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THE ETHIOPIS-ERITREA WAR: U.S. POLICY OPTIONS

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BEFORE THE

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OF THE

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THE ETHIOPIA-ERITREA WAR: U.S. POLICY OPTIONS

TUESDAY, MAY 25, 1999

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:10 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ed Royce (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This hearing of the Subcommittee on Africa will come to order. The subject is the Ethiopian Eritrean war and U.S. policy options.

Again, there is a crisis in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia and Eritrea have mobilized one half million troops against one another in a war that has already cost tens of thousands of lives and threatens the stability of the region. The human suffering goes beyond those dying in the trenches. Civilians have also suffered greatly.

Ethiopia has expelled 53,000 ethnic Eritreans, often under inhumane conditions ostensibly for security reasons. Tens of thousands of Ethiopians have fled Eritrea. Also, over 300,000 Ethiopians who are mostly farmers in the Badme area, and more than 120,000 Eritreans have been displaced as a result of the fighting. Meanwhile, hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent by both countries on armaments.

To compound this tragedy, these are two of the poorest countries in the world. Hopes for economic progress that were fostered over the last several years have been snuffed out. It is certainly hard to be supportive of debt relief and other aid for these two countries under present circumstances as each are involved in an arms buildup.

The outbreak of hostilities last May caught many offguard. Most observers, including the State Department, assumed that relations between these two countries were sound. However, there were all too evident factors, clear with the benefit of hindsight, that sparked and now fuel the war.

There were real economic tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Border disputes were allowed to linger, and there is no escaping the fact that internal political dynamics are at play.

Both governments have shown indifference toward the development of democracy, individual liberties, and impartial justice. These shortcomings undoubtedly have led each country into this spiral of violence.

Time is running out on the Ethiopian and Eritrean people's hopes for a better future. A recent Associated Press (AP) account quoted an Eritrean soldier saying, "I feel bad because we were neighbors and in the future we will have to work together to develop."

As nationalistic passions are flamed through propaganda and as battlefield losses mount, this soldier's vision of development is slipping through his hands like sand. Another AP story quoted an Eritrean woman who, having had her house destroyed by bombing, said, "I never expected this war to last so long. Maybe my own children will grow up to fight also."

With every day that passes, the cycle of animosity deepens and the prospects for peace and development grow dimmer. The United States should play an active role in attempts to resolve this conflict. For one, the winner in this conflict is the Sudanese Government and its further involvement would subtract from any real investment the U.S. has made in these countries over the last several years.

With battlefield losses at a hundred thousand now, there is no excuse for us not to be fully engaged, and the Subcommittee is looking forward to hearing about the Administration's efforts. Ultimately, though, assuming there is a desire for a responsible and fundamental resolution, a resolution and an end to this conflict will require leadership on the part of Eritrea and Ethiopia, leadership to temper nationalistic passions and it will require compromise. Only then will the Eritrean and Ethiopian leaders have lived up to their high reputations.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Ed Royce referred to appears in the appendix.]

I will now turn to the Ranking Member, Mr. Payne, for an opening statement.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this very important hearing today the prospects for peace. And let me also thank the Assistant Secretary, the Honorable Susan Rice, for the work that she has been doing as it relates to this tragedy early on, spending many days there at the inception of the conflict attempting to solve it at that time, and the continued work that she has been doing as relates to this issue.

Of course, it is certainly clear that we are all extremely disappointed with this very tragic issue. We are very disappointed because many of us here know President Isaias and Prime Minister Meles. Many of us here have visited both countries on numerous occasions, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Royce.

We are very troubled because these two leaders were persons that we pointed to. As we said, new winds were blowing across Africa with democracy coming with a new set of leaders in Africa. We went through the colonial period with Jomo Kenyatta and leaders like Mr. Mandela, the persons that moved Africa into independence, Herman Cohen, but we said we have new leaders now.

We have young men, who are educated, and interested with a lot of integrity. And so when this conflict broke out, it actually was a very troubling and disappointing effort to many of us who were so pleased at their potential. And so as many innocent people—the bombing is killing innocent people on both sides, have engaged in bombing. I think that one agreement that was made initially said there would be no air strikes, but there have been.

I am also concerned about the situation in the Horn and the long-standing impact on Sudan and Somalia. We know that there are people in Somalia that are friendly with both sides. The worst

thing that we can see happening now is that this conflict would then start to involve Adeed, Egal, and other members of IGAD. So that makes it similar to the problem in the Congo where we see many countries involved in a conflict between two countries which makes it more difficult to keep and bring this tragedy to an end.

The fact that we must respect one's sovereignty and the maintenance of territorial integrity is very important. However, border disputes have been around for many years. Especially with Ethiopia and Eritrea it was felt that border disputes would be something that eventually would be dealt with, but they were not the primary issues.

It was always acknowledged that the border was still questionable. For a conflict to begin based upon an issue that everyone has agreed to was something that we could sit down at the table. It is extremely troubling. We have had special envoy, Tony Lake, attempting to work in the region, as well as many others. But I will submit my entire opening statement for the record, but I would just like to say that we are hoping, still hoping, that there can be some way that we can bring these two leaders, these two great potentials together so that we can have a cease-fire. Then we can move on to deal with the problems at hand.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

Chairman ROYCE. We will turn now to the chairman of the Full Committee, Mr. Gilman of New York.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Chairman Royce. I want to thank you for arranging this hearing.

It comes at an appropriate time for us to consider what is happening in Eritrea and Ethiopia. This war between Ethiopia and Eritrea is the largest war in the world today. Most of us forget that.

With half a million men and women under arms and more than 40,000 have lost their lives makes the crisis in Kosovo pale in comparison. Of all the conflicts in Africa and around the world, this war between Ethiopia and Eritrea is one of the most tragic. It is tragic not just because of the huge numbers involved, although any conflict in which a single battle consumes 10,000 precious irreplaceable lives is certainly a tragedy. It is tragic also because of the aspect of two of Africa's shining lights, two brothers struggling each other at the very time they should be building their wealth, their liberty, and prosperity.

For 30-years people of Eritrea fought a bitter struggle for independence, and for 13-years people of Ethiopia fought to overthrow a brutal totalitarian regime. Eventually through tenacity, courage, and will they succeeded. It is outstanding now that leaders who already sacrificed so much and who know what true suffering is cannot find some way to resolve their differences without massive bloodshed.

It is honorable to fight and die for one's country. Of course, it is. Is it to be encouraged and gloried in? Most of us think not. I don't pretend to understand all the complexities of this conflict. But I do know that Thomas Keneally, author of Schindler's List and other works of literature, discovered in the rocky hills of Eritrea of northern Ethiopia, some of the finest people in the world. To think that

they are murdering each other by the tens of thousands is a human tragedy beyond measure.

I don't believe this vast apparatus of our government can focus on only one international conflict at a time. We would like to know why the President, after a stirring and long overdue trip to Africa last year, has been unable to direct greater high level efforts to try to pursue a lasting peace in that part of the world.

So I commend our colleagues and Chairman Royce and Mr. Payne, Chairman and Ranking Members of our Subcommittee, for directing their attention to this struggle and perhaps we can find a way to do more. I believe we should.

Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Chairman Gilman.

We will turn to Mr. Meeks of New York.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are here today to discuss viable solutions to a peaceful end to the Ethiopian Eritrean war. Mr. Chairman, this conflict is of great interest to me because of the human rights violations that are taking place by both sides and the impact that this conflict is and will continue to have on neighboring countries throughout the continent of Africa.

While I support a peaceful resolution to this conflict, more should be done to alleviate the impact of these types of conflicts early on in the process. Africa seems to be put on a back burner and we have to hold the Administration and the Members of Congress accountable to end the patterns of double standards and neglect when it comes to foreign policy in Africa. Over the past few weeks we have seen just how effective NATO and intervention can be with respect to the humanitarian relief effort provided to the refugees in Kosovo.

While compliance by both countries with the proposed peace agreement—that is a starting point, I respectfully submit that we can pursue the same kind of relief to the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea. We need to call upon President Clinton and his special envoy to step up the peace negotiations in the Ethiopian and Eritrean war.

Additionally, we should call on the United Nations Human Rights Commission to step in and provide the requested relief and observation of human rights violations. I think that if we use a concerted effort to make a difference, we can make a difference in this conflict and in other conflicts that are going on through the continent of Africa.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Meeks. Now we will go to Mr. Campbell of New York—of California.

Mr. GILMAN. He looks like a New Yorker, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CAMPBELL. We Californians have northern California and southern California. I never had this degree of distance put between us.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Really particularly personal thanks to you for holding this hearing. I am so glad that you have. I believe this attention is beneficial. My comments are personal so they are equally heartfelt as they are personal.

A year and a half ago, my wife and I and Don Payne spent Thanksgiving in Asmara. We went up to Kerin, Massawa in Eritrea. Then in Ethiopia, to Addis, Mekele, Yabelo, Aksum.

Gosh, what optimism we had, didn't we, Don. It was such a great feeling that folks were making such progress, such pride and such an accomplishment. I even had favorable words for the attitude that maybe they didn't need so much assistance from NGO's. They would do it on their own. That was an attitude I thought showed some self-reliance.

I know the witnesses today are not going to be from those two countries. They are going to be Americans. That is as it should be, but there are representatives of those countries in the audience. Let me just speak to you from my heart.

You, both countries, have utterly destroyed my efforts to focus attention of the American people on the good that could be done through partnership here. You have. And now we are focused on other parts of the world, aren't we? And I don't know what it is going to take to get the attention back, and it was in our hand. It was in our grasp. So I am so sorry, and I am here because I hope that it can be remedied, but I want you to know how touched I am, my wife and I are personally that our dream has been shattered by both countries.

And last, Mr. Chairman, there is no excuse for hate, radio-hate broadcasts. The building up of the animosities through the hate propaganda will take decades to remedy. Neighbors have to live with neighbors.

So thank you for holding this hearing. I look forward to learning from it, but I do want my colleagues and friends from the two countries involved to know that this is as close to personal as anything I have ever dealt with in Congress.

Thanks.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Campbell.

Mr. Chabot of Ohio.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you again for holding this hearing and for your leadership.

I think all of us on the Committee appreciate your efforts to encourage a peaceful solution to this unfortunate and tragic situation between two friends of the United States, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Both of these nations have assisted us in our efforts to oppose terrorism and radical fundamentalism in the region. Both have every potential to be shining examples of political and economic reform on the continent of Africa.

This conflict should indeed matter to us, matter to the United States. And it should be addressed, I believe, at the highest levels of our government. I think it is fair to say at this point that the international efforts and efforts by our own government to encourage a peaceful settlement have clearly been insufficient.

I believe, however, that personal involvement by President Clinton in this matter just might help to bring an end to the hostilities. I hope that when we conclude this hearing today, we are able to send a message to the President urging him to do a number of things.

First, publicly insist on an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Second, make it clear that any party to the agreement that

violates the cease-fire would incur serious consequences such as the suspension of all U.S. assistance. Third, invite President Isaias and Prime Minister Meles to meet with him in Washington. Fourth, strongly encourage both countries to begin immediate negotiations on the implementation of the OAU framework. And finally, have the Administration set up a mechanism to followup on all of these efforts.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you personally for your hard work on this issue and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chabot.

Before our Subcommittee to testify today we have Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice. Dr. Rice earned her Ph.D. from Oxford University, served as the White House Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs among other positions, and we are delighted that she is with us today.

Mr. GILMAN. Dr. Rice.

STATEMENT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS DR. SUSAN RICE

Dr. RICE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to testify today on the conflict in the Horn of Africa. I would like to thank Mr. Payne for his very kind words about my personal efforts and those of my colleagues in trying to resolve this conflict.

The war in the Horn of Africa threatens a broad swath of Africa as well as United States' interests in the region as a whole. The Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict which began in May 1998 has substantially damaged the economic growth and development of Ethiopia and Eritrea and has led to humanitarian suffering on both sides of the border. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost and thousands more have been maimed.

The United States and others in the international community have consistently called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and speedy implementation of the OAU's framework agreement. We continue to work with the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to secure a lasting peace.

The origins of the war are complex. In the year leading to the outbreak of fighting, relations between the two former allies deteriorated, exacerbated by economic tensions. A border skirmish occurred on May 6, 1998, at Badme. A week later, Eritrea sent troops and armor into and beyond Badme into territory administered by Ethiopia. After several weeks of fighting, several areas previously administered by Ethiopia fell under Eritrean control.

As the ground fighting escalated in June 1998, Ethiopia launched air strikes against Asmara airport. Eritrea made retaliatory strikes against the Ethiopian towns of Mekele and Adigrat, south of Zela Ambessa and in the process hit a school. Both sides then agreed to a U.S.-brokered air strike moratorium and fighting decreased to occasional exchanges of artillery and small arms fire over a 9-month period.

Both Ethiopia and Eritrea used the intervening months to acquire new military stockpiles including state-of-the art fighter aircraft and artillery and to recruit, train, and deploy tens of thousands of new soldiers. The United States actively discouraged sup-

plies to both parties and the U.N. Security Council urged governments not to provide weapons to exacerbate the problem.

Publicly, Ethiopia continued to demand a complete and absolute return to the status quo ante of May 6, 1998. Eritrea insisted that some of the area it occupied after May 6, 1998, was Eritrean territory. Fighting resumed on February 6, 1999, when Ethiopian forces attacked, eventually displacing Eritrean forces from the disputed area of Badme. Ethiopia later launched an unsuccessful counter-offensive on the Zela Ambessa front in mid-March. Eritrea failed to retake Badme in subsequent fighting at the end of March.

In April, Ethiopia struck an Eritrean military training facility and other targets deep within Eritrea. A week and a half ago Ethiopian aircraft bombed sites at Zela Ambessa, Badme and the port of Massawa. Although there has been a lull on the ground fighting over the past few weeks, press reports yesterday indicate that there were clashes between ground forces this past weekend at Badme.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has significant interest in ending the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea as soon as possible. The current conflict threatens region stability and to reverse Ethiopian and Eritrean progress in political and economic development. The United States has important national security interests in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia and Eritrea's neighbor, Sudan, has long supported international terrorism, fostered the spread of Islamic extremism beyond its borders, actively worked to destabilize neighboring states, including Ethiopia and Eritrea, and perpetrated massive human rights violations against its own citizens.

Since the conflict began last year, Sudan has increasingly benefited from the hostilities between its former adversaries. Eritrea recently signed an accord with Sudan to normalize relations. Ethiopia has renewed air service to Khartoum and made overtures to Sudan for improved relations as well. And both sides have moved to reduce support to Sudanese opposition groups.

Eritrea's President Isaias has made several trips to Libya for frequent consultations with Colonel Qadhafi and has joined Qadhafi's community of Saharan and Sahelian states.

We are also very concerned by credible reports that Eritrea has delivered large quantities of weapons and munitions to self-proclaimed Somalia President Hussein Aideed for the use of a violent faction of the Oromo Liberation Front. The terrorist organization Al-Ittihad may also be an indirect recipient of these arms.

Ethiopia is also shipping arms to factions in Somalia. The recent upsurge in violence in Somalia is, in part, related to these new developments.

