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SCC Meeting on Horn of Africa, 2 March 1978, 12:50 - 2:15 p.m.  
White House Situation Room

Participants:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <u>State</u><br>Cyrus Vance   | <u>CIA</u><br>Stansfield Turner   |
| <u>Defense</u><br>Harold Brown<br>Charles Duncan<br>(Deputy Secretary of Defense) | <u>White House</u><br>The Vice President<br>(during first part<br>of meeting)<br>Zbigniew Brzezinski<br>(Chairman)<br>David Aaron |
| <u>JCS</u><br>General David Jones<br>(Acting Chairman, JCS)                       | <u>NSC</u><br>Paul B. Henze (Notetaker)   |

Near-verbatim transcription follows:

b1 ST: [REDACTED]

ZB: I suggest we try to adhere to the following agenda for this meeting:

1. Strategy for political settlement.
2. Measures designed to convey our displeasure to the Soviets.
3. Measures designed to convey our displeasure to the Cubans.
4. Moves toward Ethiopia.
5. Our military posture.
6. Status of our consultations with other governments.

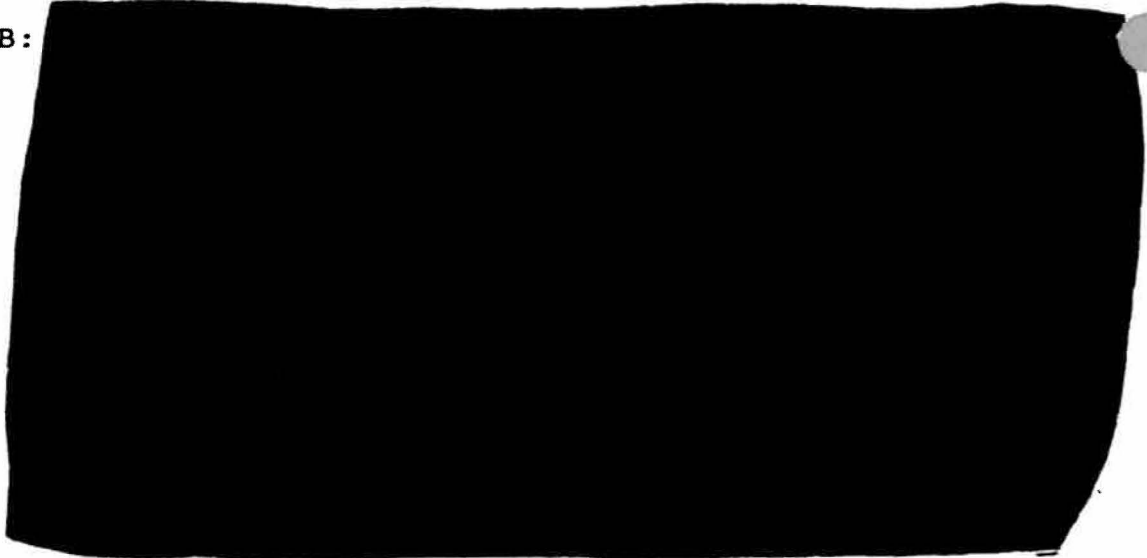
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(F13-136) under provisions of E.O. 12356  
by N. Moran, National Security Council

ZB:

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HB: We will do that.

CV: I want you to know what I said in hearings before Congress yesterday. I was asked, 'Is there linkage between what is going on in the Horn and SALT?' I replied, 'There is not.' I did have to recognize that what is happening could affect the political atmosphere. I made a speech for about two minutes on the importance of SALT.

ZB: The President said in response to a question this noon that there is no linkage but Soviet actions may impose such linkage.

HB &

CV: That is wrong.

CV: I think it is wrong to say that this is going to produce linkage, and it is of fundamental importance.

ZB: It is going to poison the atmosphere.

CV: We will end up losing SALT and that will be the worst thing that could happen. If we do not get a SALT treaty in the President's first four years, that will be a blemish on his record forever.

ZB: It will be a blemish on his record also if a treaty gets rejected by the Senate.

CV: Zbig, you yesterday and the President today said it may create linkage and I think it is wrong to say that.

VP: How would you see that playing out, Cy?

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CV: It will toughen the Russians' position. What is more, we are getting ourselves in a problem here at home. The problem is that people will say that if the Russians are good, are we going to give in to them on something in SALT?

HB: There is going to be linkage--but we should not encourage it

ZB: What we are saying is that if there is an aggravation of tensions because of what the Soviets are doing in the Horn, there is going to be linkage. That is a statement of fact.

