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BY

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The incapacity of the Ethiopian regime to conquer Eritrea and its growing dependence on Eastern bloc and Cuban military supplies, advisers and logistical support has deep historical roots in the particular relations which defined empire-colonial relations. The particularities of this relationship are grounded in the fact that the Eritrean colony was and is more advanced economically and socially than the imperial regime. Haile Selaisse imposed imperial domination through a bureaucratic-feudal state upon an Eritrean social formation which had already established a relatively more advanced form of commodity production, including capitalist plantations, and industry linked through a developed mercantile network. Feudal bureaucratic colonial domination blocked further growth of the more advanced Eritrean social formation, stunting the development of the productive forces, limiting market production, absorbing skilled labor and 'pillaging' the advanced units of production. The numerically superior Ethiopian state's incapacity to effectively colonize Eritrea was based on the latter's qualitatively higher level of cultural achievement, rooted in the more advanced forms of social production. Ethiopia's initial annexation and occupation of Eritrea did not immediately bring to bear the substantive inequality of development: yet the ingredients for underdeveloping Eritrea were present from the beginning. The willingness of sections of the Eritrean compradore bourgeoisie and sections of the petty bourgeoisie to "trade off" political freedom for 'economic opportunity' within a federated framework proved to be illusory. The feudal-bureaucratic state used its politico-military apparatus to harness the economic resources of Eritrea to sustain the decaying imperial power. The systematic disintegration of Eritrean socio-economic structures under the feudal-bureaucratic regime tended to

impoverish and block opportunities for continuing reproduction of Eritrean capital externally and internally. This pattern of 'regressive underdevelopment' set in motion a chain reaction of opposition which linked together all classes tied to the previously developed productive and distributive networks. The generalized constraint imposed by the bureaucratic feudal empire homogenized Eritrean discontent: all classes faced the imminent stagnation imposed by the dead-hand of the decrepit emperor. The initial national protest by the workers' movement in the advanced economic centers (culminating in the general strike of 1958) reflected their greater sensitivity to the disintegrating effects of feudal control. The spread of the national liberation struggle from the cities tothe countryside, and the subsequent reciprocal relationships that emerged between town and country describes the process by which the colonial regime's initial selective political repression became massified, engulfing all sectors and levels of Eritrean society: from the workers and professionals in Asmara to the subsistence producers and nomadic pastoralists in the hinterland.

The strategic superiority of the Eritrean liberation movement is rooted in the particular colonial experiences that set Eritrean development apart from the Ethiopian feudal empire. In particular, Italian colonial occupation and later British administration control more fully developed the productive forces and political institutions in Eritrea than did the bureaucratic-feudal regime of Selassie. This anomolous outcome, of colonialism contributing to growth while an independent state perpetuated backwardness, must be examined in its historical and class specificities lest we be drawn to the pernicious doctrine of the neo-colonial Warren school which trumpets the universally and historically progressive nature of imperial exploitation.

Italian imperialism in Eritrea had two faces: on the one hand, it was

an oppressive colonial power; on the other, it developed the productive forces. In particular, Italian colonialism envisioned Eritrea as a special colony -- a jumping off spot to establish an Italian empire in Africa. Being the initial point, the Italian state invested heavily in the development of infrastructure and financed the development of an Italian settler-colony which, in turn, was influential in drawing further resources from the metropolitan country to the colony. In the case of the Italian-Eritrean relation, the flow of capital from the center to the periphery greatly exceeded the return of profits.

The settler colony also placed demands on the "mother-country" which a common 'exploitation colony' could not have exercised. The Italian state rationalized the unprofitability of the particular Eritrean colony in terms of the larger empire and profits it envisioned as part of its continual conquest. Hence the Italian promoted infrastructure developed in Eritrea was seen as a means of conquering Ethiopia -- hence the specific unevenness in development between the two regions in transport, development and market relations.