The security costs of the conflict are matched if not exceeded by the grave humanitarian consequences of the war. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost, hundreds of thousands displaced. Approximately 300,000 Ethiopians and 100,000 to 200,000 Eritrean civilians have been forced from their homes and fields near the border by the conflict. An estimated 60,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean descent have been deported from Ethiopia to Eritrea and an estimated 20,000 Ethiopians have left Eritrea under duress.

We have made clear that we consider the practice of deportation to be a fundamental violation of individual rights. Moreover, the

nature of these expulsions and the arrangements made for transfer and holding of property were clearly susceptible to abuse.

Immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities in May, 1998, I led two interagency missions to Ethiopia and Eritrea to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the dispute. Working with the government of Rwanda, we proposed a series of steps to end the conflict in accordance with both sides' shared principles and international law.

These recommendations, endorsed by the OAU and the U.N. Security Council, later informed development by the OAU of its framework agreement. These initial missions also resulted in agreement by the two parties to the air strike moratorium which remained in effect until February 6, 1998.

Beginning in October, President Clinton sent former National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, and an interagency team from the State Department, the National Security Council and the Defense Department on four missions to Ethiopia and Eritrea, the most recent occurring early this year. We are grateful for Mr. Lake's tireless work on behalf of the President and his Secretary of State.

His intensive efforts which still continue have been aimed at helping both sides find a mutually agreed basis for resolving the dispute without further loss of life. Working closely with the OAU and the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Lake and our team put forth numerous proposals to both sides consistent with the OAU framework.

In December, Ethiopia formally accepted the framework agreement. Eritrea did not at that time, requesting further clarification on numerous specific questions.

Fighting resumed on February 6, while U.N. Envoy Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun was in the region still seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Following this first phase of fighting, Eritrean troops were compelled to withdraw from Badme, an important element of the OAU framework agreement. Subsequent Eritrean acceptance of the framework agreement was welcomed by the United States and the Security Council but greeted with skepticism by Ethiopia. Ethiopia instead demanded Eritrea's unconditional unilateral withdrawal from all contested areas that Ethiopia had administered prior to last May.

On April 14 of this year, Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia offered a cease-fire in return for an explicit commitment by Eritrea to remove its forces unilaterally from contested areas. He later added that Eritrean withdrawal must occur within an undefined but short period of time.

Eritrea continues to demand a cease-fire prior to committing to withdrawal from disputed territories. Ethiopia insists that a cease-fire and implementation of the OAU framework agreement can only follow an explicit Eritrean commitment to withdraw from all territories occupied since the conflict erupted on May 6. A joint OAU/United Nations effort to urge both sides to accept a cease-fire and begin implementing the framework agreement continues. The U.S. Government remains actively engaged in support of the OAU with both Ethiopia and Eritrea to secure a peace settlement.

Here, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say in response to some of the opening statements that have been made, in particular Mr. Gilman's, that the United States has been active from the outset, from

the very day this conflict began. President Clinton has personally and repeatedly talked to both these leaders and has sent letters to them.

Secretary Albright and National Security Advisor Sandy Berger also have spoken with these two leaders repeatedly. The decision to involve former National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, one of our nation's most distinguished experts in foreign policy, was a consequence of this Administration's high commitment to seeing this conflict resolved peacefully.

The President has made clear to both leaders that the United States is prepared to do its utmost in offering our good offices to resolve this conflict. And I will say that the reason this conflict is not resolved has nothing to do with the United States or the extent of our efforts. We have done and will continue to do all that we can, but this conflict will not be resolved unless and until there is the will on both sides for that to happen.

Let me finally say that there is a need not only to end this conflict as quickly as possible but also ultimately to repair over the long term strained relations in the Horn. A resolution of the border war may be attainable. The task of rebuilding both countries and mending ties between Ethiopia and Eritrea to ensure long-term sustained peace and mutual security will be especially difficult. It will require due attention and support from the United States in the international community.

Mr. Chairman, other Members of the Subcommittee, I personally look forward to continuing to work with you and other Members as we continue to pursue our shared interest in forging a peaceful resolution to this tragic conflict.

Thank you very much.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Secretary Rice.

The Prepared statement of Dr. Susan E. Rice appears in the appendix.]

Chairman ROYCE. One of the questions I would like to begin by asking has to do with the fact that we see this military buildup and at the same time the U.S. Treasury Department is planning to forgive 90 million of Ethiopias debt in 1999. It is my understanding that the notification sent to this Committee indicated that this would happen on April 27.

On the symbolic level, is this the right message to be sending? More generally, how are our bilateral and multilateral aid efforts towards these two countries being shaped by this conflict? Do we want to look at the question of forgiving $90 million at a time when several hundred million is being used to purchase armaments on the world market?

Dr. RICE. Mr. Chairman, the United States Administration, in consultation with Congress, took the decision many months back that we would not provide direct financial assistance to either government in the wake of the outbreak of hostilities.

We have continued assistance through NGO's and project-based assistance, but we have suspended non-project assistance for the time being.

On the question of debt relief, we had, prior to the outbreak of the conflict, planned to provide debt relief to a number of countries that met the Administration's criteria. This is bilateral

concessional debt. There have been staff consultations on this issue over the course of the last week. And the Administration has committed to consult further with Congress before moving forward on the debt relief that you described.

Chairman ROYCE. If we don't see an end to this conflict soon, I would very much appreciate those consultations. At the same time, Congressman Campbell and myself have been very interested in the issue of hate broadcasts.

Hate radio is a tool that was utilized in back Rwanda with Mille Collines on Congolese radio. The question that I have is we see a pitched propaganda battle between both governments. Do we see broadcasting that is approximating hate radio? Is there an element of ethnic hatred in either side's broadcasting? This is an issue that we are interested in monitoring, given the experiences in Congo and given the experience in Rwanda.

Dr. RICE. Mr. Chairman, I am not an expert in either of the two predominant languages in Ethiopia or Eritrea so I can't say with confidence that there have not been any broadcasts that you might consider hate in nature. But I think in general, while certainly the rhetoric on both sides has been considerable, I am not aware of broadcasts of the sort that we would call hate radio in the traditional sense. Certainly I am not aware of anything that would approach what tragically occurred in Rwanda in 1994.

Chairman ROYCE. I would urge that we monitor the broadcasts, and I would also urge that if we find that this methodology is being used, that this information be made available to the Members of the Committee.

The last question I will ask you is will this war, when it ends, affect U.S. democracy promotion efforts toward Ethiopia and toward Eritrea?

Dr. RICE. Mr. Chairman, I think there are several imponderables about the nature of our relationship with these two countries in the wake of what we hope will be a swift conclusion of the conflict.

The sooner the conflict ends, the greater our ability to play a constructive role in helping these two countries rebuild and reconcile. It is in our interest to have stable growing Democratic partners in the Horn of Africa, and for that reason it is my expectation that we will do all we can to promote that outcome.

Chairman ROYCE. I thank you, Secretary Rice. We will now turn to Mr. Payne, the Ranking Member, for questioning.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

As Representative Campbell said so eloquently, we have been very, very disappointed at the momentum that was being developed for Africa in general. One of the great accomplishments, to address a black caucus and I and others in the State Department, felt was a great achievement was to have President Clinton take a historic 12-day six-country trip to Africa to highlight the positive things that are going on in Africa. To get an opportunity to have the U.S. press visit, to see many of the positive programs, games and achievements that have been going on. And as I indicated that—as you know, Ethiopia and—Eritrea, with the ending of the Mengistu regime and the coming together of Eritrea finally as an independent country, that country was really on its way.

It has been extremely disappointing to the point where—one of the things that is very confusing to me is that early on I thought that we could do some diplomatic work in the office and would meet often with the Ambassadors and the embassy Representatives from both Ethiopia and Eritrea attempting to try to get to the bottom of this. But the problem that I found was that the two Representatives of the governments here in the U.S. seemed to interpret everything differently from the point of Badme itself, who went in, who didn't go in, who was there first, who was there second.

When you talk to each embassy, it would be just the opposite. And so after 4 or 5-months, we have simply found that it serves no useful purpose, I suppose, to meet with either side because we get very little accomplished.

There was a peace plan drawn up by the OAU that was presented after they did the study. They had an impartial group. Could you tell me what the OAU agreement said? It appears that there may have been misinterpretations by each country about what the OAU suggested happened, or at one point I think Ethiopia initially said it would accept it later after Badme was retaken. I think Eritrea said they would accept it, but Ethiopia, I believe, at that time said that it was off the table.

So is there some fundamental difference to the way each country, to your knowledge, view this OAU doctrine which I thought would be the way to go since it was an African document drawn up by African leaders impartial to each country?

Dr. RICE. Mr. Payne, the OAU framework agreement is a rather extensive document, and I am happy to share a copy with the Committee for the record if that would be useful.

[The information referred to appears in the appendix.]

Dr. RICE. It recommends, in the first instance, the two parties commit themselves to immediate cessation of hostilities upon acceptance by both sides of the agreement. It then calls for an end to use a short-hand statement or other forms of expression that might exacerbate the conflict.

It then says, in order to create conditions for delimitation and demarcation of the border, the armed forces presently in Badme Town and its environs should be re-deployed to the positions they held before May 6, as a mark of goodwill and consideration for our continental organization.

It says that the re-deployment would be supervised by observers deployed by the OAU. It notes that any re-deployment in this regard would not, should not, and would not be construed as in any way prejudicing the question of the sovereignty of this territory. And then it goes on to envision re-deployment from other contested areas along the common border within the framework of demilitarization of the border and then on to delimitation, demarcation.

Now, both countries have now formally stated their acceptance of the OAU framework agreement as I described in my testimony. Ethiopia's acceptance first and then followed some time later by Eritrea's. Both countries continue to maintain that they accept this agreement. There does seem to be some difference of interpretation over the question of Badme Town and its environs.

Nevertheless, we in the U.S. Government think that the principals of the OAU framework remain sound and remain valid and can form a basis for a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

I see my time has expired. But that is one of the puzzling positions for me. The first part of the OAU document evidently is that there be a cease-fire, that be the framework or the basis. Then to both say, we accept it and bombing continues and fighting continues. If you accept it, it seems to me the first premise and then all of the details would follow the cease-fire would occur.

We accept it, we accept it; then cease and desist the hostilities and move toward the thing. So it is the confusing semantics that I have found as I have tried to engage myself with this issue. If they both agree, it would seem like there would be no fighting going on and that is a part of, I think, the frustration I know we, on this side, and I am sure you have experienced in your work.

Thank you very much.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Campbell.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Thanks.

Secretary Rice, I have applause for your efforts. I hope you know that, and I want to say that publicly. I think you are trying your very best. And I think you are a woman, an individual, of exceptional skills so your very best is better than virtually anybody else's. I mean that sincerely. I do not, therefore, criticize you.

I do have this question, though. I am thinking Rambouillet. You get all the leaders together in a French chateaux outside of Yugoslavia. I am thinking Dayton, probably Rambouillet is more pleasant than Dayton. I hope I don't lose any votes in Ohio if I ever run there. But you see my point. The Camp David, bring over the head of Egypt, the head of Israel.

Why has that not been proposed? Again, I am sure you are doing your best, but why not invite Prime Minister Meles, President Isaias over to the United States or to a neutral location and try to broker it with the two of them in the same place?

Dr. RICE. Thank you, Mr. Campbell, especially for your kind words of my own efforts and those of my colleagues to try to bring this to a peaceful resolution. I appreciate them.

I will not want to get into great detail on this in a public forum. I am happy to brief you and any other Members in further depth in a closed session if you wish. But I hope you will take me at my word when I say, as I said in my testimony, that President Clinton personally, Secretary Albright, and National Security Advisor Sandy Berger have made it very clear to both sides that we are committed to doing our utmost in the use of our good offices to bring this to a peaceful resolution.

We have not been reluctant to make those good offices available. But both sides need to be ready and willing to take constructive advantage of those good offices, and we will continue our efforts but our efforts will bear fruit when and only when the two sides have come to the conclusion that they are ready for a peaceful resolution.

Mr. CAMPBELL. I appreciate your answer.

I repeat, I think you are doing your best but take a look at Rambouillet. Milosevic didn't come. Nevertheless we held a Rambouillet. We had an empty space for him. So occasionally it appears as though it is in our diplomatic interest to bring parties together or to invite them together whether they always show up or not. Again, I am not asking you to go beyond—I realize that you are an employee in a large organization.

I have a specific question which I would have given you advanced warning on had I known myself, but I did not. I hope this isn't unfair. I just learned of an American named Bruhana Mikiyel, a U.S. citizen of Ethiopian birth, Eritrean ethnicity, but apparently an Ethiopian citizen who was detained in Ethiopia for 2-months, November and December, subjected to imprisonment, and I am informed tortured as well, all the while not being the subject of any inquiry by our embassy and Addis.

If you know anything about this, I would like to hear it. If you do not, I would welcome a letter from you as a follow-up, with apologies again for not giving you advanced word but I just heard about it as I was coming into the meeting.

Dr. RICE. I think it would be most constructive for us to send you a letter as a follow-up. There are two cases, at least, that Members of this Subcommittee have brought to the attention of the State Department. The details on both, quite honestly, are not completely clearcut, and I wouldn't want to step into the details of those and be mistaken.

So let me simply say that we stand ready in the State Department and through our embassies to be as responsive as we possibly can. We have welcomed you and Congressman Royce and others bringing to our attention some of the facts behind these cases. In one instance, as the Chairman is aware, our lawyers in the State Department are looking into it and we will continue to do our best.

Correspondence and staff consultations on these cases are continuing between the State Department and the African Subcommittee. Regarding one of these cases, Mr. Petros Berhana's father has promised the State Department additional information about his case. As of August 18, 1999 the State Department has not received the data. Mr. Petros Berhana's father is not a U.S. citizen.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Could you kindly send me a letter at your convenience on that. The gentleman's name is Bruhana Nikiyel.

And last, the expulsions concern me greatly and I will ask the next panel about it as well. Tell me kindly which—this may not be constructive. You certainly have freedom to tell me that, but, if you can, is there a justification—strike that. Which side is engaging in expulsions of ethnics of the other side to a degree that you would say constitutes a human right violation, if any?

Dr. RICE. We have expressed our concern publicly and privately over the human rights implications of the conflict. They include both the deportations and expulsions, as I mentioned in my testimony, as well as the impact of the conflict on displaced people on both sides of the border.

On August 5, the State Department released a detailed statement expressing our great concern about the expulsion of ethnic Eritreans from Ethiopia. That statement went into some consider-

able detail about the nature of our concerns. As I said in my testimony, we estimate some 60,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean descent have been deported from Ethiopia and some 20,000 Ethiopians have left Eritrea under duress.

We are obviously concerned about both sets of developments, but I think your private panel expert from Amnesty International will be able to shed greater light on this since Amnesty International having just published a study on the issue.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. We appreciate the attention to Petros Bruhana, Bruhana Mikiyel, and others who have been caught in this conflict.

We will turn now to Mr. Meeks of New York. If we could ask one question each, and then we will have time to reconvene.