HB: Not all statements of fact should be made.

ZB: The Soviets should be made aware of the fact that they are poisoning the atmosphere.

HB: We should find something else to beat the Soviets with.

CV: I do not think there is much leverage anyway on this issue.

b1 ZB: [REDACTED] But what kind of arrangements and consultations need to be undertaken to carry out a withdrawal? What kind of ceasefire? What happens to the Soviets and Cubans in this process? What about responses from the concerned Arab countries?

CV: The Iranians are very much on board. They think Siad is getting what he deserves and should get out of the Ogaden. The Saudis still look on this as a holy war. They have indicated that they will say something to Siad--I am not sure they will. I do not know the latest on the Egyptian position. The Sudanese have made their peace with the Ethiopians and are no longer in the picture. As far as I can figure out, there are very few Black Africans who are going to support Siad's position. The best we can hope for is something along the lines of our four points and we have to work on how we can get the Black Africans to go along with us.

ZB: Have we heard from the Nigerians?

CV: They are trying to get the Ethiopians and Somalis to sit down together but they will not do it.

DA: The problem with Siad is that he has to know first of all that he won't get any arms as long as he occupies the Ogaden. [REDACTED]

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b1 ST: [REDACTED]

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DA: Our position implies that if they invade northern Somalia we will change our tune. That does not help our diplomatic posture. He is willing to give up Hargeisa to get help. We are holding out the possibility of negotiations but implying to Siad that if he gets invaded we will come to his assistance. This is not consistent.

HB: That is a good point.

DA: We really ought to talk to the Arabs about Eritrea.

CV: I think we can put that off for a minute. We should focus on how we can go back to Siad and make it clear to him that by dragging his feet he is only making his position worse.

ZB: Can we get the Saudis and the Iranians to join us in doing that?

CV: The Iranians, yes; perhaps the Egyptians, but I do not know about the Saudis.

ZB: We have to give Siad some assurance that he is not being abandoned.

CV: We cannot get any arms there in time. We can save his face. Even third-country transfers have to lie before Congress for 30 days.

HB: We would also have to do this with our own stocks--unless our own forces were engaged.

ZB: Just what legislation applies?

DA: Let us look at this again.

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ST:

ZB: So we will go back to Siad and we will try to get the Iranians to support us.

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[REDACTED] But what encouragement can we give to Siad?

CV: Not a helluva lot.

HB: It would have to be third-country with non-U.S. equipment.

CV: The Iranians will not do it. The Shah said that under no circumstances would he send his troops or airplanes in there. He will send people to Saudi Arabia if they will send the people in.

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HB: What about the Egyptians?

CV: They blow hot and cold.

HB: The Egyptians could put Soviet equipment into Somalia.

CV: Sadat says one thing one day and changes his position the next day. If we are trying to predict, at this point I would predict that he will be so cautious that you can give no assurance to Siad.

DA: We are feeding a situation where Siad thinks he has some reason to stay in the Ogaden.

ZB: We are not creating a situation where Siad has an incentive to pull out of the Ogaden.

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CV:

[REDACTED]

DA: Our whole policy is premised on the notion that Siad will withdraw.

CV: I can think only of a face-saver that once he withdraws we will consult with the Congress about some arms.

VP: Do you think our pumping up the press on the Russians and Cubans is encouraging Siad to think that he has some hope? It bothers me that we are pumping up this in public view-- it exposes us as impotent and Siad thinks that if he hangs on a while he has some hope.

HB: Maybe we should assure him that he won't be overrun in return for a promise that he will pull out. The statement that he will pull out is worth something politically.

ST: Let us look at what pull-out means. It looks as if he is going to be pushed out in the Harar-Jijiga area--he will be defeated there. Then there will be the whole southern problem. He may take the position that he has no forces there. We will have a problem defining what pull-out means.

CV: If we could get advisers there to see that there would be no reprisals, they could also do some other monitoring. We have to get word to Siad very quickly and very clearly what it is that we are going to do here.

ZB: Should we go in alone or with others?

CV: Alone--quickly and then try to get others to do it.

ZB:

[REDACTED]

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CV: But we also tell him that he is going to get the hell beat out of him if he stays there and he loses any chance he has of getting protection from reprisals.

