

Horn Of Africa War Designed To Cross Israeli Tripwire

In preparation for the outbreak of war — which could be sparked by the independence of the French colony and military enclave of Djibouti in June — the Red Sea and Horn of Northeast Africa region has been officially designated a hot spot by the U.S. press.

According to the scenario, the upset or threat of upset of the socialist government of Somalia would lead to the sabotage of that country's good relations with the Soviet Union, and the fomenting of a war between Somalia and neighboring pro-socialist Ethiopia over longstanding territorial disputes — which Djibouti's independence could trigger.

The outbreak of such a war, as the *Baltimore Sun*, for one, emphasizes, and the probable concomitant closing of the Red Sea shipping lanes, would be a tripwire for Israel, which receives most of its petroleum imports — from Iran — through the Red Sea.

The tripwire is tightened by the avowed intention of Saudi Arabia to lead a move by the Arab countries to turn the Red Sea into an Arab lake. The Israeli military has already deployed F-15 jet fighters and long range missile boats to patrol the Sea, and under Likud leader Menachem Begin they can be expected to use them at the first minor provocation. "If a war on the Horn of Africa closes the Red Sea to shipping," the *Sun* quotes a Western diplomat, "Europe, the United States, the Soviet Union, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel and a lot of other countries are affected, and the potential for war here must be counted as rather large at present."

During his recent visit to Paris, Sudanese President Nimeiry made clear his willingness to serve as a NATO-surrogate to set up the war in Northeastern Africa. "The French government has discovered," said the daily *Matin de Paris* May 16, "that like Mobutu in Zaire, Nimeiry represents an ace in the hole." Nimeiry charged, among other things, that "Cuban advisors, with some Soviet," are backing an Ethiopian plan to attack the Sudan. Nimeiry was referring here to the efforts of the beleaguered Ethiopian regime to suppress the monarchist Ethiopian Democratic Union, which is waging a guerrilla war against the central government, with Sudanese backing.

Nimeiry has ordered the expulsion of a Soviet advisory mission to the Sudanese army, and the cutting by half of Soviet embassy personnel in his country. Nimeiry is also calling for a Red Sea "Arab lake" and has proposed the federation of Sudan, Somalia and North and South Yemen, creating an "Arab Federation." Such a move would almost certainly provoke military retaliation from a surrounded Ethiopia, as well as from Israel. Nimeiry's proposal is also a convenient counterproposal to a peace and development federation between the socialist gov-

ernments of the Red Sea area — Ethiopia, Somalia and South Yemen — which was proposed in March by Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Nimeiry also signed a joint communiqué with French president Giscard d'Estaing expressing his approval of

Somali President Asks Détente With Ethiopia

Somali President Mohammed Siad Barre made the following statement to the first congress of Somali trade unions on the tension in the Horn of Africa, reported in the May 16 issue of the bi-weekly magazine *Afrique-Asie*:

"Imperialist forces are trying to create confusion and crisis in the Horn of Africa, with the goal of pitting the two countries of the region against each other. The imperialist forces are stirring up unresolved conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia. Somalia has no intention of attacking Ethiopia, and the differences between the two countries should be reconsidered in a humanist socialist spirit, of Africanism and realism."

France's military intervention into Zaire, which the communiqué said was "aimed at helping this country (Zaire) to assure its security and territorial integrity." Nimeiry praised the "wisdom" of Giscard's policy over the tension-ridden independence process in Djibouti, wisdom which includes dispatching the aircraft carrier *Clemenceau*, 18 other French warships, and 6,000 extra troops to the colony. The communiqué established a joint Franco-Sudanese Commission to periodically review cooperation, which includes the provision of French jet fighters, helicopters and military vehicles to the Sudan.

Somalia Under Pressure

As a result of an apparent misinformation campaign, Ethiopian radio this week broadcast gross denunciations of the Somali government whom they alleged were supporting secessionist guerrillas in southern Ethiopia's Ogaden desert — a disputed territory between the two countries. This prompted Somali President Barre, under pressure from a chauvinistic, backward right wing, to hold a press conference in which he denounced the Ethiopian regime as "mad" and to criticize Soviet deliveries of weapons to Ethiopia. Although U.S. press reports tried

to discern indications that Barre was "moving toward the West," Barre was restrained in his criticisms of the Ethiopians, and roundly denounced the Saudi-Sudanese "Arab Lake" idea saying that no power has a right to monopolize the Red Sea.