Go ahead, Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rice, just continuing with the theme of trying to have diplomatic efforts to have peace between both sides, I understand that not too long ago the President of Eritrea was to meet with the President of Egypt in Cairo with the President of Ethiopia to join them a few days later.

I was wondering if you know anything of that meeting and what, if anything, took place as a result of the meeting?

Did the meeting in fact take place?

Dr. RICE. Mr. Meeks, my understanding is that President Isaias has had contact regularly with the President of Egypt; Prime Minister Meles was not long ago in Egypt.

It is my understanding they were not there at the same time. I am not aware of an effort to bring them together in Egypt. Egypt has stated publicly that it shares the international community's interest in bringing about a peaceful resolution of the dispute on the basis of the OAU framework agreement, but I am not aware of any further effort by Egypt to mediate or to push this further on the basis of the mutual agreement of both parties.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Barbara Lee of California, and then we will come back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me say to Dr. Rice, I thank you for taking the lead to try to bring peace and stability not only in this war-stricken region but all over the continent of Africa. You have been a true leader, and I truly appreciate everything that you have done, as all of us have said.

Dr. RICE. Thank you very much.

Ms. LEE. I am new to this Committee this term, and I would like to get a bit of clarity in terms of what the State Department believes this war is really about. I know some of the root causes have to do with the fight over currency. From the U.S. perspective, what is the basic reason for this war?

Dr. RICE. Congresswoman, I wish I had a simple and pat answer to that, and while I think we could share with you some elements of our analysis and I think that would be best done in private, I think at the end of the day only the two governments of the countries can answer that question definitively.

As the Chairman said in his opening statement and as many others have echoed, these were two countries with which the United States had strong relationships, shared strategic interests, and which were among the more promising success stories in Africa. No two countries, bilateral relationship however close they may be, are without complications. Nevertheless, the relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea had seemed, at least for many years, to be one that would not be prone to the sort of conflict that we have unfortunately since seen.

I think it will be sometime after the end of the conflict, once the dust settles, when both sides are able to look back and review the developments themselves and ask themselves to their own satisfaction that very same question. I hope, that out of it will come the means for the countries to reconstruct the essence of a once good bilateral relationship.

Obviously, that will take a great deal of time. Our interest will be in trying to help bring peace to the Horn and, as I said earlier, to promote growth in security and democracy, an important area for the United States.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Ms. Lee.

We are going to return to one last question from Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My other question was just a concern about the IGAD peace process with the fact that Uganda, Eritrea, and Ethiopia are all embattled in their own regional conflicts.

What is the status of the peace process?

Dr. RICE. Well, IGAD is engaged in two peace processes, one is Sudan and the other is Somalia.

The Sudan one has obviously been the more active of the two. The IGAD peace process with respect to Sudan has been slow and complex. We in the U.S. Government and other donors have recently sought to energize the IGAD peace process by putting forth a number of suggestions for how to improve the process by which that peace process works, for example setting up a permanent secretary to deal with the Sudan issue, setting up technical Committees that can work full-time on the difficult substantive issues that divide the two sides and proposing the establishment or appointment of a full-time envoy from the government of Kenya on behalf of IGAD to work this issue.

Those proposals have been well received by IGAD, by the government in Kenya which is chairing the IGAD process. I don't think that the actual IGAD mediation process has been particularly dramatically affected by the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. As I said in my statement, obviously circumstances in Sudan have been. But I think the peace process can continue to move forward provided that the IGAD institution is able and willing to push it and that the two sides are willing to deal constructively.

Let me just reiterate an important point which I hope Members of the Committee will take on board. There are many conflicts in Africa at present and around the world. And I spend, as do all of my colleagues in the Africa bureau and the National Security Council, Defense Department, USAID, and others who work on Africa, a great deal of our time and energy working on these conflicts. We have the attention and support of the highest levels of the U.S.

Government, including the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, and President Clinton.

I want this Committee to be assured that even as the United States focuses on crises and conflicts in other parts of the world in my judgment, we do not do so, to the detriment of our efforts to promote a peaceful resolution to any of the conflicts in Africa. Those resources and that support has been there, and our principals have been very active collectively and individually on these issues as we need them.

Chairman ROYCE. We thank you, Secretary Rice.

I will mention one other thing. Congresswoman Barbra Lee had the opportunity, along with Mr. Meeks, Don Payne, our Ranking Member, and myself to lead a delegation to be election observers in the Nigerian election along with General Powell.

As you know, this is a important country in Africa. The transition is critical. It is in 4-days, and I would hope that we have a high level delegation that will be involved in this historic transition process in Nigeria.

I want to thank you again for your testimony here today.

Dr. RICE. Thank you very much. Thank you all.

Chairman ROYCE. We will stand in recess through the quorum call and through the two votes and return in approximately 20-minutes when our second panel will testify.

Thank you.

[Recess.]

Chairman ROYCE. We will now reconvene with our second panel. Dr. Edmond Keller is a professor in the Political Science Department at the University of California, Los Angeles. Professor Keller is the author of Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic. He has written extensively on Ethiopia and Eritrea. Dr. Keller earned his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the past President of the African Studies Association.

Melvin Foote is the Executive Director of Constituency for Africa, an emerging council of organizations, groups, and individuals with an interest in Africa. He has worked on development and relief issues in Africa for more than 25-years. Mr. Foote has extensive experience in the Horn region, having worked in Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia. He is presently involved in a peace initiative on the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict being developed by former Peace Corps Volunteers. Mr. Foote earned a B.A. in sociology from Western State University in Colorado. He holds an M.A. degree in public Administration from the University of Colorado.

Mr. Adotei Akwei, a native of Ghana, is the Director of Advocacy for Africa with Amnesty International. Mr. Adotei previously worked on African issues for the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the American Committee on Africa, and the Africa Fund. Mr. Adotei earned a B.A. in political science from the State University of New York. He holds an M.A. degree in government from the College of William and Mary. We will begin with Dr. Edmond J. Keller. Mr. Keller, please.

STATEMENT OF DR. EDMOND J. KELLER , DIRECTOR

Dr. KELLER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Congressman. I understand that I have 5-minute so I am going to keep my comments brief. You have my statement. I am going to concentrate on the first part of the statement in which I discuss the policy recommendations.

In the first place, the United States has to recognize that this is a complicated situation and the United States carries some baggage that would make it difficult in the long run for this country to appear to be an impartial, honest broker in the conflict. Each side claims that the U.S. favors the other. However, the conflict has such potential to spread in terms of its scope and intensity that the U.S. must attempt to play a proactive role, especially in the international diplomatic arena.

Now, bearing this in mind, let me offer the following policy actions:

The U.S. should continue to press for an unconditional cease-fire, a withdrawal of troops from both sides in the contested area—this would include all of the various fronts that have opened up since the initial front at Badame—the creation of a demilitarized zone that would be occupied in a robust manner by an OAU/U.N. peacekeeping force. This should be followed as rapidly as possibly by the demarcation of the disputed territory by an international team of cartographers.

Second, rather than taking a role in mediating and facilitating the negotiation between the warring parties, the U.S. should vigorously support the efforts of the OAU and the United Nations in this regard. It is commonly agreed that regional and subregional organizations in Africa are going to have to become more proficient in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace-building. And countries like the United States, rather than being necessarily directly involved on the Continent should provide the material and technical expertise that would ultimately be needed to make African leadership in this regard happen in an effective manner.

Third, the U.S. should be praised for speaking out about the massive amounts of arms being exported into the contested area. But much more needs to be done. There needs to be a policy introduced that is very similar to the one that imposes sanctions on countries that are not making serious efforts to stem the flow of drugs from and through their countries. U.S. foreign assistance represents leverage that could be used against countries like China, Russia, Ukraine, and others who themselves are involved in arms trade in this war or who allow their nationals to be involved in that trade. I can't emphasize strongly enough how important such a policy could be. I shudder to think what the impact would be for Africa when weapons of mass destruction that have been recently introduced into the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict begin to find their way into other zones of conflict such as central and southern Africa. I don't think that the United States should allow this to happen.

Eritrea and Ethiopia are two of the poorest countries in the world. At the same time, they are countries with enormous potential. As is made clear by the large numbers of Eritreans and Ethio-

pians who are well educated and highly trained citizens that reside in this country, the human capital that would be needed to rapidly build the economies of the two countries are well within reach. What stands in the way, of course, is war. A return to peace would set the stage for economic takeoff.

The U.S. should do its best to promote the reestablishment of trust between the leaders of the two countries. There is little doubt that this would be difficult, but an effort has to be made. Thank you very much.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Dr. Keller. We also thank you for taking the long trek from Los Angeles out here.

Dr. KELLER. It is nice to be with you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, and we will put your full report into the record.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Edmond J. Keller appears in the appendix.]

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Foote.

STATEMENT OF MELVIN P. FOOTE , EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONSTITUENCY FOR AFRICA

Mr. FOOTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a great pleasure to be here and I want to commend you for the outstanding work you are doing in leading the Africa Subcommittee. I also want to identify with much that I have heard today from Dr. Rice and others and Dr. Keller.

Tens of thousands of young combatants on both sides of this conflict have already been sacrificed in the border war. Sluggish economies have now become even more stagnant and hard-won political capital has been severely compromised. I fully associate myself with the many friends of Ethiopia and Eritrea in the U.S. who cannot understand why these great people have decided to settle their differences through force of arms. Not only has this conflict done harm for the east Africa region as a whole, but it has already damaged the unprecedented goodwill and commitment that had been building between the United States and Africa during the 6-years of the Clinton Adminiatration. In no uncertain terms we must do all we can to bring this truly unnecessary conflict to an end.

I am also a part—I spent many years in Africa, about 7-years total—I am part of a group of former Peace Corps volunteers who served in Ethiopia or Eritrea who are working to end the war and bring peace between the two countries. Tomorrow we are holding a forum at Howard University with many recognized experts and leaders from both countries to explore the path to peace. We are hopeful of coming out of this meeting with a number of creative ideas and viewpoints which we would like to pursue on our upcoming mission to the region, which we expect would take place in the very near future.

Perhaps the time has come for a multitrack approach toward seeking diplomatic solutions to this problem. In addition to the efforts of the U.S. Government, OAU, the United Nations, and other concerned nations, it seemed to us to be a constructive role for groups like our former Peace Corps delegation, non-governmental organizations and eminent personalities in promoting the road to peace.

I want to emphasize here that while our group is pursuing our effort independent of the U.S. Government, including the Peace Corps, still we are making every effort to seek our government's counsel and also keep them well informed of our activities.

While the Clinton Adminiatration, under the astute leadership of Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Dr. Susan Rice, has done much to seek an end to the war, it is clearly not the time for a let-up from the U.S. Government. The situation is very explosive. Tensions remain extremely high on the war front and throughout both countries. Obviously fratricidal war cannot be allowed to continue.

Generally, the U.S. should work closely and in a partnership with the organization of African Unity and the U.N. to mediate this tragic dispute and to seek lasting solutions. The OAU's December report is an excellent framework for mediation and contains much that both sides could agree with. This report contains an important 11-point proposal that has received a strong endorsement from the international community.

The OAU proposal calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities so that a peaceful resolution of the conflict may occur through the elimination and demarcation of their common border. In connection with the cease-fire, I understand that the OAU requires a withdrawal of forces from Badame and other areas in Ethiopia to the position held before May 6, 1998. While it can be argued and debated as to who did what to start the war, I sincerely believe that the best posture for our government is to maintain friendly ties with both countries and to find ways to provide additional support to the OAU framework in order to resolve the immediate border issues and other pressing issues which have been spawned as a result of the border conflict.

Once border hostilities are ceased, the U.S. should give serious consideration to holding a "Dayton-style" conference in which President Clinton is fully involved, as Representative Campbell has suggested. I fully endorse that. That not only paves the way for a peaceful and longstanding settlement of this dispute, but also sends a powerful message to other African countries and to the American people that Africa truly matters. Holding this conference in the U.S. would provide an appropriate environment far away from the area of conflict to lessen the tension and bluster which now exists in the region. It would also allow American political scientists such as Dr. Keller, scholars, and political policymakers and others the opportunity to play a constructive role in bringing an end to the war and set the basis for economic development.

In the region, the U.S. should be prepared to provide financial and technical assistance to the two countries to formally define the borders. Beyond that, the U.S. should embark on a strategy in cooperation with such nonprofit groups as the Corporate Council in Africa and the Constituency for Africa to encourage American and other investment in the region as a way of "jump-starting" economic development. Many American companies were in fact prepared to enter into the business relationships in the region but have since shied away because of the instability. Investor confidence cannot be restored so long as the war continues.

Thank you again for having me as part of this hearing.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Foote.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Melvin P. Foote appears in the appendix.]

Chairman ROYCE. Earlier I missed a vote. So I am going to take the opportunity to recess for a minute, if I could, so that I could catch this vote. Thank you, Mr. Payne. I am going to turn the gavel over to you at this point.

Mr. Adotei, thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF ADOTEI AKWEI, ADVOCACY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Mr. AKWEI. Thank you, Mr. Payne, and thank you, Congressman Royce, for allowing Amnesty International to take part in these proceedings. Like my colleagues, I am going to be very brief because we have been here a while and I think quite a lot of what we would have stated has already been said by a number of people. Our testimony accompanies our latest report which was released last Friday. I would just ask that that report be entered into the record.

Mr. PAYNE [Presiding.] Without objection.

Mr. AKWEI. What I would like to do basically is just restate what is in the short testimony. We looked at the human rights condition in both Eritrea and Ethiopia which we feel will have to be addressed for long-term resolution and the sort of consolidation of democracy in both countries. Then we also looked at the human rights violations that resulted as a result of the conflict. I would just like to read the conclusions again and the recommendations, and hopefully we will have a question and answer period.

Amnesty International is not here to endorse one country or to condemn the other as being guilty of more heinous abuses. All human rights violations are unacceptable, even those committed during a conflict situation. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia have used the allegations of human rights abuses against their nationals in the other country as justification for their own actions in this conflict. However, both countries have a responsibility to protect human rights within their jurisdictions and to ensure that the protection of human rights is a part of any negotiated settlements between the two countries. It is imperative that the steps to redress the issues of human rights violations by both sides be established, as both sides have widely publicized allegations against their own citizens. Amnesty International believes that unless this is done, the tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea will continue, with the possibility of further conflict and human rights violations even if this current border dispute is resolved satisfactorily.

Amnesty International is also aware of the energy and effort that has been expended by the United States to try and resolve the conflicts peacefully by both the Clinton Adminiatration and Members of Congress like yourselves who have appealed, implored, and begged both governments to resolve the conflict peacefully. You should be commended, but you should also be encouraged to do more because the bottom line is that we have not succeeded.

Until we do succeed, reports like ours and hearings like this will be, by necessity, focused on wasted potential as opposed to documenting positive change in Ethiopia and Eritrea or the region in general. It is past time for maximum diplomatic and political pres-

sure to be brought to bear on both governments. Pressure is needed from foreign governments with links to either country, from institutions which both countries are a member to, and perhaps, most importantly, from their support bases outside of Africa.