The second source for the greater development of Eritrea was the role that Eritrea played during World War Two as a supply depot for the allied forces. Under British administrative control, and due to its strategic position, Eritrea was able to develop industry and expand its commerce. Because of war time constraints on the developed industrial countries, local Eritrean enterprises flourished. At the same time under the relatively 'liberal' political climate that was tolerated by British rulers (relative to political conditions under the Selassie regime) the new wage, entrepreneurial and employee groups were able to participate openly in political life, forming civic, trade union and political associations. The combined impact of Italian colonial investment, and the stimulation of production and distribution during World War Two, created very substantive unevenness in development between Eritrea and Ethiopia -- and

became a major source of conflict: having experienced economic expansion and political liberalization, the Eritreans experienced the Ethiopian occupation as a backward and downward push. The growth of Eritrean national and cultural consciousness is intimately linked with the collective experience of sharing a common decline in socio-economic status and political freedom. To the common experience of resisting European oppression was added the degradation of being subject to a stagnant feudal empire. The World War Two boom that saw aircraft assembly plants, increasing commercial and transport activity, growing administrative experience was initially undermined by the reassertion of world capitalist penetration of local markets after the war and by the Ethiopian occupation. The rising Eritrean petty bourgeois and working class associated with the previous growth increasingly came into conflict with the feudal political and social fetters that increasingly restricted their capacity to control the state and direct it toward promoting the productive forces in Eritrea. The economic decline precipitated by Ethiopian domination had the increasing effect of homogenizing the Eritrean population -- in poverty. In the 1970's the increased repression and destruction levelled the distinctions between property and propertyless classes, creating displaced masses without ties to traditional patterns who became available for and increasingly provided the basis for the further radicalization of the Eritrean liberation movement. The combined effects of pillage, oppression, repression and displacement led the most advanced sectors of the national liberation movement to combine the struggle for national liberation with the socialization of production.

Soviet Policy and the Ethiopian Regime

The growth and deepening of Soviet ties to the Ethiopian military dictatorship is not a result of its so-called radical social reforms nor of its anti-imperialist foreign policy. Nor is it a reflection of growing Soviet

"social imperialism." The Soviet Union's deep involvement in Ethiopia is the result of its declining position in the region and its relative weakness viz a viz the U.S. and the conservative Arab state. A brief examination of the context of Soviet involvement in Ethiopia will bring the issues into focus. The major Soviet push in Ethiopia occurred after the U.S.S.R. was ousted in the Sudan and Egypt, which, in turn, was preceded by the jailing and assassination of pro-Soviet Communist supporters in each of these countries. The defeats of the Communist Party in both countries and Soviet political defeats and diplomatic isolation were compounded by the shift in Somolia toward Saudi Arabia and the expulsion of the Soviets in November of 1977. It was only after these political losses that the U.S.S.R. made a massive commitment to the Menghistu regime -- and then only after the dictatorship demonstrated a capacity to consolidate its rulership and after it had weakened its ties with Israel and the U.S. Up until then Soviet policy had been more concerned with retaining its right wing regional allies than with any of the 'land reforms' undertaken by the regime. Soviet policy was conditioned by the shifts in state to state relations and its concern with retaining political and diplomatic leverage. This belies the contention that the Kremlin's support of Ethiopia was based on internal social changes -- most of which took place much earlier. If it were not for the hostile policies initiated by the neighboring countries, in expelling the Soviets and aligning with the U.S., it is doubtful whether the U.S.S.R. would have made its big move to bolster the sagging Menghistu regime, at least not in the scale and scope that it did. More basically, the Soviet ties to Third World regimes, like the Menghistu regime, are 'extensive' at the state to state level but don't penetrate deep into the society, nor are they linked to any revolutionary class forces. Ethiopia's economic ties continue basically with the West. In fact, its exports to the Western industrial markets—

increased from 69 percent to 72 percent between 1960 and 1978. Capitalist and pre-capitalist relations of production operate as a sea around the islands of nationalized enterprise. These state to state ties at the apex of society are designed by the Soviets to carve out outposts of political influence and strategic advantages (a military base, naval port, etc.) and are extremely vulnerable to being reversed with shifts within the governing clique. Massive Soviet support has not changed Menghistu into a Soviet-style communist of the Eastern European variety. On the contrary, there is a high probability of the Soviets being ousted as they were in Somalia, Egypt and Sudan, if and when the bureaucratic dictatorship deems it to its interest.

