

Human Rights versus Cold War: The Horn of Africa, Southwest Asia and the Emergence of the Carter Doctrine

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Superpower play at the horn of Africa

Ethiopia

- Ties with the U.S. since 1953 Mutual Defense Agreement
- The fall of Emperor – 1974
- Revolutionary movement with Marxist inclinations (Mengistu)
- By 1977 Ethiopia receiving military assistance from the Soviet Union

Somalia

- Legacy of colonialism left fragmented reality
- 1960-1969 fragile democracy
- 1969 coup that brought Said Barre to power
- “Scientific socialism” and close ties with the Soviet Union
- Historic rivalry with Ethiopia over disputed territory

The Ogaden War

- July 1977 war begins
- Winter 1977-1978 critical phase of war – massive Soviet involvement in support of Ethiopia
- Somali withdrawal – March 1978



U.S. position towards the conflict:

- Focus on the Soviet threat – fear that Moscow would succeed in consolidating its position in Ethiopia while retaining it in Somalia
- Acknowledgement of direct Soviet involvement
 - “We have incontrovertible evidence of a massive, continuing Soviet airlift of equipment and personnel into Addis Ababa”
- Soviet expansionism had to be countered *without* intervening directly
 1. Conception of other means to put pressure on Moscow – the opening to China
 2. Reliance on U.S. traditional allies, the “twin pillars”
 - Saudi Arabia – “They have the money to buy Somalia away from the Soviets if they really wanted to”
 - Iran – the centerpiece of U.S. security framework in the region



US-Iranian ties provided pillar to US strategy in the Persian Gulf

- U.S. presence first enters Iran during World War II
- **1953** – CIA sponsored coup returned Shah to power
- Mid 1950s to 1979 – close relationship between the U.S. and the Shah
 - 1959: Defense Agreement
 - 1968: British withdrawal from Gulf
 - 1972: Nixon agreement with the Shah
 - 1972-1979 continued close links...
- **1979** – the Islamic revolution
 - The hostage crisis – end of diplomatic relations

US reaction to the “loss” of Iran

- Necessity to rethink US commitments to the region – these entail a *direct* presence (process made more urgent by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan)
 - U.S. and Somalia negotiate access to the base at Berbera to support US Rapid Reaction Force
 - By mid-1980 U.S. provides direct military aid to Somalia, thus completing the reversal of alliances initiated in 1977
- The Carter Doctrine (Jan, 1980):

"Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

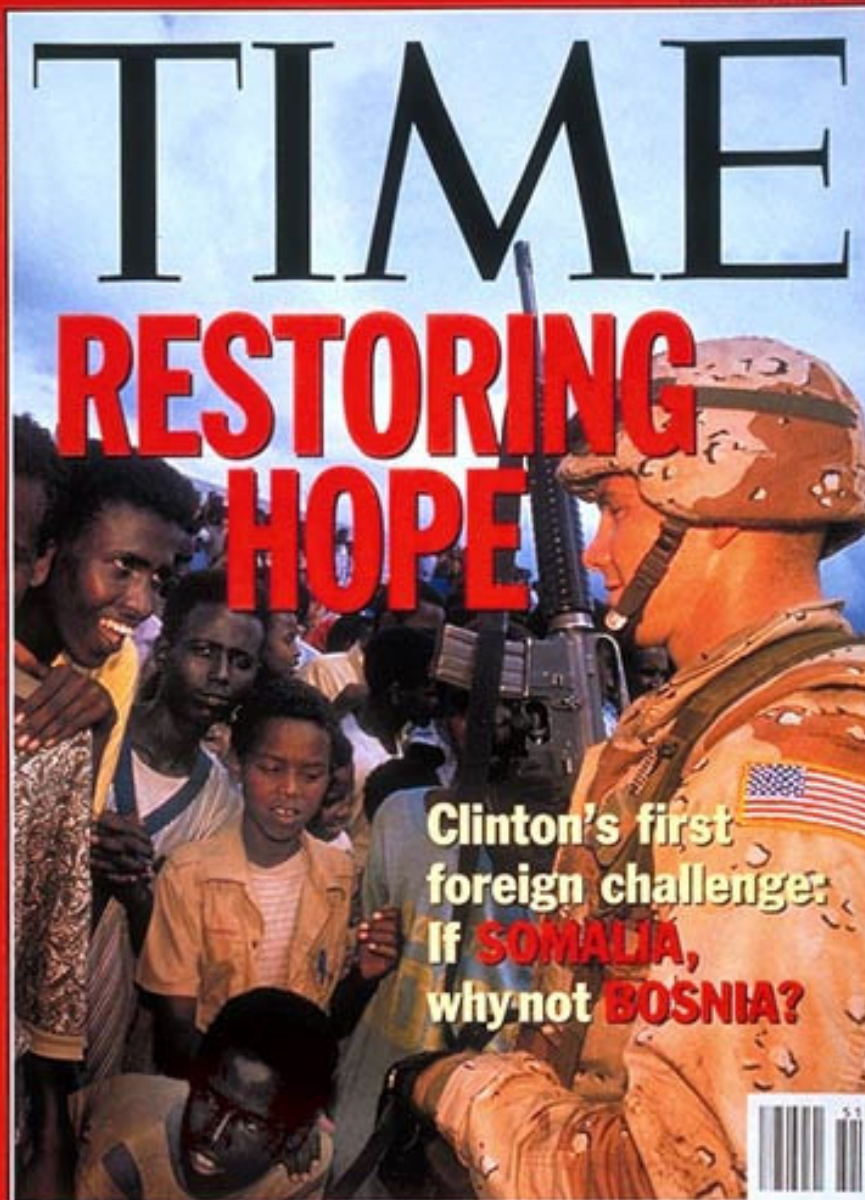
Legacies?

- U.S. focus on Soviet threat evident: the local dynamics and the regional grievances were not taken into consideration
- Both Somali and Ethiopian leaders end their rule in 1991 (when the Cold War order is gradually but globally dismantled)
 - While Ethiopia's statehood has ancient roots, Somalia's instability endures to the present day...
- US-Iranian relations have yet to improve
- U.S. bias in viewing complex local conflicts in terms of global repercussions still troubles U.S. foreign policy making





"SURE, WE'D LOVE TO TALK MR. OBAMA."



U.S. Out of Somalia



- End the racist occupation!
- Self-determination for Somalia!
- Resist the U.S. war in Africa!

Rally Sept. 28

7 pm at 133 West 44 Street, NYC at the
Newspaper Guild between Broadway and 6th Avenue

SPEAKERS INCLUDE: Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General; Asha Samad, Monica Moorehead, International Action Center; Rev. Lucius Walker, Pastors for Peace; Elombe Brath, Patrice Lumumba Coalition; Samori Marksman, WBAI and others

International Action Center, 212-633-6646. Donations requested, no one turned away for lack of funds.



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