It is essential that the Ethiopian and Eritrean communities living here in the United States—who seem to be waging an even more vociferous war against each other than are the Asmara and Addis Ababa—be reminded of the lives that are being lost, the resources that are being wasted, and the suffering of the people in the region. Perhaps when there is no more support for the fighting and when there are stark costs to pay, both diplomatically and politically, both sides or even one side will have the courage to say enough is enough and stop fighting. In that regard we would make the following recommendations:

We call upon the Clinton Adminiatration and Congress to insist that human rights be at the top of any agenda to negotiate an end to the settlement. The U.S. Government should insist that both governments give full and unrestricted access to the International Commission of the Red Cross to visit all prisoners of war, not political prisoners. The Administration should also publicly call on both governments to publicly announce that Ethiopians and Eritreans who were forced to leave each country as a result of the conflict will be free to return to their former homes and places of work and that an independent review panel to address issues of ownership, property disputes, will be established and, where appropriate, compensation for Ethiopians resident in Eritrea and Eritreans resident in Ethiopia at the time will be addressed.

Finally, we urge and appeal to Congress and Senior Members of the Administration to speak out forcefully against all human rights violations, be they internment of civilians, deportations and expulsions, or indiscriminate bombings. In particular, crackdowns against civil society, including the independent press which could have acted as a break in the slide into war, should be publicly challenged and condemned.

The United States has close ties with both governments and both governments look to it for leadership, but that doesn't preclude it from condemning actions and policies that are wrong. Both countries are waiting for leadership and looking for inspiration to resolve the conflicts. Thank you.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much for your testimony.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Adotei Akwei appears in the appendix.]

Mr. PAYNE. And now we will hear from Mr. Mel Foote? Oh, you did? The entire panel. Well, very good.

First of all, let me thank each of you for coming here to testify. It is good to see you again, Dr. Keller. And, of course, the other Members I see more regularly. They are local, and so we really appreciate it.

Let me perhaps ask just some questions and perhaps any one can attempt to answer that. As you have already heard and I know all of you, especially the two of you that spent time in Ethiopia, and of course Amnesty International also, were all very, very disappointed, because we looked to Ethiopia and Eritrea as the new leaders of Africa with the democracy coming into South Africa and

now into Nigeria. We were just under the opinion that Ethiopia and Eritrea would be further ahead.

I really don't think that the leadership of either country realized the damage, not only for Ethiopia or Eritrea, but as I was mentioning earlier when we finally got the Administration focused on Africa, we had newspapers writing positive stories. We saw elections happening. We saw democracy coming on, but both Prime Minister Meles and President Isaias, have done more to set Africa policy back in this country than any two people I know of in the recent past.

There was not a positive attitude towards Africa. We found two great leaders because, as you know, Africa policy has always been on the back burner. The Administration did not care about Africa. We could tell by the lack of assistance, the lack of attention. Finally, we had Secretaries of State, Presidents, the First Lady, Vice Presidents, people going to Africa continually.

Then these two men we talked to as the future of Africa, the "poster men," so to speak, the trailblazers, had done more to the 700 million Africans. So those of you from each of those countries, be sure that you say that, that's what I said, Congressman Payne, who has been visiting Ethiopia for 35-years, has said. Those two men have set Africa back. It would be all right if it was just their own country, but Africa has been set back by us pointing to them and having high hopes for them and for them turning their backs and destroying everything that has been built up. It is wrong. They don't have the right to do it. And I really don't understand who they really think they are to be able to do that to the continent.

Let me ask you,—I have heard you give recommendations, but what do you think different or what more could have been done, since what we have done up to now has not worked? Is there any—I know that you made conclusions, but is there any conversation that you may have or, second, can any of you try to put your finger on the real problem? It is not Badame, that is for sure. If it was awarded to one or the other and there was no dispute, I am sure they would argue about—well, let me just say, let me just ask you, do you know what the real issues may be in any of your opinions since you all have been associated with both countries?

Dr. KELLER. Well, this is a very delicate question. I am going to try to be as diplomatic as I possibly can. In the first place, it is complex. The reason that it is complex is because this particular war did not need to happen, but it happened because of what I consider to be an accident in a border zone. That happens in many places. You could go back to Sarajevo, way back to the period before the First World War.

It seems to me this thing has gotten out of hand. We have a government in Addis which is predominantly comprised of people from the Tigray region. There are other ethnic groups there, some of whom feel that government does not represent their point of view. There is tension there. But there are some Ethiopian nationalists who really feel that this minority government sold them out when it agreed to a referendum in Eritrea.

So when a dispute erupts between Meles Zenawi and Isaias Afworki, because there is the prospect of getting Eritrea back or paying Eritrea back, there is a groundswell of support for the war

effort. But still underneath it all, there is a great deal of tension and it has to do with the internal politics of Ethiopia but also it has to do with the personalities.

Both leaders are very proud men. You and I have been in situations where we have seen that. And it is a matter of national honor for both sides. It seems to me that Eritrea feels that it is justified in building up this massive capacity, military capacity, simply because it feels like the very survival of the Eritrean nation is at stake. On the other hand, there are Ethiopians who feel that Ethiopia must recapture its lost pride. I think that is the political underpinning of it. But, of course, you can talk about economics too.

Mr. FOOTE. I just want to add to that. I have always felt that there was a culture of war and a culture of tension in the region. There is pride in being the victor. In some respects this war goes back to Haile Selassie. It goes back to really hundreds if not thousands of years.

Somehow the issue of how you resolve conflict has not been dealt with there. It is very easy and very quick to pick up a gun and very easy to pick up a stick, very easy to find as your first response to a problem.

I would also add that poverty certainly plays a role in all of this and I think the lack of opportunity for individual people and groups also exacerbates greatly the potential for conflict in the region.

Mr. AKWEI. I think it is ironic that many people were referring to the two leaders as role models for democracy for Africa in the next millenium because both of them didn't come to power from the ballot box. That is something that people need to be very conscious of when they look at what was going on internally in both countries prior to the conflict. Whether it was because of economics, whether it was because of a sense of national pride and honor, or whether it was, as my colleague Mel just said, because of a culture of violence, all of which are debatable.

But the question of whether there were institutions in both countries that could have applied brakes to the outbreak of conflict, as happens in other countries—like, for example here in the United States, you have dissent, you have questions about policy, you have challenges. I guess the axiom is that democracies don't go to war or they don't go to war often, because there are checks and balances that they need to go through. Both countries still haven't developed that. If there had been perhaps more of a focus in developing institutions as opposed to making allegiances with the individuals, no matter how charismatic they were, we might not be in this situation.

Mr. PAYNE. That is true. There was an attempt in Ethiopia. Dr. Keller was the chair of the elections monitoring group, and there were institutions that were developed in Ethiopia, for the election. It was a multiparty election. It was relatively fair, although there was a group that decided during the latter part, near the election date, that they were going to boycott the election. There seemed to have been attempts.

At least in Ethiopia we tried to work on Eritrea on this single party state we were sort of having discussions about. But Uganda,

that has the single party. Mr. Museveni says it is no party rather than the single party.

But I do think there were beginnings that had started, at least as I said in Ethiopia. Some of the discussion that we had with both of them were certainly about the fact that institutions needed to be developed. They were both well read persons. I think the Prime Minister had read more books about John Kennedy and I had never finished the first one. He had three or four of them on his desk. It is not that there was an absence of the right stuff, the right material, the right direction to go. So that is probably why it was more disappointing.

In the new wave, it wasn't so much the individual, but the fact that there is a new group of leaders that have been emerging, who are relatively young for African standards. As I mentioned, the Kenneth Colanders and the Jomo Kenyatta, and the revolutionary people had sort of left the scene or were leaving the scene. So these were the younger, and relatively educated. The West and Europeans thought was the right thing to do in order to have positive relations.

Actually, the growth in the GDP in Ethiopia had started to move to 6, 7-percent annually. Eritrea was moving forward with public works projects that rolled from the airport into the city that were redone. There were so many visible signs of progress that I think that is where the hope was. I could agree with you; institutions should build on institutions not individuals.

I yield back to the Chairman. We certainly apologize for this unusual kind of event that we have today with votes being called so closely together. I am glad that we were able to keep it going. Mr. Chairman, I would yield back to you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Payne. We will turn to Mr. Meeks if he wishes at this time to ask some questions.

Mr. MEEKS. No, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since I missed the testimony, I am going to refrain.

Chairman ROYCE. Will continue because I have some questions that I was going to ask. Mr. Adotei, you mentioned in your testimony that 53,000 people of Eritrea origin were deported from Ethiopia between June 1998 and today. This is being done in the name of national security. The government in Ethiopia early on announced that officials of the ruling party in Eritrea, or those found spying or mobilizing resources for the Eritrea war effort, would be deported. Clearly 53,000 people is a large number of people to put into this category. Should I take it from your testimony that you believe these deportations were illegitimate?

Mr. AKWEI. Yes. The Ethiopian Government has since acknowledged that in the process of trying to keep families together, spouses, dependents, children, were all shipped out. But we certainly feel that the—first of all, the deportation process itself violates international law to which the Ethiopian Government is a party to. As we mentioned here, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights basically has a very clear procedure under which you appeal to be able to derogate from your responsibilities. We feel that did not happen. But we also would think that the people who were detained did not necessarily meet all of these categories or criteria for deportation.

That is why one of our key recommendations is that all of those that were deported be given the right to return home and the right to regain their property.

Chairman ROYCE. I appreciate your observations. Mr. Foote, in your testimony you referred to ethnic friction and longstanding vendettas. Is there an ethnic dimension to the present conflict, and what do you mean by longstanding vendettas?

Mr. FOOTE. I think in the case of the war, like in the border war, it didn't start with Badame. I think it goes way back. I think Dr. Keller touched on it in terms of internal politics of Ethiopia which fostered an environment for conflict. I am sure the same thing could be said in Eritrea. But I think the end of the war, the official war, the 30-year war, was not completely ended by everybody. Some people felt bad about that and would love to see another conflict in which perhaps the Ethiopia regime would be toppled and another regime would come in. It is so complex as to be almost amazing.

I think one has to look beyond the surface to see who called for this war. I think that this whole inference of trying to resolve conflict and reduce the friction must be a permanent part of the discussion. I personally think that Ethiopia and Eritrea, for instance, must learn to work together. They are dependent on each other economically, politically, and otherwise. It is dumb to have two countries, quite frankly. We need to be talking about several countries regionally coming together economically and politically. The rest of the world is grouping up; why is Africa becoming smaller and smaller? And so those are my remarks.

Chairman ROYCE. I appreciate that. Dr. Keller, we haven't seen troops amassed behind trenches and this type of infantry assault into machine gun nests and through mine fields since the first world war. The type of slaughter that we are seeing is divisions just being mowed down like we read about in the paper. There are 500,000 men lined up on this border engaged in this trench warfare.

What are the domestic political consequences of this many deaths occurring and this type of horrific carnage that we read about in the newspapers and which you also reported on in your paper?

Dr. KELLER. The domestic consequences are quite apparent, but you have to look beyond what the domestic consequences might be. It is not as if this battle was taking place in Louisiana and you could flip on the TV and see on CNN what happened on this front or that front. I don't think that we will see the consequence, the domestic, the true impact of it until this war goes on longer. I am afraid that it seems to me that this war will go on longer.

The kind of tactics that are being used now are the ones which were traditionally used, and it is just that the two sides have not been able to gear up in a high-tech sense fast enough to begin to use all of these other weapons that they have. That is what I am more concerned with. If this war spills over, and arms that were brought in for this conflict get to central Africa or southern Africa, we could really be in a fix. I am very concerned about that.

I would just like to say one quick thing about the ethnic dimension. In Ethiopia in 1995, Ethiopia after this new government came in created these ethically based states. Many people objected to

that. They said that compromised Ethiopian national unity. But the government was committed to working with it. But what the government put in place were elements of procedural democracy rather than a democracy based upon the legitimacy of the strategy that it had chosen.

This continues to be a problem. You have elections that are ostensibly free and fair, but there are so many people and groups that are left out of these elections until the tensions continue. And that is feeding the sort of arms buildup in Somalia with opposition groups in Kenya, in Sudan. We are yet to really see the true dimensions, and that is why we need to try to urgently try to stop the conflict right now and begin to work on peace-building and peacemaking.

Chairman ROYCE. Dr. Keller, I thank you for testimony, and Mr. Foote and Mr. Adotei. We have a question from Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was trying to find out, I didn't want to be repetitive, but I know that we had asked Dr. Rice when she testified and she was really perplexed as to what was the cause of the conflict. In other words, to get a diplomatic resolution, generally you need to know what is the cause of the conflict. I have heard some say it is stubbornness, I have heard some say that it is trying to prove that one's army is stronger than the other. One wants access to water, et cetera.

Can either one of you give us your opinion what is at the heart of the conflict so that we can try to figure out what we are trying to resolve here?

Mr. FOOTE. My view is that the cultural war is one major factor. These are real proud people. When you look at the people of the world and the tougher folks and the ones who are really, really on top of their game, you find some of the sharpest people in the world in the Horn of Africa. I find them very resilient but very, very proud. I was saying I wish that African-Americans would have a certain sense of that pride. But it almost goes overboard to a certain extent that this creates a negative: When it comes down to a fight, I am going to fight you to the finish; I don't care whether it is over a popsicle or over a gold mine. We are going to fight. That is one area that has got to be dealt with.

I think also this overall poverty in the region plays a problem because you have got lots of people out there. Unfortunately, a lot of people who are dying in the war are peasants from rural areas who have very little going for them anyway economically, so it is almost as if they are expendable or they are being perceived as expendable by these governments. I think the culture of war and poverty are major factors exacerbating this problem.

Dr. KELLER. I would like the Congress, this Committee, to really think about Ethiopian politics in sort of a nuanced way. You have a government headed up by Meles Zenawi from the EPRDF. He is trying to pursue a policy or sets of policies which other people don't agree with. There is no way for them to express themselves except in bellicose language and whatnot. So you have tensions that develop as a consequence of that.

I have on many occasions in Addis since 1991 heard people refer to the EPRDF as being a puppet of Isaias Afworki. And so in a situation like that, there is a lot of warlike tendencies that are in a

society to begin with. Then if you have a precipitant incident like the one at Badame, you could see how this thing could quickly get out of hand.

What I have been amazed at is the level of buildup, not only in terms of military personnel but in terms of the amount of money being spent on this conflict. I am really afraid of this. I am afraid of it for Ethiopia and Eritrea, but afraid of it also for Africa.

Mr. AKWEI. I would just like to say that without offering a definitive answer, I don't think that you will get one, I think there are three key elements that are important in trying to solve the problem, in trying to solve the conflict, and that is pride, trust, and respect. My colleagues have already referred to the fact that the region has an enormous heritage and a great pride in itself. That is why I think the recommendations for high-level interventions by the President or a Dayton-type conference or a Rambouillet-type conference are extremely appropriate. If that is what it is going to take, that is what we need to get.

At the same time, respect for the opposing side, for the country on the other side of the border. Eritrea is going to exist. The Ethiopians, who are not happy with it, must learn to live with it and that means respect for it, the Eritrean existence, just as the Eritreans must learn to respect that Ethiopia has its own legitimate interests and its sense of sovereignty over the areas that are being fought over.