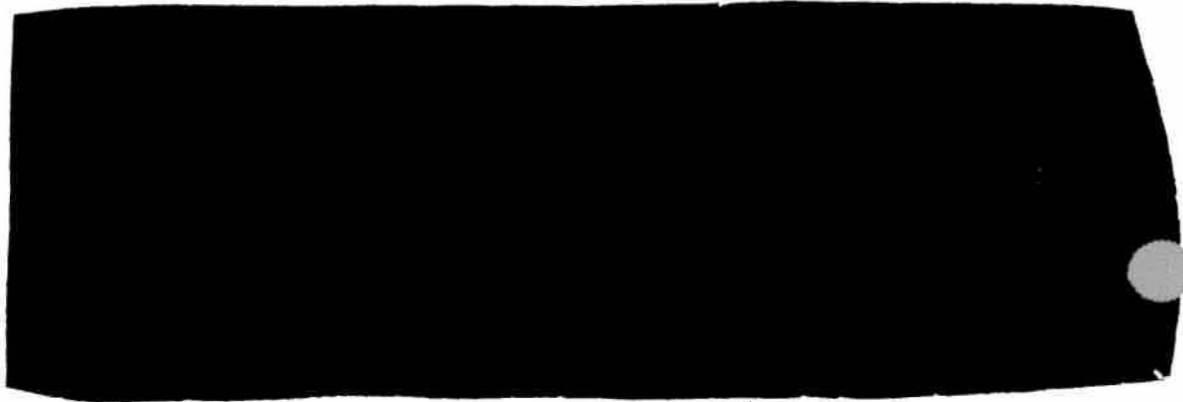
DA: I believe his strategy is to get into a negotiation by losing Hargeisa. If we are not going to go for that then his only chance of getting anything is to withdraw.

CV: What do we tell him about what we would do if his border is crossed?

DA: We should go back and tell him we won't do anything unless he pulls out.

ZB: I am for that.

ST:



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ZB: We are going in with the four points.

CV: We will also tell him (i.e. Siad) our military assessment of the situation. We tell him that time is of the essence, that this way he may get some protection against reprisals...

ZB: Because of African presence in the Ogaden...

CV: ...which he would not get otherwise.

ZB: He will want some assurances concerning his military situation as he withdraws.

CV: We will tell him if he withdraws and does it now, we will be prepared to consult with the Congress--but only if he withdraws from the whole Ogaden.

HB: How much consultation has there been with the Congress about what we are telling the Saudis and others?

ZB: Very little. Shall we go to the Nigerians?

CV: Yes.

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- ZB: Anything else on strategy for political settlement?
- CV: I want to go back to the Egyptians and we need to be sure that the Shah is going to do what he said he would.
- DA: Have we had anything from the Saudis on those mortars? Asking them helps to remind them and underscores our concern.
- CD: The HIRC was very interested in this subject when I testified this morning.
- DA: Where do we stand on the other serial numbers we were having checked?
- ZB: Let's go to item no. 2: showing our displeasure to the Soviets. Frank Press has developed a memorandum on bilateral relationships--space, transportation and housing seem to be the areas in which we have the least interest...
- HB: It most favors them and these are the ones we want to find.
- ZB: I am convinced about the moondoggle.
- HB: I think we should consider cancelling the meeting--not just postponing it.
- VP: It is all pretty puny.
- ZB: None of this amounts to much by itself except to convey displeasure on the Horn.
- HB: The Salyut one they will feel.
- DA: Any message on this needs to be accompanied by an indication of what we want them to do in the Horn as opposed to what we do not want them to do.
- CV: We have told them that if the Somalis withdraw we expect them and the Cubans to get out and there should be an OAU advisory group that would protect the Ogaden population against reprisals. There should obviously be a ceasefire and an agreement to respect the boundaries and consideration should be given to how the ethnic problem might be dealt with. They say that their interest will not be to stay if the Ogaden is settled.
- DA: We ought to link this up and get a commitment from them. We should short-circuit the Ethiopians on this.