The major impact of the Soviet intervention was to fundamentally shift the balance of struggle against the Eritrean liberation struggle and in favor of the Mengistu regime. In this regard, Halliday and Molyneaux's discussion of the Ethiopian revolution is deeply flawed and contradictory. At one point they argue that the provision of Soviet arms and Cuban troops merely enabled the Ethiopians to achieve a more rapid and decisive victory than would otherwise have been possible. They argue that the "demographic preponderance" of Ethiopia, the fact that it "felt itself invaded" would have led it to reassert its "strategic predominance" over Eritrea. This is one of the more specious arguments that they raise. First, mere population size is no determining factor in modern or ancient conflicts. In particular, the qualitative advantages discussed above certainly were decisive in the Eritrean victories in the mid-1970's. Secondly, empirical evidence suggests that it was the Eritreans who felt themselves invaded (and not only "felt" it but experienced it in bombed out villages and razed cities) and who therefore developed the will to struggle to the end. In contrast, the forced conscripted peasant armies felt no such commitment -- they were fighting far from their land and family and frequently deserted or fought very poorly. In sum, the Halliday-Molyneaux assertion that

the Ethiopian dictatorship would have eventually conquered Eritrea without Soviet assistance is not at all convincing. Paradoxically, in an off hand statement they later observe, more accurately, "Overall the Ethiopian military campaign in Eritrea would have been impossible without the initial and continuing agreement of the Russians." Apparently and fortunately, consistency is not one of their virtues.

Soviet support was directed at maintaining a political foothold in the Horn of Africa to compensate for declining influence in world politics and, in particular, in the Middle East and Northern Africa. The Ethiopian regime opening to the Soviets was to harness military aid to prevent it from military and political disintegration and to retain control of its colonial possessions. The Soviet-Ethiopian alliance's ideological afinity with socialist values is minimal. Soviet ideologists and the defenders of the Ethiopian regime claim that the alliance is an expression of revolutionary solidarity. There is better reason to think that it is based on conjunctural congruence of state interests. Those who argue that it is a question of solidarity presume that we are dealing with a social revolutionary regime when in fact it is a dictatorship over, not by, the proletariat. Apart from the systematic exclusion of workers and peasants and their representatives from all decision-making bodies, the regime's policies and intervention are directed against all expressions of independent working class action. The question that proponents who argue that Ethiopia has experienced a social revolution have to answer is whether there can be a <u>revolutionary</u> class in the modern world that is not oul' non-working class or peasant -- but rather acts in a systematic and violent fashion to destroy their independent class organizations. If so, the proponents must demonstrate how and where this new revolutionary class emerges and they must specify the substance and nature of the society that this 'revolution' produces. The political institutionalization of bureaucratic-military rulers -- the Dergue --

not workers' councils, defines the class nature of the state: a highly centralized and authoritarian state capitalist regime.

Despite the claims of the military rulers, the dictatorship over the workers and peasants controls all political life and subordinates all classes to the state. This is not a case of socialism but of dictatorial statism. The Soviet characterization of it as a "non-capitalist road" type of regime is not convincing. It is not a way station between reaction and socialist revolution, but rather a form of dictatorial state capitalism that attempts to usurp political space from both the masses and imperialism: it nationalizes imperial property and appropriates the workers' surplus. The proponents of the "non-capitalist regimes" are defined by what they deny more than by what they affirm, by the classes they repress rather than the classes they represent. The advocates of the "non-capitalist way" have formulated a regime in search of a political perspective -- one that substitutes demagogic maneuvers for political principles, which improvises radical rhetoric precisely when it denies the oppressed class the means to institutionalize class power. The style of the regime reveals its content: their revolutionary manifestos fill the squares with demonstrators while their broken promises empty the streets and fill the morgues. Historical experience teaches us that sooner or later space for maneuver shrinks and time runs out. The continual internal and external pressures (class, national, imperial) exhaust the regime's options and it turns against itself. A military coup sets the stage for the resurgence of neo-capitalist restoration. The imprisoned workers, repressed intellectuals, the militants from the national movements are in no position to deepen the process: only the military officials next in line execute change and not infrequently in collaboration with imperial intelligence agencies and with the promises of the international bankers. There is no reason to believe that the

road of the Ethiopian regime will be any different. And Soviet "Marxists" can overlook another example of a non-capitalist regime which returns to the capitalist road.

