

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: 11 March 1978

SUBJECT: Horn of Africa, Rhodesia (Part 1 of 2)

PARTICIPANTS:	US	USSR
	The Secretary	
	Deputy Secretary	Amb. Anatoliy Dobrynin
	Marshall D. Shulman	

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Summary: Dobrynin came in at the Secretary's request, primarily to discuss the Horn. In response to the Secretary, he indicated some Soviet willingness to influence Ethiopia against reprisals, but he maintained that outside observers and Soviet/Cuban withdrawal were matters for internal Ethiopian jurisdiction.

The Horn:

The Secretary began with an expression of appreciation for Dobrynin's telephoned response on March 10 to our approach to him during the night of March 8. (The Secretary had recorded Dobrynin's response as positive in tone, indicating that the Soviet government had communicated to the Ethiopians the US desire that the Ethiopians not exact reprisals in the Ogaden and not "butcher" the withdrawing Somali troops. He also recorded Dobrynin's expression of the Soviet government's positive reaction to the consultation, and readiness to reciprocate.)

The Secretary suggested further measures of cooperation that would be useful: 1) that the Soviet Union use its influence with Addis to moderate its reported unrealistic conditions for a cease-fire and settlement; 2) that the Soviet Union cooperate in making it possible for an outside observer group to be sent to the area as soon as possible, with the support of African countries; that Soviet and Cuban troops begin the process of withdrawal from the area promptly, and that the introduction of additional Soviet or Cuban soldiers be prevented; 4) that foreign advisers not be introduced into Eritrea; and 5) that consultations be held to prevent the introduction of foreign troops into Southern Africa.

(Drafting Office and Officer)

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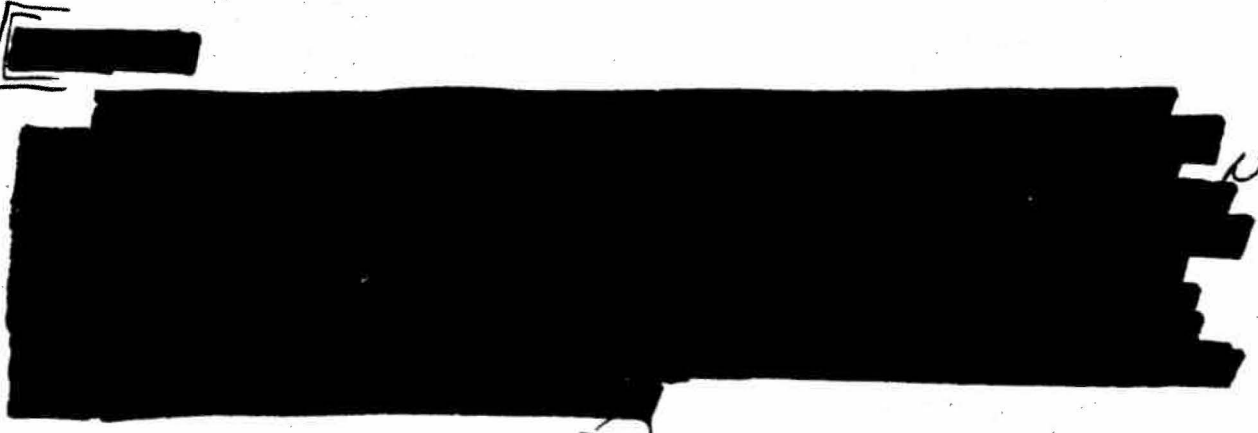
Dobrynin said the Soviet government had given him no instructions on the questions of an observer group or on reductions in Soviet or Cuban forces in Ethiopia, but he reaffirmed that it had urged the Ethiopian government to avoid any reprisal action in the Ogaden. He asked if it was the intention to post observers in the Ogaden or only along the border, and expressed the personal opinion that it would be more difficult to get Ethiopian agreement to the presence of such a group on Ethiopian territory. On both this issue and the Cuban-Soviet troop withdrawal, he took the position that these were matters within the internal jurisdiction of the Ethiopian government.

In response to the Secretary's repeated stress on the importance of prompt action on these points to prevent further bloodshed, and on preventing the arrival of additional Cuban troops reportedly on the way, Dobrynin said that he would communicate these concerns to Gromyko promptly.

With regard to a reported hardening of Ethiopian conditions for a ceasefire, Dobrynin said he was only aware of press reports from Kenya on this point, which he was inclined to discount.

(Comment: Despite the foregoing disavowal, it seems likely that Dobrynin's back-peddling reflected an awareness of the substance of the Ethiopian position, made public in a communique issued by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on March 11, hardening its conditions for the acceptance of a ceasefire, and rejecting the demand for the withdrawal of foreign troops as "an unacceptable interference in Ethiopia's domestic affairs.")

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