The final thing I think will be trust. Any kind of agreement is going to have to get the buy-in not only of the leadership and the military but of the people on both sides of the border who have been fed massive amounts of information, falsely accusing the other of being the worst demons in the world. Until you actually get that, get to the root of that—and I think Congressman Royce was touching on that. It may not be hate radio yet, but it is very bad.

When we were there, there was an absolute fear and terror of the opposing side. That is going to take years to correct. So there is going to have to be some kind of mechanism that ensures trust. That is where you get into the whole issue of human rights. How do you make sure that people are accountable for what they did; how do you establish an accurate record of what they did; and how do you build from there? Those are the elements that should be part of any U.S. policy.

Chairman ROYCE. I wonder what the people of both these nations would think of their respective governments if we were broadcasting all of the information from both sides into the people and they had the full information. What would the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea think of their respective governments not resolving this conflict, but instead wasting these resources that are so necessary for health and education and infrastructure on a military buildup which is going to cost, another 100,000 lives?

I know that you had something to close on, Mr. Foote, and I believe Congressman Payne had one last question. So we will go to you, and then Congressman Payne will ask his question.

Mr. FOOTE. I just wanted to add that the Ethiopians and the Eritreans who are in the United States, who are outside of the region, have a unique opportunity to also play a role in fostering peace for their own countries back home and also help mobilize us over here.

I find that the same friction over there seems to permeate among the Ethiopians and Eritreans who are here. They also need to be challenged to be more constructive in helping to bring about a peaceful——

Chairman ROYCE. I think that is a fair criticism. I will say that I have been approached by both Ethiopians and Eritreans who have decried their respective governments for doing this. I think that it can be observed inside both communities here in America that they wish this had never happened, and that they fault their respective leaders for not being able to avoid this conflict. That is based upon conversations that I have had both back in my district and out here with quite a few people. But, Mr. Payne——

Mr. PAYNE. Just the involvement by both the leaders in Somalia is really what concerns me a great deal. I am made to understand that they have picked sides. If these newly acquired weapons get into Somalia, with the lack of a government in Somalia already, it certainly is going to create more of a problem.

I do have a question about Sudan, which once again Sudan being involved in the north of Uganda with the Lords Resistance Movement, Uganda being allied with Rwanda; the question even moving over into the other side of that conflict with Angola and Namibia and Zimbabwe, Urundi indirectly, and Zambia, also. These connections, it becomes almost a world war in Africa. Could any of you explain to me why both sides have sort of gone to Sudan for better relations?

Dr. KELLER. My answer would have to do with the fact that when you are fighting a war, Mengistu did it when he was fighting Aideed. If he was having internal problems and having border problems, that meant that he had more fronts than he could adequatly cover. It seems to me that Sudan would like to shore up its borders by making peace with Ethiopia and Eritrea so that rebels would not be threatening Sudan from those regions. It makes perfect sense to Bashir. I would think that is only temporary. I would think also that it is probably not very enforceable. I think that the SPLA is stronger than it has been in years and that conflict will continue. I guess that we should be having a hearing on that at some point because that is really a tragedy.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Chairman ROYCE. Again, we are going to thank our witnesses and the Members of this panel. We are going to adjourn at this time. Thanks for coming all of this way.

[Whereupon, at 4:21 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MAY 25, 1999

U.S. House of Representatives

Subcommittee on Africa

705 House Annex One, Washington, D.C. 20515

For Immediate Release
May 25, 1999

Bryan Wilkes
Michelle Lo
(202) 225-4111

Opening Statement by Chairman Ed Royce

The Ethiopia-Eritrea War: U.S. Policy Options

"Again, there is a crisis in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia and Eritrea have mobilized 500,000 troops against one another in a war that has already cost tens of thousands of lives, and threatens the stability of the entire region.

"The human suffering goes beyond those dying in the trenches. Civilians have suffered greatly. Ethiopia has expelled some 53,000 ethnic Eritreans, often under inhumane conditions, ostensibly for security reasons. And tens of thousands of Ethiopians have fled Eritrea. Also, over 300,000 Ethiopians, mostly farmers in the Badme area, and more than 120,000 Eritreans, have been displaced as a result of the fighting.

"Meanwhile, hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent by both countries on armaments. To compound this tragedy, these are two of the poorest countries in the world. Hopes for economic progress that were fostered over the last several years have been snuffed out. It's certainly hard to be supportive of debt relief and other aid for these two countries under present circumstances.

"The outbreak of hostilities last May caught many off guard. Most observers, including the State Department, assumed that relations between these two countries were sound. However, there are all-too-evident factors, clear with the benefit of hindsight, that sparked and now fuel this war.

"There are real economic tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Border disputes were allowed to linger. And there is no escaping the fact that internal political dynamics are at play. Both governments have shown indifference towards the development of democracy, individual liberties, and impartial justice. These shortcomings undoubtedly have led each country into this spiral of violence.

"Time is running out on the Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples' hopes for a better future. A recent Associated Press account quoted an Eritrean soldier as saying, 'I feel bad because we are neighbors, and in the future, we'll have to work together to develop.' Well, as nationalistic passions are flamed through propaganda and as battlefield losses mount, this soldier's vision of

(more)

development is slipping through his hands like sand. Another AP story quoted an Eritrean woman who, having had her house destroyed by bombing, said, 'I never expected this war to last so long.' She went on, 'Maybe my own children will grow up to fight also.' With every day passed, the cycle of animosity deepens and prospects for peace and development grow dimmer.

"The United States should play an active role in attempt to resolve this conflict. For one, the 'winner' in this conflict is the Sudanese government. And the U.S. has made a real investment in these countries over the last several years. With battlefield losses in the tens of thousands, there is no excuse for us not to be fully engaged, and the Subcommittee is looking forward to hearing about the administration's efforts. Ultimately, though, assuming there is a desire for a reasonable and fundamental resolution, a resolution will require leadership -- leadership to temper nationalistic passions and compromise. Only then will the Eritrean and Ethiopian leaders have lived up to their high reputations."

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Remarks of
Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman

Chairman,
Committee on International Relations

Hearing of the Subcommittee on African Affairs
on
Conflict in Eritrea and Ethiopia

May 25, 1999

This war between Ethiopia and Eritrea (air-a-TRAY-a) is the largest war in the world today. With half a million men and women under arms and more than 40,000 dead, it makes the crisis in Kosovo pale in comparison.

Of all the conflicts in Africa and around the world, this war between Ethiopia and Eritrea (air-a-TRAY-a) is one of the most tragic. It is tragic not just because of the huge numbers involved -- though any conflict in which a single battle consumes ten thousand precious, irreplaceable lives is certainly a tragedy.

It is tragic also because of the aspect of two of Africa's shining lights, two brothers, strangling each other at the very time when they should be building wealth, liberty and prosperity.

For thirty years, the people of Eritrea fought a bitter struggle for independence. And for 13 years, the people of Ethiopia fought to overthrow a brutal totalitarian, regime. Eventually, through tenacity, courage, and will, they succeeded. It astounds me that leaders who have already sacrificed so much and know what true suffering is cannot find some way to solve their differences without massive bloodshed.

Is it honorable to fight and even die for one's country? Of course. Is it to be encouraged and gloried in? I think not.

I do not pretend to understand all the complexities of this conflict. But I do know that Thomas Keneally, author of *Schindler's List* and other great works of literature, discovered in the rocky hills of Eritrea and northern Ethiopia some of

the finest people in the world. To think that they are murdering each other in the tens of thousands is a human tragedy beyond measure.

I do not believe that vast apparatus of the United States government can focus on only one international conflict at a time. I would like to know why the President, after a stirring and long overdue trip throughout Africa last year, has been unable to direct greater, high-level efforts to foster a lasting peace.

I congratulate my colleagues Mr. Royce and Mr. Payne, chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee, for directing their attention to this matter. Perhaps we can find a way to do more. I believe that we must.

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
Susan E. Rice

Statement
Before
The House of Representatives Committee on International Relations
Africa Subcommittee

2172 Rayburn House Office Building

Tuesday, May 25, 1999
2:00 p.m.

"The Ethiopian-Eritrean War: U.S. Policy Options"

Introduction

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to testify today on the conflict in the Horn of Africa. Much like the crisis in Sierra Leone, which I had the opportunity to discuss with your Subcommittee members two months ago, the war in the Horn of Africa threatens a broad swath of Africa as well as United States' interests in the region as a whole.

The Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, which began in May 1998, has substantially damaged the economic growth and development of Ethiopia and Eritrea and has led to humanitarian suffering on both sides of the border. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost and thousands more have been maimed.

The United States and others in the international community have consistently called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and speedy implementation of the Organization of African Unity's Framework Agreement. We continue to work with the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to secure and implement a lasting peace.

Origins of the Conflict/Escalations of Hostilities

The origins of the war are complex. During the 1980s, two liberation fronts -- the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrea People's Liberation Front (EPLF) -- joined forces against Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, although differences between the two led to occasional disputes. Mengistu's brutal Derg regime was toppled in 1991, and Eritrea gained formal independence in 1993. As a result, Ethiopia became landlocked, with a common border established almost 100 years ago between the Italian colony of Eritrea and Ethiopia never fully and precisely delineated or demarcated. It is important to note that the two new governments enjoyed such strong

bilateral relations that neither they nor the international community considered formal determination of the border an immediate priority.

In the year leading to the outbreak of fighting, relations between the two former allies deteriorated, exacerbated by economic tensions. A border skirmish occurred on May 6, 1998 at Badme. A week later, Eritrea sent troops and armor into and beyond Badme into territory administered by Ethiopia. After several weeks of fighting, several areas previously administered by Ethiopia -- the Badme area and areas near Zela Ambessa and Bure, south of the port of Assab -- fell under Eritrean control.

As the ground fighting escalated, in June of 1998, Ethiopia launched airstrikes against Asmara airport. Eritrea made retaliatory strikes against the Ethiopian towns of Mekele and Adigrat, south of Zela Ambessa, hitting a school. Both sides then agreed to a U.S.-brokered airstrike moratorium, and fighting decreased to occasional exchanges of artillery and small-arms fire over a nine-month period.

Both Ethiopia and Eritrea used the intervening months to acquire new military stockpiles, including state-of-the-art fighter aircraft and artillery, and to recruit, train and deploy tens of thousands of new soldiers. The United States actively discouraged suppliers to both parties, and the UN Security Council urged governments not to provide weapons to exacerbate the problem. Publicly, Ethiopia continued to demand a complete and absolute return to the status quo ante of May 6, 1998. Eritrea insisted that some of the area it occupied after May 6, 1998 was Eritrean territory.

Fighting resumed on February 6, 1999, when Ethiopian forces attacked, eventually displacing Eritrean forces from the disputed area of Badme. Ethiopia employed fighter-bombers, helicopter gunships, and reconfigured transport aircraft in tactical support of ground operations. Ethiopia later launched an unsuccessful counter-offensive on the Zela Ambessa front in mid-March. Eritrea failed to re-take Badme in subsequent fighting at the end of March. In April, Ethiopia struck an Eritrean military training facility and other targets deep within Eritrea. A week and a half ago, Ethiopian aircraft bombed sites at Zela Ambessa, Badme, and the port of Massawa. Although there has been a lull in the ground fighting over the past few weeks, press reports from yesterday indicate there were clashes between ground forces this past weekend at Badme.

United States' Interests

The United States has significant interests in ending the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea as soon as possible. The current conflict threatens regional stability and to reverse Ethiopian and Eritrean progress in economic and political development.

The United States has important national security interests in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia's and Eritrea's neighbor, Sudan, has long supported international terrorism, fostered the spread of Islamic extremism beyond its borders, actively worked to destabilize neighboring states, including Ethiopia and Eritrea, and perpetrated massive human rights violations against its own citizens. Since the conflict began last year, Sudan

has increasingly benefited from the hostilities between its former adversaries. Eritrea recently signed an accord with Sudan to normalize relations. Ethiopia has renewed air service to Khartoum and has made overtures to Sudan for improved relations as well. Both sides have moved to reduce support to Sudanese opposition groups.

Eritrea's President Isaias has made several trips to Libya -- Africa's other state sponsor of terrorism -- for frequent consultations with Colonel Qadhafi, and has joined Qadhafi's 'Community of Saharan and Sahelian States' (COMESSA).

We are very concerned by credible reports that Eritrea has delivered large quantities of weapons and munitions to self-proclaimed Somalia President Hussein Aideed for the use of a violent faction of the Oromo Liberation Front. The terrorist organization Al-Ittihad may also be an indirect recipient of these arms. Ethiopia also is shipping arms to factions in Somalia. The recent upsurge of violence in Somalia is, in part, related to these new developments.

Increased activity by a violent faction of the OLF in the south and the east has led to crossborder raids by Ethiopian security forces along its frontiers with Kenya and Somalia. These developments clearly reflect a dangerous trend.

Prior to this conflict, Ethiopia and Eritrea played a constructive role in the Great Lakes region. Their current dispute with each other has precluded them from continuing to take such a role in this volatile area and other areas of the continent where we had foreseen mutually beneficial cooperation.

The security costs of the conflict are matched, if not exceeded, by the grave humanitarian consequences of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost and hundreds of thousands displaced. Approximately 300,000 Ethiopian and 100,000-200,000 Eritrean civilians have been forced from their homes and fields near the border by the conflict. An estimated 60,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean descent have been deported from Ethiopia to Eritrea, and an estimated 20,000 Ethiopians have left Eritrea under duress. We have made clear that we consider the practice of deportation to be a fundamental violation of individual rights. The nature of these expulsions and the arrangements made for transfer and holding of property were clearly susceptible to abuse.

United States' Response

Immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities in May 1998, I led two interagency missions to Ethiopia and Eritrea to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the dispute. Working with the Government of Rwanda, we proposed a series of steps to end the conflict in accordance with both sides' shared principles and international law. These recommendations, endorsed by the OAU and the UNSC, later informed development by the OAU of its Framework Agreement. These initial missions also resulted in agreement by the two parties to the air strike moratorium, which remained in effect until February 6, 1999.

Beginning in October, President Clinton sent former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and an interagency team from the State Department, the National Security Council, and the Department of Defense on four missions to Ethiopia and Eritrea, the most recent occurring in early 1999. We are grateful for Mr. Lake's tireless work on behalf of the President and the Secretary of State. His intensive efforts, which still continue, have been aimed at helping both sides find a mutually-agreed basis for resolving the dispute without further loss of life. Working closely with the OAU and the UNSC, Mr. Lake and our team put forth numerous proposals to both sides consistent with the OAU Framework. In December, Ethiopia formally accepted the Framework Agreement. Eritrea did not, requesting clarification on numerous specific questions.

Fighting resumed on February 6 while UN envoy Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun was in the region still seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Following this first phase of fighting, Eritrean troops were compelled to withdraw from Badme -- an important element of the draft OAU Framework Agreement. Subsequent Eritrean acceptance of the Framework was welcomed by the United States and the UNSC but was greeted with skepticism by Ethiopia. Ethiopia instead demanded Eritrea's unconditional, unilateral withdrawal from all contested areas that Ethiopia had administered prior to last May.