The option of overthrowing Barre if he refuses to play out the war scenario was indicated by an article in the

French daily *Le Figaro* May 17. The paper charged that pro-Soviet army officers were plotting against Barre, who has been at the center of his country's relations with the USSR since he came to power in 1969. Such a charge provides the pretext for right wingers in the hierarchy to plan a "defensive coup."

'State Of War' In Southern Africa

Following a campaign of military threats and incursions by the white supremacist Smith regime in Rhodesia, Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda announced last week that a state of war existed between Zambia and Rhodesia.

Three of the five front-line African states were attacked this past week, as the military pressure against them mounts. Pro-Soviet Angola was hit the hardest, suffering multiple attacks from Zaire. Botswana and Zambia were attacked by Rhodesian forces.

Coincident with the attacks on the front-line states, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young and Vice-President Walter Mondale are in southern Africa to impose a U.S. "settlement" of the Rhodesian crisis on the front-line states. A breakaway ally scenario in which the Republic of South Africa, in ostensible opposition to U.S. policy, would provide the muscle for full-scale war against the front-line states, is the club with which Mondale and Young are attempting to intimidate the Africans.

The Military Situation

French- and Egyptian-piloted Mirage jets have conducted bombing runs into Lunda province of Angola, according to the Cuban press agency *Prensa Latina*. Lunda province adjoins Zaire's Shaba province, site of the April military buildup coordinated by French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

Well-informed diplomatic sources reported this week that attacks by the U.S.-backed FNLA and its U.S. Special Forces back-up have once again resumed attacks into northeast Angola from Zaire. The goal is to cut rail and road traffic, making the area ungovernable.

In addition, the U.S.- and French-linked terrorist gang, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) is threatening to destroy Gulf Oil's operation in the Angolan province of Cabinda. "Gulf Oil must die within the next month," said a FLEC communique released this past week in Lisbon, and addressed to Gulf. "If we stop the royalty payments, the MPLA (Angolan government — ed.) will fall. If we do not receive a reply from Gulf, the order will be given to destroy all pumping stations, rights and installations as well as the docking quays."

Ian Smith's outlaw Rhodesian regime was the source of threats and attacks against Zambia and Botswana. British Foreign Secretary David Owen, who is working closely with the Carter regime, delivered a note from Smith threatening an attack on Zambia to Zambian

President Kenneth Kaunda. Referring to Rhodesian national liberation forces based in Zambia, Smith's note to Kaunda threatened that Smith "might have no alternative but to strike against bases in your country."

A few days later Kaunda put his armed forces on alert, and declared that a "state of war" existed with Rhodesia. On May 19 Kaunda charged that Rhodesian forces had placed land mines in Zambia which claimed several Zambian victims. Fifty Rhodesian troops also carried out a raid against Botswana, ostensibly pursuing ten guerrillas, and attacked a Botswana police base.

Military backup has been pledged to Kaunda from several countries, undermining Smith's efforts to terrify Kaunda into breaking ranks with the other front-line presidents, the necessary first step towards isolating Angola for continued attacks.

Angolan Foreign Affairs Minister Paolo Jorge pledged to stand by Zambia in case of further attacks by Smith, adding that Angola considered an attack on one front-line state an attack on all of them. Tanzanian Defense Minister Rashidi Kawawa said Tanzania would not sit with crossed arms while Rhodesia attacked Zambia, and also pledged military support. Tanzania has demanded that Britain stand behind the front-line states militarily in case of attack by Smith. The Yugoslav ambassador to Zambia has said Yugoslavia would come to the aid of Zambia if it were attacked by Rhodesia.

Fearful of the consequences of a war in southern Africa, British Prime Minister James Callaghan, indicating he did not approve of his Foreign Minister's complicity in Smith's threat to Kaunda, sent Smith a strong message condemning any preemptive strike, and warning him of the "grim consequences" that would ensue.

The London *Financial Times*, also worried about war, warned that "there are grave worries about the potential destabilizing effects of Rhodesian military action against Zambia." A May 18 *Financial Times* editorial raked Foreign Secretary Owen over the coals for his role in the Smith provocation to Zambia. "The only justification for communication between London and the illegal Smith regime is in pursuit of a negotiated settlement on Rhodesia's future, and that end is hardly likely to be promoted by the transmission of belligerent messages... Dr. Owen can only have made matters worse" by his actions, said the newspaper. The *Financial Times* added that the goal of British diplomacy in southern Africa should be "to bring about a change of regime in Rhodesia."