Nationalization Class Relations and the Ethiopian State

Soviet, Cuban and Western defenders of the Ethiopian regime cite the growth of the state sector -- nationalization of property -- as the key issue in defining its "revolutionary" character. No doubt there have been very basic shifts in the forms of property ownership. The old feudal landlords, the Church and the absolutist monarchy have been replaced. The fundamental question, however, is by whom and for what? We cannot assume that what is not landlord is peasant; what is not capitalist is worker; what is not absolutist rule is popular-democratic government. The nationalization establishes a new bureaucratic military class power that is neither feudal nor social revolutionary: it has destroyed one set of hierarchical exploitative relations and raised another. Insofar as the direct producers are concerned, it has not ended the appropriation of surplus nor has the regime even proven that it can utilize the surplus exploited from labor to develop the productive forces. Nationalization can be viewed as progressive when it serves to develop the productive forces (not develop the forces of destruction), to develop internal markets (not to conquer external markets). Thus far the empirical evidence demonstrates that the statification of the Ethiopian economy has been harnessed to a military caste intent on pillaging a more advanced social formation (Eritrea), and it is these military-political goals and activities that define the function and meaning of nationalization, not the professions of socialism mouthed by regime publicists.

Ethiopia's regimes'and society's backwardness preclude any neo-colonialist style "federation" solution to the Eritrean question. The Ethiopian ruling

class lacks the economic resources and financial power to establish strong economic links. Without Soviet backed Ethiopian political-military domination, Eritrean society would soon develop links to those developed economies and societies which complement its own development needs. Secondly, the Ethiopian regime lacks collaborator classes within Eritera capable of sustaining a neo-colonial federated state: the advance of the class-national struggle has progressively eliminated those groups and individuals who earlier might have played this role.

Soviet-Ethiopian Relations in World Historic Perspective

The Vietnam revolution disarticulated the U.S. imperial state. In the immediate aftermath of the U.S. defeat, the armed forces, the American public and U.S. allies were not willing or able to effectively intervene in Third World revolutionary struggles. Simultaneously with the disarticulation of the U.S. state, Soviet influence continued to decline both in the Third World and among its former allies. The development of revolutionary movements independent and frequently in opposition to the two dominant powers defined the new reality.

Within the Third World where the super-powers were no longer controlling events, there emerged several strands of "anti-imperialism", each reflecting its unique social-political characteristics and a different set of dominant forces.

In Nicaragua and Angola 'nationalist-socialist' regimes emerged; in Iran a clerical-feudal, anti-imperialist that sought to restore pre-capitalist relations gained hegemony; in Afghanistan a pro-Soviet elite attempted to impose 'socialism' from above on a pre-capitalist society; in Ethiopia the bureaucratic-military regime attempted to forge a state-capitalist society while retaining its colonial framework. The crises of U.S. hegemony produced a variety of responses -- the results were not all "progressive." The Soviet response,

however, was not premised on how 'progressive' the regime was from the point of view of internal class relations, but how it reacted at the state level: did it weaken U.S. imperialism?

What the Soviet state sought to obtain was political and military influence at the level of the state -- not the promotion of social revolution. Soviet intervention was based on obtaining 'spheres of influence'. It does not penetrate deeply into society. It is precisely for that reason that what some describe as Soviet "client states", "surrogates", etc. are able to dislodge the Soviets with such ease. In pursuit of strategic locations, bases, ports and diplomatic support, Soviet civil and military missions have no deep ties with important collaborator classes in Ethiopia. Unlike Western imperialism which develops long-standing, deep-structural relations with capitalists, landowners, etc., the Soviets lack organic ties with old oppressors and new exploiting classes.

Soviet policy supports regimes which weaken imperialism but do not threaten Soviet-style socialism by raising the issue of democratic control. Soviet policy-makers' reliance on military-political influence at the level of the state is designed to avoid involvement in revolutionary mobilization that might break out of the boundaries of bureaucratic-statist regime-states. For Soviet strategists, state-capitalist regimes are more compatible with their internal class and ideological interests, as well as for international reasons. This combination of internal and external reasons explains why Soviet policy-makers continually reiterate their support for "non-capitalist regimes" despite the frequency with which they turn against the U.S.S.R.