On April 14, Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia offered a cease-fire in return for an explicit commitment by Eritrea to remove its forces unilaterally from contested areas. He later added that Eritrean withdrawal must occur within an undefined but 'short' period.

Eritrea continues to demand a cease-fire prior to committing to withdraw from disputed territories. Ethiopia insists that a cease-fire and implementation of the OAU Framework Agreement can only follow an explicit Eritrean commitment to withdraw from all territories occupied since the conflict erupted on May 6, 1998.

Conclusion

A joint Organization of African Unity/United Nations effort to urge both sides to accept a cease-fire and begin implementing the framework agreement continues. The United States Government remains actively engaged, in support of the OAU, with both Eritrea and Ethiopia to secure a peace settlement.

There is a need, however, to not only end the conflict as quickly as possible but also ultimately to repair, over the long-term, strained relations in the Horn. A resolution of the border war may be attainable. The task of rebuilding both countries and mending ties between Ethiopia and Eritrea to ensure long-term sustained peace and mutual security will be especially difficult. It will require due attention and support from the United States and the international community. Mr. Chairman, I look forward to continuing to work with you and other members of this Subcommittee as we continue to pursue our shared interest in forging a peaceful resolution to this tragic conflict.

PROPOSALS FOR A FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE BETWEEN ERITREA AND ETHIOPIA

We, the Heads of State and Government, mandated by the 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 8 to 10 June 1998, to contribute towards the search for a peaceful and lasting solution to the unfortunate conflict which erupted between the two brotherly countries, the State of Eritrea and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;

- Deeply affected by the outbreak of the conflict between the two countries that are united by historic links of brotherhood and a common culture;

- Saddened by this conflict which occurred at a time when the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea had launched a new era of relations built on a partnership and a common vision and ideals as regards the future of their peoples, the region and the whole continent;

- Noting, however, that differences had emerged between the two countries relating particularly to their common border, differences which the two countries endeavoured to resolve peacefully;

- Deploring the fact that, notwithstanding those efforts, an open conflict broke out between the two brotherly countries, with which our 34th Summit was seized;

- Paying tribute to the commendable efforts made by friendly countries aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the conflict;

- Conscious of the fact that resorting to the use of force results in loss of human lives, the destruction of property and socio-economic infrastructures as well as creating a division between the peoples, all the things which the two brotherly countries and our continent cannot afford at a time when all efforts must be channeled towards the promotion of peace and development which we greatly owe to our peoples;

- Encouraged by the commitment made by the two parties to the OAU High-Level Delegation to settle the conflict peacefully and by their positive response to its appeal to continue to observe the moratorium on air strikes and to maintain the present situation of non-hostilities;

- Having considered and endorsed the Report and Recommendations of the Committee of Ambassadors, as submitted by the Ministerial Committee to the Parties on 1 August 1998 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso;

- Having listened to the two Parties and made an in-depth analysis of their respective positions, taking into account their legitimate concerns and after having thought deeply about the ways and means likely to contribute to the peaceful settlement of the crisis in a fair and objective manner;

- MAKE on behalf of Africa, its peoples and leaders, a solemn and brotherly appeal to the Leaders of the State of Eritrea and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to do everything in their power to opt for a peaceful settlement of the dispute and find a just and lasting solution to the conflict;

SUBMIT, hereunder, for the consideration of the two Parties, the elements of a Framework Agreement based on the following principles:

- resolution of the present crisis and any other dispute between them through peaceful and legal means in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity;

- rejection of the use of force as a means of imposing solutions to disputes;

- respect for the borders existing at independence as stated in Resolution AHG/Res.16(I) adopted by the OAU Summit in Cairo in 1964 and, in this regard, determine them on the basis of pertinent colonial Treaties and applicable international law, making use, to that end, of technical means to demarcate the borders and, in the case of controversy, resort to the appropriate mechanism of arbitration.

We recommend that:

1. The two Parties commit themselves to an immediate cessation of hostilities;

2. In order to defuse tension and build confidence, the two Parties commit themselves to put an immediate end to any action and any form of expression likely to perpetrate or exacerbate the climate of hostility and tension between them thereby jeopardizing the efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the conflict;

3. In order to create conditions conducive to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict through the delimitation and demarcation of the border, the armed forces presently in Badme Town and its environs, should be redeployed to the positions they held before 6 may 1998 as a mark of goodwill and consideration for our continental Organization, it being understood that his redeployment will not prejudge the final status of the area concerned, which will be determined at the end of the delimitation and demarcation of the border and, if need be, through an appropriate mechanism of arbitration;

4. This redeployment be supervised by a Group of Military Observers which will be deployed by the OAU with the support of the United Nations. The Group of Military Observers will also assist the reinstated Civilian Administration in the maintenance of law and order during the interim period;

5. a) The redeployment be subsequently extended to all other contested areas along the common border within the framework of demilitarisation of the entire common border and as a measure for defusing the tension and facilitating the delimitation and demarcation process. In effect, the demilitarisation which will begin with the Mereb Scitit segment, will then extend to the Bada area and the borderas a whole;

b) The demilitarisation process be supervised by the Group of Military Observers;

6. a) The two parties commit themselves to make use of the services of experts of the UN Cartographic Unit, in collaboration with the OAU and other experts agreed upon by the two Parties, to carry out the delimitation and demarcation of the border between the two countries within a time frame of 6 months which could be extended on the recommendation of the cartographic experts;

b) Once the entire border has been delimited and demarcated, the legitimate authority will immediately exercise full and sovereign jurisdiction over the territory which will have been recognized as belonging to them;

7. In order to determine the origins of the conflict, an investigation be carried out on the incidents of 6 May 1998 and on any other incident prior to that date which could have contributed to a misunderstanding between the two Parties regarding their common border, including the incidents of July-August 1997;

8. a) At the humanitarian level, the two Parties commit themselves to put an end to measures directed against the civilian population and refrain from any action which can cause further hardship and suffering to each other's nationals;

b) The two parties also commit themselves to addressing the negative socio-economic impact of the crisis on the civilian population, particularly, those persons who had been deported;

c) In order to contribute to the establishment of a climate of confidence, the OAU, in collaboration with the United Nations, deploy a team of Human Rights Monitors in both countries;

9. a) In order to determine the modalities for the implementation of the Framework Agreement, a Follow-up Committee of the two parties be established under the auspices of the OAU High-Level Delegation with the active participation and assistance of the United Nations;

b) The Committee begin its work as soon as the Framework Agreement is signed;

10. The OAU and the UN working closely with the international community, particularly, the European Union, endeavour to mobilize resources for the resettlement of displaced persons and the demobilization of troops currently deployed along the common border of both countries;

11. The Organization of African Unity, in close cooperation with the United Nations, will be the guarantor for the scrupulous implementation of all the provisions of the Framework Agreement, in the shortest possible time.

Hearing on the Eritrea-Ethiopia War: US Policy Options

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May 25, 1999

House Subcommittee on Africa

Statement:

The war between Eritrea and Ethiopia has now entered its second year. Over the past year, what began as a border skirmish over some contested terrain between the two countries has emerged into a regional war that threatens to spread and become regionalized. Since last spring, the governments of both countries have been involved in massive troop build-ups and dramatic expansions of their military arsenals. Ethiopian troops amassed along the Eritrean border have increased from 120,000 to 320,000 and the number of Eritrean stationed along the border has expanded from 47,000 to about 120,000. Rather than the war abating over time, it has expanded to at least three new fronts.

The war has ebbed and flowed. Initially the Eritreans took control of the contested border zone around Badame, and despite periodic skirmishes and air and artillery attacks against their fortified positions, they were able to hold on to the territory until late February when Ethiopian troops broke through and retook the area of Badame. The Eritreans retreated to more defensible positions in the area, and began to vigorously call for an adherence to the OAU mediation plan. Yet, there has been no movement towards a firm cease-fire. Each side continues to hold the other in deep distrust, and no outside mediators have been able to come up with incentives that get both sides to the peace table.

A question that is often asked is, why did such a violent conflict break out between countries which only seven years earlier had seem destined to eventually form themselves into a confederation. There was the free flow of people and trade across the borders of the two countries, and Ethiopia seemed at least officially committed to helping Eritrea to recover from the ravages of a 30-year war of national liberation. However, beneath the surface there were festering problems, not the least of which were the different economic development strategies developed by the two countries. Eritrea follows a top-down strategy in which the government has a great deal of control over the pace and pattern of economic development. After 1991, Ethiopia adopted a free market approach to development. Over the years resentment grew in Ethiopia over what some perceived as Eritrea's flooding of its market, while making it very difficult for Ethiopians to do business in Eritrea. There were even some claims that Eritrean traders were smuggling coffee across the border and exporting it for ill-gotten profit. In addition, Ethiopia began

by 1997 to complain about what it felt was exorbitant fees imposed by Eritrea for use of its Red Sea port of Assab. Economic tensions reached their apogee when in 1997 Eritrea introduced its new currency, the Nakfa, and expected that it would trade on a one-to-one basis with the Ethiopian birr. At the same time, the Eritreans expected Ethiopia to pay for the use of Assab in hard currency. In reaction, Ethiopia strongly refused to accept the Nakfa as equivalent to the birr. These economic tensions clearly had their political effects, and the formed the underlying factors in the current conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The popular media describe the conflict as a senseless war over some barren territory. On the surface it is just that. The war did not have to happen. However, given the fact that the two countries never agreed to firm borderlines, this was an accident just waiting to happen. The Eritreans claim that the conflict can be traced to 1992, just after the new boundaries of Ethiopia's Tigray Province had been drawn. The Tegray Regional Administration moved into the Badame area, and began to impose fines on those Etritreans who violated Tigray space. Several joint commissions were established at the subregional level to attempt to mediate territorial disputes. But, negotiations were consistently difficult and inconclusive.

During the struggle against the Mengistu regime in the late 1980s, the Tigray People's Liberation Front and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front signed an agreement on the border problem that would remain in effect until the two governments complete demarcation of their common border. Eventually, a joint committee of 8 was created in 1997, and it was scheduled to meet on July 30, 1997 at Badame. However, before the meeting took place a map that had been commissioned by the Tegray Administration surfaced. Although, the Badame area had historically never been mapped out on the ground, the new map showed it clearly inside Ethiopian territory. The Tigray authorities in the area commenced to attempt to establish effective control over the area. In November of 1997 there was an urgent meeting of the Commission in Asmara, and it was acknowledged that the tensions around Badame were so high that conflict could break out if a quick solution was not found to the problem.

In May of 1998, as the Tigray Authorities continued to attempt to establish the border around Badame, tensions grew to a boiling point. The incident that precipitated the current conflict involved an effort on the part of a contingent of Eritrean troops patrolling the border with Tigray to question the legitimacy of the actions of the Tigray administration. A gun battle ensued and four Eritrean soldiers were killed. Eritrea, apparently feeling that it had no recourse but to retaliate, struck back militarily and the war was on. A better solution would clearly have been a diplomatic effort; but this did not happen. Now we have a situation that is out of control, and there is no easy solution.

Both Eritrea and Ethiopia have escalated their troop capacities as well as their defense spending. It is estimated that since the outbreak of war last year, Ethiopia has spent more than $300,000,000 on arms, and Eritrea is not far behind. Countries such as Russia, China, Romania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine have provided weapons of war to both sides.

Other weapons are constantly being bought on the open market from private arms traders. In addition foreign technicians, pilots and mercenaries have been interjected into the war. Much of the new military equipment is very sophisticated, and the Eritrean and Ethiopian troops will need time to master their operation. In the meantime, the tactics being used by the Ethiopians involve a heavy use of infantry, tanks, artillery, and airpower. Battle estimates range anywhere from 60,000 to 300,000 dead on the Ethiopian side. A figure somewhere in between would seem more likely. Eritrean figures seem impossible to get at; but since they have been mostly following a defensive strategy, it is likely that their casualties a somewhat less than suffered by Ethiopia. But I must emphasize, these numbers are impossible to verify on either side.

What continues to drive this war, despite its obvious disastrous effects on both societies? In large measure it is a matter of national pride. The Eritreans feel that they are in a battle for their very survival. They feel that the Ethiopians will not stop until they get to the Red Sea, and there is evidence that Ethiopia is working through Eritrean opposition groups to attempt to come up with an alternative to the Issaias Afeworki regime. On the other hand, there is also evidence that Eritrea is arming opposition groups opposed to the Meles regime, and operating out of neighboring countries such as Somalia, Kenya, and Sudan. In fact, Kenya and Somalia have come to represent yet another war front as the Ethiopian military has recently been penetrating those countries allegedly in "hot pursuit" of invading opposition groups. The intended effect of these actions on the part of the Eritreans is obviously to force the Ethiopians to overextend themselves; thus creating instability within the EPRDF and the population at large.

The Ethiopian position is complicated by the fact that Prime Minister Meles does not command widespread legitimacy in his country. His government is seen by many to be a minority Tigray government that until this war broke out was a puppet of Eritrea. The war has created strange bedfellows among the Ethiopian. There is no one Ethiopian voice except when it comes to winning this war. Hard core Unionist blame Meles for having given Eritrea away. Amharas, Oromos, Ogaden Somalis and other ethnic groups feel that his government has created a façade of ethnic regional autonomy, while rigidly controlling all aspects of their lives. Some elements among the Oromo want nothing less than total independence from Ethiopia. Others simply want their equal citizenship rights. This war creates an allusion of legitimacy for the Meles regime, but this will only last as long as the war itself. Should Ethiopia win the war outright and leave Eritrea in tact, the EPRDF will continue to lack widespread popular support. Should Meles agree to a cease-fire and stick to it, he could very well face calls for his ouster for once again supporting the break up of Ethiopia.

The spread of the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict in to neighboring countries is an alarming prospect; one that should not be taken lightly by the world community. It is true that recently imported high-tech weaponry is now being underutilized by both Eritrea and Ethiopia, but over time, their respective armies will come to master these weapons. They will also continue their military expansion. When all of this comes together we could be on the brink of a continental or even a world catastrophe.

What, then, are possible policy options for the United States?

In the first place, the US government must recognize that this a complicated situation and the US carries some baggage that would make it difficult for this country to appear to be an impartial honest broker in this conflict. Each side claims that the US favors the other. However, this conflict has such potential spread in terms of scope and intensity that the US must attempt to play a proactive role, especially in the international diplomatic arena.

Bearing this in mind, let me offer the following policy options:

- The US should continue to press for an unconditional cease-fire; a withdrawal of troops from both sides from the contested area---this includes all the various fronts that have been open since the initial one at Badame—the creation of a demilitarized zone that would be occupied in a robust manner by OAU/UN peacekeeping force. This should be followed as rapidly as possible by the demarcation of the disputed territory by an international team of cartographers.
- Rather than taking a direct role in mediating and facilitating negotiations between the warring parties, the US should vigorously support the efforts of the OAU and the UN in this regard. It is commonly agreed that regional and subregional organizations in Africa are going to have to become more proficient in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building, countries such as the US should provide the inevitable material and technical expertise that would be needed to make this happen in an effective manner.
- The US government should be praised for speaking out about the massive amount of arms being exported into the contested area, but much more needs to be done. There needs to be a policy introduced that is very similar to the one which imposes sanctions on countries that are not making serious efforts to stem the flow of drugs from and through their countries. US foreign assistance represents leverage that could be used against countries such as China, Russia, Ukraine, and others who themselves are involved in the arms trade in this war, or who allow their nationals to be involved in that trade. I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important such a policy could be. I shutter to think what the impact would be for Africa when weapons of mass destruction that have been recently introduced into the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict begin to find their way into other zones of conflict such as Central and Southern Africa. We cannot let this happen.

