Special Session on the Ogaden Crisis if the measures taken in the Action Order are realistic.

Sources

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