U.S.: Declining Hegemony and the Revival of the Cold War

The decline of U.S. imperial state and the upsurge of anti-imperialist revolts revealed that no substitute imperial state could replace the role played

by the U.S. The proliferation of regional power centers and the growth of intra-Third World wars was one symptom of the new fragmentation of power. Most clearly the expansionist efforts by Indonesia in East Timor, Turkey into Cyprus, Iraq and now Iran in the Persian Gulf, Israel into Lebanon and Ethiopia in Eritrea defined a new conjunctural phenomena: the attempts by local Third World regimes to resolve the crisis of legitimacy through external conquest. The rise and demise of bourgeois nationalism in Ethiopia stands as a clear example: a regime which simultaneously promoted 'national liberation' and national oppression. The contradiction between its economic backwardness and political hegemonic aspirations were temporarily resolved through massive external dependence (on the U.S.S.R.). The Ethiopian regime lacked an underlying strategic predominance to carry off its dual goal: its very backwardness in material life undercut any appeals it might make to the Eritrian masses. Ethiopia's high rates of illiteracy, technical backwardness, and dictatorial regime, its general low level of economic development did not provide for a kind of 'Napoleonic liberation' from above and the outside. Without Soviet intervention, the strategic historical advantage was clearly in Eritrean hands: a more developed society, with higher skills, and the motivation of an invaded country. It is in this context of declining U.S. hegemony that we can best understand the effort by the Reagan Administration (and before it Carter) to revive the Cold War. Essentially it represents an effort to reestablish the power and supremacy that it possessed in the 1950's. In the following section we will discuss the nature and strategy of the Reagan Administration in pursuing this new policy and its implications for Third World Liberation struggles.

Confrontation on a Global Scale: Components and Strategies

The most salient feature of the revival of the Cold War has been the massive military build-up undertaken by the Reagan Administration. The military program is a wide-ranging and comprehensive effort. Multi-purposed and multi-pronged, it is directed at strengthening U.S. military interventionary capacity, bolstering clients and bludgeoning European and Japanese allies into sharing the military costs commensurate with the benefits that they derive from the imperial system. The military build-up is manifested in several inter-related areas: (a) the development of new weapons systems and their location in forward positions; (b) the development of new military bases and the increasing effort to integrate 'host' nations in overall U.S. strategy; (c) the strengthening of old military alliances, including demands that allies increase their military spending, including new weapon systems, etc.; and (d) developing new military alliances, especially with former pariah regimes (colonial settlers, such as Israel and South Africa) that can serve as 'regional police forces' sharing in the destabilization of zones of revolutionary mobilization.

The over-arching commitment of the Reagan Administration is to out-muscle the Soviet Union.

The build-up of the naval and air force is intended to intimidate third world regimes in the process of transforming their society and to inhibit the transfer of material supplies to liberation movements. Equally important, the military build-up is a form of "armed propaganda", putting recalcitrant democratic allies on notice of the centrality of the U.S. in the Western scheme of things, as well as providing 'moral support' to dictatorial clients in the third world that the armed might of Washington stands ready to protect regime stability. The new weapons system then are as much a propaganda symbol, signalling a new policy of confrontation, as it is an

outcome of the Reaganites drive to substitute military solutions for the political, diplomatic and economic failures of U.S. policy. Unable to construct a meaningful political-economic approach to revolutionary upheavals and North-South conflicts, Washington seeks, through its military power, to reorganize the agenda, establish new political boundaries, impose solutions that basically reflect overwhelming U.S. economic interests.

The military bases are physical extensions of the new military definitions of foreign policy: the military presence and "exercises" give literal meaning to the "projection of power" policy currently enunciated in Washington. Psychologically it reassures local clients that U.S. intervention to save tottering regimes is a credible policy. The bases are not primarily concerned with external Soviet expansion, but mainly as points of departure to intervene in critical third world countries, in which vital U.S. corporate interests are being adversely affected. The argument of "deterrence" against the U.S.S.R. becomes a means for preemptive action against internal revolutionary forces. Nevertheless, the political costs of a U.S. military presence in delegitimizing a regime has precluded some ruling groups from openly embracing the U.S. proposal: large-scale training missions and bases in adjoining areas serve the same purpose.

Complementing the military build-up is a policy of strengthening old military alliances and developing new ones. The tacit alliance with South Africa and Israel are being upgraded to strategic ones; the de facto collaboration with the right-wing dictatorships in Chile and Argentina are being revived. Efforts to promote a South Atlantic Treaty Organization to dominate the region are being pursued .