Eritrea and Ethiopia are two of the poorest countries in the world. At the same time, they are countries with enormous potential. As is clear by the large numbers of Eritrean and Ethiopian well-educated and highly trained citizens that reside in this country, the human capital that would be needed to rapidly build the economies of the two countries are well within reach. What stands in the way is war. A turn to peace would set the stage for economic take-off.

The US should do its best to promote the re-establishment of trust between the leaders of the two countries. There is little doubt that this will be difficult, but an effort must be made.

STRATEGIES FOR ENDING THE CONFLICT BETWEEN
ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA

by

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May 25, 1999
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I first would like to bring greetings on behalf of the Constituency for Africa's new Chairman, former Congressman Ron Dellums, and the CFA Board of Directors. I also want to thank the Sub-Committee on Africa for organizing this very important and timely hearing on the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. This war has further destabilized an already unstable region on the continent. Tens of thousands of young combatants on both sides have already been sacrificed in the border war; sluggish economies have now become even more stagnant; and hard-won political capital has been severely compromised. I fully associate myself with the many friends of Ethiopia and Eritrea in the United States who can't understand why these great people have decided to pay such a steep price for land of so little value and for issues of such minor significance. Not only has this conflict done harm for the east Africa region, it has also damaged the unprecedented goodwill and commitment that has been building between the United States and Africa during the six years of the Clinton administration. In no uncertain terms, we must do all we can to bring this truly unnecessary conflict to an

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end as soon as possible!

I first went to Africa in 1973 as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia. My first year was spent working in the YMCA in Asmara, Eritrea, which was then still a part of Ethiopia. It was there that I learned about the more than 30 years of hostility between Ethiopia and the fledgling Eritrea liberation movement. I was eventually evacuated out of Asmara because of the war, and spent my second year with the Peace Corps in Harar in the eastern part of the country. I enjoyed Ethiopia so much that I stayed a third year as a teacher in the then American Community School in the Ethiopian capital city, Addis Abeba.

I have since returned to the region many times including in 1985 accompanying a women's delegation led by Mrs. Jacqualine Jackson, the wife of Rev. Jesse Jackson, on a needs assessment mission during the famine which decimated many parts of the country and claimed millions of lives. I returned to Ethiopia in 1992 as an African-American Institute observer for the Regional Elections; again in 1994 as an AAI observer to the Eritrean Referendum on Independence; in December 1997 as a member of a Presidential Trade Delegation led by Congressman Charles B. Rangel, which visited Ethiopia and Eritrea as part of a six-countries tour in promotion of the African Growth & Opportunity Act; and again in the spring of 1998 for a ground-breaking conference organized by wealthy businessman Sheik Mohammed

Alamoudi, for the purpose of attracting capital to the region.

I am now a part of a group of former Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Ethiopia or Eritrea, who are working to end the war and broker peace between the two countries. Tomorrow (May 26th), we are organizing a forum at the Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center at Howard University with many recognized experts and leaders from both countries, to explore the "path to piece"! We are hopeful of coming out of this meeting with a number of creative ideas and viewpoints which we would like to pursue on our upcoming mission to the region which will take place within the next two weeks. Perhaps the time has come for a "multi-track" approach towards seeking diplomatic solutions to this problem. In addition to the efforts of the U.S. government, perhaps there is a constructive role for groups like our former Peace Corps delegation, non-governmental organizations and eminent personalities in establishing the road to peace. I want to emphasize here that, while our group is pursuing our effort independent of the U.S. government, including the Peace Corps, still we are making every effort to seek our government's counsel and are also keeping them well informed of our activities.

While the Clinton Administration, under the astute leadership of the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Dr. Susan Rice, has done much in seeking an end to the war, it is clearly not the time for a let-up from the United States. Tensions remain extremely high on the war front and throughout

both countries, and obviously border demarcation issues, ethnic friction, egoism, nationalism, and long-standing vendettas are all playing a part in fermenting this dispute.

Generally, the U.S. should work closely and in partnership with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations, to mediate this tragic dispute and to seek lasting solutions. The OAU should be commended for it's December 17-19 1998, report which is an excellent framework for mediation, and contains much that both sides can agree with. This report contains an eleven-point proposal, which has received the strong endorsement from the international community.

The OAU proposal calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities so that a peaceful resolution of the conflict may occur through delimitation and demarcation of their common border. In connection with the cease-fire, I understand that the OAU requires the withdrawal of forces from Badme and other areas in Ethiopia to the positions held before May 6th, 1998. As such, while Eritrea may have entered the contested Badme region which the OAU concluded was administered by Ethiopia, I sincerely believe that our government must find a way to provide additional support to the OAU framework agreement in order to resolve the immediate border issues, and other issues which have been spurned as a result of the border conflict.

Once border hostilities have ceased, the U.S. should give

serious consideration to hosting a "Dayton-style" conference in the United States, that not only paves the way for a peaceful and long-standing settlement of the dispute, but also sends a message to other African countries, and to the American people, that Africa truly matters! Holding this conference in the U.S. would provide an appropriate environment far away from the area of conflict, to lesson the tension and bluster which now exist in the region. It would also allow American political scientists, scholars and policy-makers an opportunity to play a constructive role in bringing an end to the war and to set the basis for economic development.

In the region, the U.S. should be prepared to provide financial and technical assistance to the two countries, to formally define border demarcation. Beyond that, the U.S. should embark on a strategy in cooperation with such non-profit groups as the Corporate Council on Africa, and the Constituency for Africa, to encourage American and other investment in the region, as a way of "jump-starting" economic development. Many American companies were in fact preparing to enter into business relationships in this region, but have since shied away because of this instability. Investor confidence cannot be restored so long as the war continues.

I hope that my remarks are useful. Once again, I would like to thank the Sub-committee on Africa for holding this important hearing.

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The Conflict in the Horn: Protecting Human Rights - Preventing A Disaster

Testimony of Adotei Akwei
Africa Advocacy Director, Amnesty International USA
House International Relations Subcommittee
May 25, 1999

Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working impartially for the release of all prisoners of conscience, fair and prompt trials for political prisoners and an end to torture and executions. It is funded by donations from its members and supporters throughout the world.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
William F. Schulz

The Conflict in the Horn: Protecting Human Rights - Preventing A Disaster

Testimony of Adotei Akwei
Africa Advocacy Director. Amnesty International USA
House International Relations Subcommittee
May 25, 1999

Introduction

Mr. Chairman and other members of the subcommittee on behalf of Amnesty International USA I would like to thank you for holding these hearings and for allowing AIUSA to testify before this committee. The energy, interest and commitment that you and your staff have shown toward Africa has been one of the few reassuring beacons of hope that the continent and, the people who work on Africa here, in the United States, look to for inspiration.

Mr. Chairman, my name is Adotei Akwei and I am the Advocacy Director for Africa with Amnesty International USA. Amnesty International is a worldwide human rights movement that works for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners and ending torture, "disappearances", political killings and executions wherever they occur. Amnesty International has one million members and supporters in over 100 countries around the world with about 300,000 here in the United States. The organization is financed by its members and supporters and accepts no money from governments

Mr. Chairman, these hearings are extremely timely. For many, the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been mystifying, depressing and I would personally argue a tragic waste. "Border disputes" should not be allowed to displace over 600,000 people and claim the lives of untold thousands, in countries that have already sacrificed so many lives and resources in struggling for their freedom. In a continent which suffers from an overly simplistic image of being in endless crisis and conflict, this conflict, especially between two former allies who were both billed as symbolic of a new type of African leader, has had repercussions for the whole continent. I think we can agree that neither country really needs a long drawn out conflict, nor does Africa need yet another conflict. Most importantly, the Eritrean and Ethiopian people, the common man and woman, do not need the human rights abuses and suffering this conflict has caused. If these hearings can generate any moral or public pressure to end their suffering, then that will be a significant contribution.

Mr. Chairman, my testimony today will focus on four areas:

- A short overview of the human rights situation in both Eritrea and Ethiopia prior to the conflict.
- A review of the human rights violations that have occurred as a result of the conflict.
- Recommendations for action by the United States government.
- D. Recommendations to the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Mr. Chairman, this testimony accompanies our latest report on Ethiopia entitled *Ethiopia and*

Eritrea Human rights issues in a year of armed conflict which was released last Friday and which should be referred to for more detailed information. Regarding the general human rights situations, a complete list of our reports is attached in the appendix. I would request that the report be made a part of the records of this hearing

Mr. Chairman, here I would also like to refer you to the entries on Ethiopia and Eritrea in this year's annual report on Human Rights Practices by the Department of State. The Department of State has done an excellent job of collating the human rights concerns in both countries and I commend both the human rights officers at the posts and the Department of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor here in Washington.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the opportunity to visit the region twice, visiting Ethiopia in the summer of 1997 and again in October of 1998. Amnesty International is an impartial human rights organization and as such will not address the causes of the war. Nor are we interested in who has the most compelling media release justifying their latest activities, or whether the town of Badme is under Eritrean rule or Ethiopian rule. In the end these justifications will not bring back the sense of fellowship amongst the peoples of the two countries, it will not bring back the lives that have been lost, or reunite the families that have been scattered. I know that many of you on this committee have visited several disaster areas and have been faced with the humbling experience of meeting people desperately calling out for help, when all you could offer was to listen and then share their stories in the hopes of generating international support for aid or for a solution. Mr. Chairman this testimony is my attempt to answer those appeals I met with in Mekele and Adigrat, and which my colleagues encountered in Asmara and Assab.

Before going in to our key human rights concerns and recommendations in relation to the conflict, I would like to state that prior to the outbreak of the conflict Amnesty International had been documenting and advocating on general human rights issues in both countries. After the conflict started, AI representatives visited Ethiopia from 19 to 30 October 1998 and met with several government officials, members of the diplomatic community, international organisations and some local NGOs. We interviewed over 60 Ethiopians who had returned from Eritrea after the conflict started. The delegation also travelled to Mekele and Adigrat, in the northern Tigray region and to reception camps for Ethiopians arriving from Eritrea, in Mille, in the northeastern Afar region.

AI also visited Eritrea from 11 to 22 January 1999, meeting with government officials, members of the diplomatic community and international organisations and local ngos. The delegation interviewed Eritreans individuals who had been expelled from Ethiopia, travelled to Assab and to the nearby border crossing with Ethiopia and met people recently expelled from Ethiopia as they arrived in Eritrea.

Overview of the protection of human rights prior to the conflict

Human Rights in Ethiopia

Civil and political rights in Ethiopia still remain at risk despite several positive initiatives by the government of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The Ethiopian government is currently bringing to trial roughly 2,700 persons associated with the former government of Haile Mariam Mengistu, which was responsible for massive systematic human rights abuses. Over 550 trials have taken place and have been free of major irregularities so far.

Mr. Chairman, one cannot over estimate the importance of these trials and of establishing accountability for Ethiopia and for Africa. One need only look at the events of Rwanda in 1994 to see where the unchallenged impunity ends. Amnesty International has major concerns with the impact that the governments limited resources and the growing needs of a federal judicial system have caused one due process in Ethiopia. These include lengthy delays resulting in some defendants spending a significant amount of time in jail before even having the chance to prove their innocence. However, the government's attempt to establish accountability is laudable and it is a standard that they themselves must meet.

In another positive direction, in the first half of 1998, the government convened an international conference to discuss the creation of an Ombudsman and or a Human Rights Commission. As a result of the conflict with Eritrea further progress in this area has come to a halt, including consultations with local or international human rights groups on the various proposals. In June 1998, Ethiopia acceded to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. In early 1999, the government also released one of Ethiopia's best-known political prisoners, Dr. Asrat Woldeyes, the chairman of the All Amhara Peoples Organization on medical reasons. Sadly, Dr. Asrat passed away a few weeks ago in Houston, underscoring the risk human rights defenders and critics of the government face on a daily basis.

Among the key human rights concerns are:

Restriction on freedom of expression and association - thousands of critics and opponents of the government have been arrested, including members of the press and human right advocates. Amongst them were the staff of the newspapers *Tobia* and *Zegabi* and members of the Ethiopian Human Rights League. At the same time the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, while operating normally, still has its account frozen. The Ethiopian Teachers Association remains in limbo with its assets locked up and it Chairman, Dr. TayeWoldesmayat, on trial. A verdict is expected shortly.

Detentions and violations of due process – Amnesty International estimates that the government has been holding more then 10,000 political prisoners, since 1996 as a result of their opposition to the current government. Many of these persons have never been tried, while others wait so long for their day in court that they end up serving their sentence before even being found guilty.

Impunity by security forces – Amnesty International continues to receive reports of disappearances, torture and beatings by the security forces. Among the cases which still need a public and impartial investigation is the killing of Tesfaye Tadesse, a lawyer, publisher and non-violent government opponent who was allegedly killed by the security forces in June of this year. Also unresolved is the case of Asafa Maru, a member of the Ethiopian Teachers Association who was gunned down in October 1997.

Human Rights in Eritrea

The protection of civil and political rights in Eritrea still faces serious challenges. In a positive development, the government of President Issayas Afewerki has now signed the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and is reportedly in the process of considering signing the Geneva conventions. Following the outbreak of hostilities with Ethiopia, the government allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross to open offices and operate in Eritrea. However, it denied them access to all prisoners of war. The government also finally released prisoner of conscience, journalist Ruth Simon, who was jailed for "inaccurate reporting" without being given a trial.

Among the key human rights concerns are:

Detention of political prisoners – Rumors persist that scores of political detainees remain in detention, however AI has not been able to confirm the allegations. There are at least 120 Ethiopian detainees who have been incarcerated since 1991.

Convictions based on unfair trials – The 120 members of the former Ethiopian administration in Eritrea who were convicted in 1991 after secret trials, in which they were denied legal representation and the right of appeal, remain in detention.

Restrictions on free association and expression – The only political party allowed to exist is that of the ruling Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice. The elections scheduled for 1997 were delayed until 1998 and have been delayed again as a result of the conflict with Ethiopia. Civil society remains restricted in its size and activities. Four members of the Jehovah's Witnesses have been incarcerated since 1994 with out charge or trial allegedly for refusing to participate in national military service. While the constitution protects freedom of religion, in practice, the government restricts actions based on religious beliefs. The government continued to persecute members of the Jehovah's Witnesses by revoking trading licenses and dismissing members in the civil service. While the government has not banned any non-governmental organizations, it has imposed strict controls on what ngos can do, how they can do it, and with whom they can partner.

Key human rights concerns as a result of the conflict

The indiscriminate bombing of civilians – Both countries have targeted and killed unarmed and innocent civilians through their airforces and through shelling.

