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22

(b)(3):50 USC
3024(i)

DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE COMMENTARY

14 June 1983

1. DENMARK:

Coalition Prime Minister
Resists Conservative Party
Pressure for Elections as
Means To Override Antidefense
Left ~~(S/NOFORN)~~

SPECIAL ARTICLE

2. SOMALIA:

Defense Minister Will Seek
\$40 Million in New Military
Sales Credits in Washington
~~(S/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT
UNINTEL)~~

(Mohamed Ali Samantar will visit the US between 13 and 22 June. In his conversations with officials, he is expected to justify requests for further credits and good offices with Saudi Arabia by the threat from hostile Ethiopia and its radical backers. Although Somalia's security assistance needs are real, Samantar will probably over-stress the external threat and may minimize tribal strife that we consider to be of immediate and serious concern.)

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(b)(3):50 USC 3024
(i)

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2. SOMALIA'S DEFENSE MINISTER WILL SEEK MORE AID DURING VISIT THIS MONTH ~~(S/NOFORN)~~
~~NOCONTRACT~~ ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ ~~(S/NOFORN)~~

(b)(3):50
USC 3024(i)

REF: ~~(S/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)~~ ~~(S/NOFORN)~~ ~~(S/NOFORN)~~

(b)(3):50 USC 403 (g),(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

Samantar, while briefing US officials on the military situation, will stress the superiority of Ethiopian forces backed by the Soviets, Cuba, Libya, and East Germany over the Somali Army. Because of government inability to deal with it and because Somalia does not acknowledge "tribalism," he will probably not mention the sensitive subject of recent tribal fighting among Somali clans.

Samantar and President Siad have apparently been convinced by US representatives in Mogadishu, as well as a variety of delegations visiting there, that the presentation of a long shopping list of military equipment during the visit is counter-productive; thus the shorter priority list of lower cost items. Nevertheless, the shopping list can be produced should Samantar sense a particularly sympathetic audience.

(b)(1),1.4
(d)

Samantar's situation briefing will probably exaggerate Ethiopian strengths and the support from its allies. The Soviets have some 1,700 military advisers in Ethiopia but there are no combat units in the country. Moscow continues to supply arms but there have been no advances in sophistication in these weapons (no T-62 tanks, no new types of aircraft or missiles) since the introduction of Mi-24/HIND attack helicopters several years ago. Some 9,000 to 11,000 Cuban advisers and troops remain in Ethiopia, but they have not become directly involved in the recent fighting against Somalia. The same thing applies to East Germany, South Yemen, and Libya; all are believed by the Somalis to be more active than they are. Libya has provided large amounts of money, equipment, and training to anti-Siad dissidents but there is a lull currently. The Ethiopians outnumber and out-gun the Somalis

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both overall and along the border. Nevertheless, Ethiopia has serious internal security problems elsewhere, morale is low, resources are short, and there are both domestic and international political constraints which restrict their freedom to mount a major invasion of Somalia. Smaller attacks along the border are possible, and the Somalis are not capable of preventing the occupation of border towns as the Ethiopians did last year.

Samantar is likely to raise the occupation of the central Somalia border towns of Balenbale and Goldogob by the Ethiopians as a significant factor in declining domestic support for the Siad regime and as a justification for more aid. While Somalia's inability to push the Ethiopians out has been an embarrassment to President Siad and the army, we doubt it poses a serious threat to the regime.

A more serious problem, which Samantar may not raise, is that of tribal conflict. Tribal strife over water and grazing rights is not unusual in the predominantly nomadic Somali society. However, tribal fighting has been almost continual over the last 6 months. With Ethiopian- and Libyan-backed dissidents supporting one side and the Somali Government backing the other, some of the skirmishing has led to casualties numbering over 100. The conflicts have distracted the government and involved the army both in fighting against clans and in tribal fighting within units. Citizens have sided with or joined anti-Siad dissidents who aggravate the situation. This fighting is the most immediate and serious problem threatening the Siad regime, yet no policy to provide a lasting solution is in sight. We believe the failure to come to grips with this problem will continue to block national unity, feed dissent, contribute to the erosion of internal security, and make Somalia more vulnerable to the potential use of force by Ethiopia. Continued tribal fighting will also reduce the effectiveness of military and economic assistance. ~~(Classified by multiple sources. Declassify on OADR.)~~

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