The most serious efforts, however, are concentrated in pressuring the NATO countries to increase their weapons procurement policies, to build up their armed forces and share the military cost of defending the imperial system. Long-standing tensions have emerged between the U.S., Europe and Japan over the fact that the U.S. pays the military bill for sustaining third world regions in which their competitors are extracting high profits. The U.S. program is to pressure all its regional allies to accelerate and expand their military programs within a basically U.S. centered global alliance. In Europe, the effort of the Reagan Administration is to implicate the NATO members in U.S. policy through new military deployments: the stationing of new missiles and weapon systems controlled by the U.S. underlines the very real loss of sovereignty which this implies in the control over foreign policy -- and the terms of negotiation with the Soviet Union. The added leverage obtained by U.S. policy-makers enhances their capacity to disregard European initiatives -- reverting U.S.-European relations back to the 1950's. The policies toward the third world are in major agreement with the direction of this approach: arms sales and 'strategic agreements' are being hammered out with Turkey, Pakistan and South Korea, South Africa, and Egypt at each end of Africa and the promotion of Somalia as a military outpost at the Horn. The military bases and the joint military activities within these regions serves to bolster the status quo regimes and directly involves the U.S. armed forces in the role of defending incumbent dictators against popular opposition movements. The military build-up of the U.S. and its extension abroad has the general political effect of strengthening the coercive apparatus of incumbent regimes, and marginalizing democratic and reformist forces from any institutional role.

New Strategies for Direct Intervention

Above we have been discussing the new patterns of arms build-up and the patterns of military alliances which are emerging. In this section we would like to focus on the likely policies to be pursued in accordance with these developments. The overarching reality that emerges is the growing willingness by U.S. policy-makers to sanction and approve a "regional policeman's" role for its strategic allies. The explicit relations with South Africa, the strategic alliance with Israel and the reestablishment of ties with Pinochet in Chile, Viola in Argentina, the reconsolidation of relations with Marcos in the Philippines and the South Korean regimes are directed at forestalling any new changes in the third world, as well as reversing processes of change already underway. The U.S. defense of the South African invasion of Angola is in accordance with the Reagan Administration's policy of defending South Africa, of destabilizing Angola and of creating a client regime in Namibia. The invasion reflected the convergence of interests between the Botha and Reagan regimes. The disregard of African bourgeois nationalist and Western European opinion suggests the centrality of the South African connection for U.S. policy. Likewise in the Middle East, the U.S. agreement to deepen its ties with Israel, the doctrine of strategic collaboration including military ties on land, sea and air, involves efforts by Washington policy-makers to police the whole Middle East. The growth of radical anti-imperialist forces, the fragility of oil-rich regime and the absence of Arab based forces with a capacity to intervene, has led the Washington administration to seek to increase the role of Israel, despite the adverse reactions among pro-U.S. Arab regimes. The collaboration of Israel would be essential to any direct use of the Rapid Deployment Forces, the new combat teams, established to specialize in the protection of U.S. corporate access to oil. South Africa and Israel's military power and the willingness to use it thus

fits in nicely with the Reagan Third World policy, at a time when other Third World and Western European allies have proven refractory to the Reagan view of East-West confrontation.

The capacity for U.S. intervention is thus built on a twofold basis: in the first instance, direct support and supply of the established military-dictatorial regimes and in the final instance the effort to construct a regional based police force that can provide for the collective security of any particular regime threatened by upheaval. The impact and consequences for the third world of U.S. policy are profound: the decline of diplomacy and political negotiations as instruments of policy in the face of the ascendancy of the arms build-up. This does not mean that all negotiations will be eschewed, especially in light of the constant pressures by Western allies. What it does mean, however, is that negotiations and summit meetings with Socialist and revolutionary regimes will be ritualistic affairs in which Washington will hope to "demonstrate" their ineffectiveness -- they will become themselves propaganda forums to reinforce the commitment to policies of confrontation. International meetings with adversaries will be arenas to "warn" or "threaten" or "pressure" them to accommodate U.S. interests or face retaliation. Negotiations and meetings thus become an extension of the confrontational relationship -- a process that will affect every area of international exchange. The Reagan Administration's decision to proceed with confrontational policies was taken unilaterally -- the allies are presented accomplished facts and the alternatives of accepting them or being subject to U.S. pressure. The strategy of the Reagan Administration is to "create facts" which polarize East/West, forcing the rest of the capitalist world to follow suit.