The Ethiopian airforce bombed Asmara Airport on June 5 and the village of Lali Deda on 9 February 1999. The same day Eritrea condemned the shelling of its border town of Adiquala in which it claimed eight civilians were killed and dozens wounded by Ethiopian artillery. Ethiopia has denied targeting civilians deliberately and issued an apology on 11 February regretting the civilian deaths in Lali Deda.

On 15 April, the Ethiopian airforce attacked Adi Kaieh, about 60kms north of Zalembessa and Mendefera, about 55kms south of Asmara. Eritrea announced that 10 school children and an elderly man were injured in the attack on Adi Kaieh and that a church had been destroyed.

The Eritrean air force bombed Mekele Airport and a few other targets in the area. The government of Eritrea has acknowledged that during air strikes on Mekele, a school was hit and some 47 civilians were killed. It called the bombing of the school a mistake and has apologised. However it has not made any detailed or formal statement or indicated that an independent inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the bombing will be held.

The displacement and ill treatment of civilians – In March 1999 the World Food Program estimated that 337,000 Ethiopians had been displaced as a result of the fighting. Most of these were farmers living in or along the border of the Badme area. UN estimates state that Eritrea is handling roughly 100,000 internally displaced people. Both sides claim that the other has tortured and ill-treated its civilians and had destroyed and looted homes and churches in the disputed areas. There were also claims of women being raped and being forced to assume different identities.

The treatment of Prisoners of War – Both countries are holding POWs captured during fighting. Eritrea announced that it was holding 147 in February 1999 having released 71 Ethiopian POWs in August 1998. There have not been any other releases as of May 1999. The Ethiopian government has not indicated how many Eritrean POWs it is holding, however there are at least 150 in Bilate camp in southeastern Ethiopia. Ethiopia has allowed the ICRC access to the POWs in Bilate. The Eritrean government has not allowed the ICRC access to Ethiopian POWs, but it has offered to allow other human rights bodies access to them and to the prisons.

The internment of civilians – Both Eritrea and Ethiopia have detained civilians. In the Ethiopian context these persons fall into three basic categories:

- "internment" designed as a preventive security measure - where the cases can be regarded as falling under the Geneva Conventions; this only concerns 1,200 Eritreans detained in Bilate camp in Ethiopia, to whom the ICRC has access;
- arrests of Eritreans in Ethiopia for deportation as soon as possible to Eritrea. This now a considerable number on account of the suspension of deportations in February, due to the border fighting;
- arrests of people suspected of having committed a security offence and being investigated for possible charge and trial: some Eritreans arrested for deportation were interrogated for suspected security offences, but were not taken to court or charged. There may be a considerable number of such detainees. In Eritrea, there may have been several arrests of this nature, and the Eritrean authorities acknowledged ten were still being held without charge or trial in January 1999.

In Ethiopia, around 1,200 Eritrean civilians have been interned at Bilate detention camp in southeastern Ethiopia. Most were arrested in June 1998, reportedly because they had either received military training in Eritrea as part of a national service requirement or were former Eritrean guerrilla fighters. Although detained because of the war and not within the provisions of the Ethiopian criminal justice system, these individuals are not 'prisoners of war' as defined by the Geneva Conventions. Most are between the ages of 20 and 40 years but Amnesty International has received reports of the detention of children as young as 14 years and of elderly persons as old as 70 years. They have not been charged with any offence or taken to court, and the government evidently has no intention of doing so. The government regards them as 'war detainees' to whom it has given the ICRC regular access.

The treatment of Ethiopians in Eritrea and of Eritreans in Ethiopia - Over 70,000 people have moved across the border between the two countries. Both countries claim that their citizens have been ill treated, arbitrarily detained and expelled in violation of their human rights.

Ethiopians in Eritrea

Prior to the conflict, an estimated 100,000 Ethiopians were working in Eritrea. Many of them lost their jobs as a result of the conflict which resulted in a sharp downturn in economic activity, particularly in port cities of Assab (an estimated 30,000 Ethiopians lost their jobs) and Massawa. Without any income the Ethiopians were soon destitute and homeless.

At the end of June 1998 the Eritrean authorities said that the Ethiopians were free to leave but before being permitted to leave they first had to pay off any debts, utility bills and purchase an exit visa, which many Ethiopians were unable to do. In September, the Eritrean authorities relaxed these rules and

many Ethiopians registered to leave and did leave. The ICRC helped at least 22,000 Ethiopians return home by the end of January 1999. A few thousand returned by other means. The exact number of Ethiopians left in Eritrea is uncertain.

AI does not believe that the reports from Ethiopians who had returned from Eritrea amount to a systematic policy of ill-treatment by the Eritrean government. However, there have been instances in which private citizens and members of the security forces violated the rights of Ethiopians, despite the announcement of the National Assembly of Eritrea warning them not do so.

Eritreans in Ethiopia

On June 12, 1998 the Ethiopian government announced that officials of the Eritrean Government and the ruling party would have to leave the country. It also stated that anyone found spying or mobilizing financial resources for the Eritrean war effort would be expelled. The Ethiopian government estimated that this would amount to about 1,045 people. On July 11, the government announced that another 1,000 Eritreans would be expelled for the same reasons of national security.

About 53,000 people were expelled between June 1998 and the resumption of hostilities on February 6th, 1999. At the peak of the deportations, an estimated 1,500 people per week were expelled to Ethiopia's border with Eritrea, while others were sent to Ethiopia's borders with Kenya and Djibouti. Spouses, children and elderly dependents have also been deported and people of Eritrean origin abroad have had their Ethiopian passports cancelled by Ethiopian embassy officials.

The issue of Eritrean citizenship – Most of those expelled were born, or long resident in Ethiopia, held Ethiopian passports and had lived and worked in Ethiopia all of their lives. Under Article 33 of the Ethiopian Constitution, no Ethiopian national shall be deprived of the nationality against their will. Article 11 (b) of the Ethiopian Nationality law states that people lose their Ethiopian nationality when they willingly take up a foreign nationality. The Ethiopian government has asserted that the people of Eritrean origin who registered to vote in the Eritrean Independence Referendum in 1993 thereby forfeited their Ethiopian citizenship. Although those expelled had identity cards, which entitled them to vote in the referendum, and were entitled to take up Eritrean citizenship if they wished, they had not formally done so, and so had not formally renounced their Ethiopian citizenship.

Violating International law – AI is aware that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) allows for states to derogate from certain obligations under the Covenant as long as the measures taken are not inconsistent with their other obligations under international law and or are not discriminatory. This derogation can only happen after a state of emergency has been declared and must be communicated to the Secretary General of the UN. The Ethiopian government has not announced a state of emergency nor has it announced that it is derogating from any provision of the ICCPR. At the same time the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights does not allow for any derogations, even in time of war.

AI is also concerned that person who were arrested by the Ethiopian authorities were not informed of the charges against them – the charges were rarely specific or in the form of a written order - nor given the opportunity to challenge the reason for their detention- none of the expelled were taken to a court of law or charged with any offence.

Conclusions and Key Recommendations

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I would like to reiterate what this testimony is meant to do It is to:

- briefly document the human rights situation prior to the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea,
- review the abuses that have occurred as a result of the war,
- make recommendations to both governments to try and rectify those abuses and,
- urge members of the international community to play a role in helping end those violations.

We are also not here to endorse one country or to condemn the other as being guilty of more heinous abuses. All human rights violations are unacceptable, even those committed during a conflict situation. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia have used the allegations of human rights abuses against their nationals in the other country as justification for their own actions in this conflict. However, both countries have a responsibility to protect human rights within their jurisdictions and to ensure that the protection of human rights is a part of any negotiated settlement between the two countries.

It is imperative that steps to redress the issue of human rights violations by both sides be established as both sides have widely publicised allegations of human rights violations against their citizens. Amnesty International believes that unless this is done the tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea will continue with the possibility of further conflict and human rights violations, even if the border dispute is resolved in a satisfactory manner.

Amnesty International USA is also aware of the energy and effort that has been expended by the United States to try and resolve this conflict peacefully. Both the Clinton Administration and the members of Congress, like yourselves who have appealed, implored both governments to resolve the issue peacefully. You should be commended but also be encouraged to do more, because the bottom line is that we have not succeeded yet. Until we do succeed, these reports and hearings will be by necessity, focused wasted potential instead of documenting positive change in Ethiopia, in Eritrea or in the region in general.

Mr. Chairman, it is the time is past due for maximum diplomatic and political pressure to be brought to bear on both governments. Pressure is needed from foreign governments with links to either Eritrea or Ethiopia, from institutions, which both countries are members of, and perhaps most importantly from their support bases outside of Africa. It is essential that the Ethiopian and Eritrean communities living here in the United States -who seem to be waging an even more vociferous war against each other than are Asmara and Addis Ababa, - be reminded of the lives that are being lost, the resources that are being wasted and the suffering of the people in the region. Perhaps then, when there is no more support for the fighting and when there are stark costs to pay both diplomatically and politically both sides, or even one side, will have the courage to say enough is enough and stop fighting. In that regard w make the the following recommendations.

To the US Government and the International Community:

- AI urges the Clinton administration and Congress to insist that human rights be at the top of the agenda of any efforts to end to the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The US government should insist that both governments give full and unrestricted access to the

ICRC to all prisoners of war and to all political prisoners

- The Administration should publicly call on both governments to publicly announce that Ethiopians and Eritreans who were forced to leave each country as a result of the conflict will be free to return to their former homes and places of work and, that an independent review panel to address issues of ownership, property disputes will be established where appropriate, compensation, for Ethiopians resident in Eritrea and Eritreans resident in Ethiopia at the time of the conflict.

- Congress and the senior officials in the administration should forcefully speak out against all human rights violations existing prior to the conflict as a result of it. In particular crackdowns against civil society, including the independent press should be publicly challenged and condemned. The close ties that the US has with both governments do not preclude it from condemning actions and policies that are wrong. Both countries look to the United States for leadership. It is time to exercise that leadership.

To Both Governments:

- Take active measures to ensure the protection of the civilian population in line with the fourth Geneva Convention and Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions.

- Give immediate access to the ICRC to all prisoners of war and civilian internees.

- Take active efforts to ensure that once hostilities end that all prisoners of war and civilian internees shall be released as soon as possible.

- Publicly announce that Ethiopians and Eritreans who were forced to leave each country as a result of the conflict are free to return to their former homes and places of work.

- Establish an independent review panel to address issues of ownership, property disputes and, where appropriate, compensation, for Ethiopians resident in Eritrea and Eritreans resident in Ethiopia at the time of the conflict.

To the Ethiopian Government

- Announce publicly a stop to the arbitrary expulsion of Eritreans and people of Eritrean origin.
- Immediately review the cases of all remaining civilian internees, including those held at Bilate camp, with a view to securing their speedy release in line with Articles 43 and 133 of the Geneva Conventions.
- Publicly reassure Eritreans living and working in Ethiopia that they are not at risk of ill-treatment because of their Eritrean origin and the protection of their rights under Ethiopian and international law.
- Rescind the confiscation of citizenship, through the issuing of new identity cards and passports, to any Ethiopians of Eritrean origin who wish to return to Ethiopia.

- Clarify, as a matter of urgency, the laws relating to citizenship and the status of Eritreans within the country.
- Establish an independent enquiry into the allegations of ill treatment of persons of Eritrean origin during their detention and deportation and to bring to justice all those responsible for such ill treatment.

To the Eritrean Government:

- Instigate an independent and impartial judicial, public inquiry into the killings of Ethiopian civilians at Mekele by the Eritrean air forces. The inquiry should especially review the Eritrean air force's rules of engagement and operational guidelines for implementing the principle of distinction between military and civilian targets and make recommendations to prevent unlawful killings in the future.
- Ratify the four Geneva Conventions and the two Additional Protocols. In the interim period, the government of Eritrea should grant full access to the International Committee of the Red Cross to all places of detention and all prisoners of war.
- Establish an independent and impartial judicial inquiry into the claims of ill treatment of Ethiopians in Eritrea and bring to justice anyone responsible for human rights violations.
- Review with a view to releasing, and allowing to return to Ethiopia, all Ethiopians held in detention, unless they are to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence. These persons should also be allowed to exercise their right to challenge the orders for their detention in court

List of Amnesty International Documents on Ethiopia and Eritrea

ETHIOPIA: Accountability past and present: Human rights in transition – 4/95

ETHIOPIA: Human rights trials and delayed justice- the case of human rights gold medallist Mammo Wolde and hundreds of other uncharged detainees – 7/96

ETHIOPIA: RED TERROR DETAINEES FINALLY CHARGED - 1/23/97

ETHIOPIA: Human rights defenders arrested as part of government crackdown should be released - 11/27/97

ERITREA and ETHIOPIA: Amnesty International Report 1996 - 6/97

Urgent Action Appeals: 17 cases

ETHIOPIA: Journalists in prison - press freedom under attack - 4/23/98

ETHIOPIA: Open Letter from the Secretary General of Amnesty International to Participants at a Conference in Addis Ababa, 18-22 May 1998, on the Establishment of a Human Rights Commission and Office of Ombudsman - May 1998

ETHIOPIA: Amnesty International criticizes government's resumption of executions - 6/98

ETHIOPIA and ERITREA Civilians killed in border conflict - 6/12/98

ERITREA and ETHIOPIA: Amnesty International Report 1997 - 6/98

Urgent Action Appeals: 36 cases

ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA: Amnesty International witnesses cruelty of mass deportations - 1/29/99

ETHIOPIA/ERITREA: Amnesty International welcomes Ethiopia's release of 38 Eritrean students - 2/16/99

ERITREA and ETHIOPIA: Ethiopia and Eritrea Human rights issues in a year of armed conflict – 5/21/99

United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

SEP 21 1999

Dear Mr. Campbell:

During the May 25th House International Relations Africa Subcommittee hearing on the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, you asked Assistant Secretary Rice for a written response about the Ethiopian government's treatment of Mr. Michael Berhane-Gebre.

Assistant Secretary Rice's staff met May 12th with Mr. Michael Berhane-Gebre, an American citizen of Eritrean origin. Mr. Berhane-Gebre told them he was detained by federal Ethiopian authorities in Addis Ababa on November 19, 1998, and kept in custody until he was deported to Germany January 16, 1999. At the time of his detention, he was in Ethiopia pursuant to an investment opportunity involving a brewery to be built in Tigray region. In addition to his concerns about his detention and deportation, Mr. Berhane-Gebre told us he also wishes to pursue recovery of his personal investment of approximately $500,000 in the brewery project.

We are raising strong concerns with the Ethiopian authorities regarding their failure to notify us of Mr. Berhane-Gebre's detention and subsequent deportation. We are also working with Mr. Berhane-Gebre to further clarify his situation and assess what more we can do on his behalf.

The Honorable
Tom Campbell,
House of Representatives.

When we have a better understanding of the specific circumstances of his case, we will be pleased to help him pursue it through proper channels. We will inform your office of the eventual outcome of these efforts.

If we can be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Barbara Larkin

Barbara Larkin
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

cc:
Chairman Ed Royce