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- CV: If we can feel assured that the Somalis are going to get out of the Ogaden then we can do business with the Soviets.
- HB: Can we do anything without long negotiations?
- ZB: The Soviets are demonstrating a predisposition to exploit a local conflict for larger purposes. They are frightening more countries in the region and they are creating a precedent for more involvement elsewhere. The Cubans are offering 800 men to ZAPU. If the Cubans and Soviets are going to get massively involved in Rhodesia, we are going to be in a worse bind there. If we allow the Soviets to send expeditionary forces to resolve territorial conflicts in ways that are beneficial to them, then we are going to have more and more problems.
- VP: You are right but our remedies are all theoretical. We only strengthen their position. The conundrum in the Somali problem is that they are fighting an aggressor.
- ZB: And in the south they will be fighting apartheid--that will be even more advantageous to them.
- HB: I have an idea re China. The Chinese are less concerned about the aggressor. Why don't we get together with the Chinese in Warsaw and issue a joint statement of concern about the Horn and append to it a statement that we will consult on other areas where we have a joint interest? That would get the Soviets' attention.
- CV: That would get their attention but we are at the point where we are on the brink of ending up with a real souring of relations between ourselves and the Soviet Union and it may take a helluva long while to change and may not be changed for years and I think that is a very important step to take--we should examine it carefully before we go down that road.
- HB: It is an important step--it is not like postponing or cancelling a meeting on space. I am struck by the approach the Chinese ambassador made the other day to our ambassador in the Sudan. They want to be in close touch with us.
- ZB: On this business of souring relations with the Soviets, the real question is why are they being soured? Do the Soviets want to sour these relations? If they can do what they want in the Horn without getting evidence of concern from us, we are going to have major problems with them in the south. We should communicate to the Soviets that they do not have a free hand and that what they do entails risks. Otherwise, what will they think?

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- DA: I think it is time to have a very thorough discussion with the Soviets on all this. We should include southern Africa in this discussion. We should give it this one crack before we take some steps.
- ZB: Not before we take--as we take. Otherwise, this is going to be a continuation of our pattern of behavior of the last few months: noise but no follow-through.
- HB: The Chinese one is different.
- ZB: And the space one is different.
- CV: I think the key still remains SALT. If we make progress on SALT, then a lot of things will fall into place that do not fall into place otherwise.
- HB: I do not think a SALT treaty would make any difference--if we had it now, they would be reacting in the same way.
- ZB: They must understand that there are consequences in their behavior. If we do not react, we are destroying our own posture--regionally and internationally and we are creating the conditions for domestic reaction.
- CV: This is where you and I part. The consequences of doing something like this are very dangerous.
- HB: Small steps are neither very risky nor very helpful.
- CV: If they come back and ask what we were doing in the UN, how can we answer that?
- ZB: It is not a question of fixing blame; it is a question of our relationship six months from now.
- VP: I haven't heard any remedies which I think will change Russian policy one bit. By trying to pressure this issue, we underline our impotence on the Horn. Our remedies are hollow.
- ZB: Some remedies we reject because they go too far and others we reject because they do not go far enough...
- VP: They have us by the short hairs. That is our problem. I do not think the joint space agreement makes much difference.
- DA: I think it would be worthwhile to begin to discuss these questions with the Chinese--no declaration yet. Then you start getting some leverage on the situation. I am less worried about leverage on the Russians than leverage on Siad.

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- CV: A year ago the Soviets were in Somalia and in Ethiopia as well--now it has become a daily crisis. We are stirring it up ourselves.
- HB: There is a difference: there are now 10,000 Cubans in Ethiopia and a billion dollars worth of Soviet equipment that was not there a year ago.
- DA: The key to the question is what happens to those Cuban combat forces.
- ZB: Where do they go next? But moves to be effective must have some real credibility behind them.
- DA: To get attention we ought to move the carrier into the Indian Ocean and we tell Siad that if he withdraws, we will move it up. We should try Siad one more time and then tone the whole thing down.
- HB: If you move and it turns out to be a bluff, the next time you move nobody will believe it.
- DA: If the carrier is put close and we start to get this package working, then we have some means of protection. Our point is to guarantee the peace, not fight the war.
- HB: Maybe Siad would understand that but I doubt whether many other people would. If you put it there, it will be understood that it is there to fight. We can get it closer by moving it to Singapore.
- DA: I do not want to fight the war with the carrier--I want it to guarantee the peace.
- VP: Let's send it to Singapore.
- CV: That does not bother me.
- HB: The Joint Chiefs say that this will not even attract attention because Singapore is not in the Indian Ocean.
- ZB: Where do we stand? Shall we decide to move the aircraft carrier to Singapore?
- CV: If it is regarded only as a routine move with no public announcement and fanfare...
- ZB: Do we do anything about any one of the bilateral relationships with the Soviets?

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CV: I would say no--but I would like to follow up on David's suggestion of a very serious talk with the Soviets. Gromyko is out, though--we would probably have to do it here with Dobrynin.

HB: I suggest that we do that only if we have parallel consultations with the Chinese.

ZB; How about cancelling an agreement?