The main criteria today in shaping Reaganite policy is how a regime lines up on the issue of East-West polarization and whether it is willing to subordinate itself to U.S. leadership in pursuit of the politics of confrontation. The revival of the doctrine of a bi-polar world and the attempt to submerge all conflicts into this pattern will be resisted by many allies of the U.S.: West Germany, with its trade ties with the Eastern bloc; Saudi Arabia, with its fears of Israeli expansionism; Indonesia and Malaysia with their fears of Chinese "hegemonism"; Mexico, with its fears of U.S. domination, etc. The ideology of bi-polar global confrontation and the polarizing effects that it evokes will have an adverse effect not only on 'non-aligned' forces, but will undercut the position of middle class liberal-democratic and nationalistic movements within third world countries: the right-wing and repressive political terrain will favor clandestine groups over legalists; the supply and training of military forces will encourage violent, as opposed to electoral, activity; the attacks on the center will force centrists out of politics or over to the left. Global confrontation which polarizes international politics will have a tendency to do likewise internally. The end of policy is to reconstruct the structure of power that existed in the 1950's -- and to recuperate the economic position that accompanied uncontested military supremacy.

The commitment of the Reagan Administration to the reconstruction of the world in the image of the 1950's requires a number of fundamental changes -- most of which are beyond the realm of possibility (including "military supremacy over the U.S.S.R.," dominating European economic and foreign policy, etc.). What appears to be the first strategic task is to prevent any further changes in power -- "containing revolutions" in the third world. This involves a major effort to make El Salvador an example of the "testing of the wills" -- the willingness of the U.S. to maximize the use of force to sustain a repressive

regime, even at the cost of massive loss of civilian lives, even in the absence of allied support. Beyond the revival of preventive-interventionism is the serious planning of policies to reverse established revolutionary regimes. The attempt to retrieve the past involves efforts to destroy the present: the danger is that it can lead to global nuclear war. Washington, under Reagan, is not reconciled with the established revolutionary governments in Angola, Nicaragua, Grenada or Cuba. Policy-makers have developed a strategy of confrontation to create the basis for "regionally based" military intervention. The image of revolutionary societies that Reagan projects is revealing; according to him, they are crisis wracked systems devoid of popular support and dependent on outside power to sustain them; the strategy adopted by the Reaganite is to neutralize Soviet assistance (through a military build-up) and then, through combined U.S. and regional allies, engage in a military assault for power.

These extremist positions -- even by U.S. standards -- reflect the new personnel in Washington whose ideological propensities and styles are divorced from the practical exigencies of day to day business operation: the extreme voluntarism manifested in U.S. foreign policy -- the will to power -- substitutes individual desires and powers above the objective circumstances that allow for the realization of policy goals.

The adventurism in this approach is obvious. The same subjectivity is evidenced in the Reagan approach to the market; the problem is the "psychology" of Wall Street for not investing in industry and stock -- not the high interest rates or the availability of other areas which provide higher profit rates. There is an emerging

conflict between the militarist-voluntarist policy geared to reversing global trends over the past twenty years and the more sober-minded calculations of pragmatic Western businessmen who recognize the realities of post-revolutionary society -- and try to maximize opportunities: the divorce between political power and economic power, however, has yet to manifest itself in any clear-cut alternative program. It finds expression only in opposition to particular policy measures.

The first manifestations of the new Reagan offensive strategy have already appeared: the deepening ties with Israel have found expression in the invasion of Beirut and the bombing of Iraq. Despite Washington's disclaimers, the action was followed by a Washington initiative to formalize a relationship of "strategic collaboration." The rapproachment with South Africa is evidenced in Washinton's veto of a Security Council resolution condemning its invasion of Angola. The South Africa invasion established terrain for the operation of the U.S. promoted UNITA terrorists in Angola and attempts to create a zone between Angola and Namibia to isolate SWAPO from its Namibian supporters.

Massive bombings, full-scale invasions, massive internal political crackdowns, are the first fruits of the new era of the Cold War. While the strategic collaborators thus follow the policy of open warfare, the Reagan Administration pursues a policy of unremitting pressure on Europeans and moderate nationalist governments in the third world. Following the French-Mexican declaration of support for the Salvadorean Democratic Revolutionary Front, twelve Latin American countries were mobilized to denounce the declaration. Vernon Walters, Reagan's roving ambassador, is the laiason with the most extremist forces in the Latin American military, and the

key figure organizing support for U.S. positions. The process of integrating and subordinating Latin countries within the U.S. orbit has been operating primarily at the military-strategic levels, as the growing pattern of economic diversification make more difficult a greater control by the U.S. (for example, Argentina's heavy dependence on grain sales to the Soviet bloc).