HB: Press says we could easily postpone this space meeting indefinitely.

ZB: It seems to me we have three elements in this approach:

    Serious talks with the Soviets  
    Consultations with China  
    Suspension of the space meeting.

HB: I recommend we talk about the Horn of Africa and other general questions with the Chinese.

DA: Let us even discuss southern Africa.

ZB: What about space suspension?

CV: It is a very great signal.

DA: The main argument for it is that the Soviets' in it is not technical and scientific--it is political.

CV: Are we going to make it public? The more things we make public the more difficulty we make for ourselves. I would like to reflect on this possible suspension...as long as it is not public...

ZB: Does anyone oppose this?

HB &

DJ: No.

VP: I do not feel strongly about it one way or another. I do not consider it very important.

ZB: Approach to the Chinese: political or talk about technology?

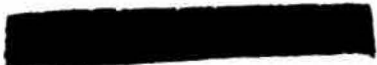
CV: I favor talking to the Chinese about science and technology.

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HB: ...abandon political consultation with China? Cy, I disagree with this.

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ZB: How about Cuban activities in Angola? 

CV: What is the law?

HB: It only applies to the 1976 act and the 1976 project. There is an open question as to whether the Tunney-Javits amendment reflects continuation of congressional limitation.

CV: What do we know about the attitude of Congress?

ZB: We have to consult.

DA: It is important not to put this thing only in the context of the Horn but to consider the situation in southern Africa as well.

CV: Suppose we start helping Savimbi and he takes back a few more towns. Are the Cubans not going to send more people in then? Doesn't this just drive them to do more? Savimbi is doing quite well now. Why do anything that will increase the likelihood of more Cubans there?

ZB: Only if it increases their casualties and the costs of their involvement. Consider the fact that they are offering 800 people to ZAPU. If it does not cost them anything, they are likely to do it.

CV:

ST:

DA:

CV:

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ZB: Stan, is it your judgment that aid to Savimbi would increase his capabilities?

CV: I would like a better analysis of what the effect of these various steps is going to be.

ZB: The issue is not whether we get more Cubans in Angola. There are going to be as many there as is necessary to keep Neto in power.

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CV: [REDACTED]

ZB: But why not make them increase their involvement in Angola? Let them be pinched by it. The Soviets and Cubans want not only to stimulate the conflict but to decide the outcome of the conflict.

CV: Another alternative would be to open up some discussions with Neto. We should think of this. He has no place to turn but to the Soviets and Cubans. For the same reason that it is a good idea for us to have an ambassador in Ethiopia--this is worth thinking about. We should think of all sides of these problems. [REDACTED]

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ZB: [REDACTED]

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State will help. Meanwhile, we will stop advising friendly countries against aid to Savimbi.--Next topic is our relations with Ethiopia. We should make a greater effort to use Tito and others to stress our desire to maintain a reasonable relationship with Ethiopia and our interest in a peaceful solution. Is there anything else?-- Why don't we see if Tito can convey the 4 points to the Ethiopians? -- Shall we ask the Italians to discuss the 4 points with the Somalis? -- Next, our military posture: I doubt whether we need to do anything more about that now.

DA: But there is the question of allowing aid to go to Siad.

CV: If we really want Siad to withdraw, do we want to encourage others to support him? Do we want to encourage the Saudis?

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DA: I do not think that Siad is ever going to get the message unless we discourage the Saudis. [REDACTED]

ZB: I am afraid we will look foolish if we go back to the Saudis now. Let us wait and see if the 4 points will go. Let us then put pressure on the Somalis. -- Should we talk more firmly with our NATO allies?

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- CV: We should keep their ambassadors up to date on what is going on and what we are thinking. I will have George Vest give the ambassadors a rundown on these things.
- ZB: On the situation and on the 4 points as well. An assessment of the military/political situation--the implications of this and the approach we are developing.
- ST: I have considerable concern on the impact of forcing Siad to withdraw from the Ogaden on Siad's ability to remain in power. Whether it is in our interest or disinterest to have him toppled remains to be seen.
- ZB: Is this something on which you could develop more analysis?
- DA: That is a very important point. If I were Siad I would not want to give up. Should we send an emissary to Somalia?
- CV: Let us talk about this--or do we just send in the ambassador to do this?
- DA: What about disinformation? Perception management?
- ST: I have had some suggestions in since November.
- ZB: We will hold up the decision recommendations as either unanimous or with your dissent.
- CV: We are going to have to move fast on this.

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