The revival and extension of Central Intelligency Agency activity as a factor in destabilizing nationalist regimes in the Third World is once again evident in the recent reports of attempts on the life of the Libyian head of state. The activation of terrorist activity against the Angolan government and the harassment of the Cuban government are also likely indications of stepped up CIA activity -- following patterns established earlier.

The mounting pressures on Japan and Europe to re-arm for confrontation is promoted by a demagogic campaign centering on the efforts in Poland to extricate itself from Soviet and local Stalinist domination. The Soviet-Polish confrontation has been manipulated by the Reagan Administration as a means of mobilizing and militarizing Western Europe under U.S. hegemony. By focusing on Soviet-Polish relations, Washington hopes to extend its own brand of interventionism: brandishing the threat of Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe, it hopes to subordinate Western Europe to its efforts to polarize the world.

The goals of the Reagan Administration include:

(1) Reestablishment of U.S. military-economic hegemony over the Third World, through the development of a network of stable strategic collaborators capable of jointly participating in armed occupation of target areas;

(2) Displacement of European and Japanese hegemony in areas which it has undercut U.S. positions, deflecting competition, and striking a more favorable 'balance' between the partners regarding their economic gains and their military expenditures; and

(3) Creating new opportunities for U.S. capital expansion and new markets for U.S. goods by universalizing the free market economic strategy. Rejection of large-scale public funding and the proposals for a New International Economic Order are centerpieces of the new strategy.

Central to the Reagan strategy of "making the U.S. number one again" is the restructuring of U.S. society and economy: the federal budget is oriented toward cutting taxes and social services to free capital to accumulate, compete and increase its share of markets worldwide; the increase in the military budget is to provide the imperial state with the armaments to defend and create the opportunities for expansion. Thus the Reagan approach is a new historical project based on a sharp reconcentration of capital for export which leaves out the labor movement: it represents a shift from 'social' or 'welfare imperialism' in which domestic reform accompanies outward expansion to an approach in which internal exploitation becomes a necessary condition for imperialism. The basic difference is the enormous growth of competition between advanced countries and the new challenges from the third world which have vastly increased the costs of participation in the world economy. The cost of external expansion, however, point to one of many contradictions between the goals of the new historical project of the Reagan Administration and the historical realities of the world economy.

The U.S. and the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa is of particular importance to Washington because of the adjoining regions of which it forms an integral part: namely, the countries facing the Red Sea and access to the Indian Ocean. Thus while the Horn in itself does not have great economic interest, it does have "strategic significance", namely that influence in the region provides major powers leverage in shaping policies in countries where economic interests are paramount -- in particular,

the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries.

Thus the formulation of U.S. policy toward the regimes in the Horn is shaped by how these interact with U.S. policy toward larger regional issues. One of Washington's prime concerns in the Middle East has been to refashion a collaborative framework involving Egypt-Israel-Saudi Arabia, thus excluding the Soviet Union. The Camp David Agreement achieved part of this goal. (Saudi Arabia and most other Arab states rejected it.) The basic concern of U.S. policy-makers was to mobilize support behind the Egyptian position. Behind the support for Egypt and the overall Camp David framework, Washington envisioned the reinsertion of the U.S. in the Middle East -- through its clients and allies -- as the major power shaping development agendas and political direction. This core concern with projecting U.S. power in the Middle East radiated outward toward the adjoining region, including the Horn of Africa. For Washington a crucial determining factor of U.S. policy toward the countries in the region was their relationship toward Egypt and its participation in the Camp David framework: the ties between Sudan and Somalia with Egypt are decisive elements in shaping Washington's favorable policy. There are other issues that define U.S. policy toward the countries of the Horn -- namely their relationship with the U.S.S.R. and their disposition to U.S. bases facing the Indian Ocean. Washington's commitment to Sudan, Somalia and Kenya is dictated in part by their hostility to the Soviets and their willingness to provide bases for U.S. forces near the Indian Ocean.

U.S.-Ethiopian relations deteriorated subsequent to the overthrow of Selassie in 1974. According to policy-makers in Washington, the points of conflict revolved around three issues: Ethiopia's close ties with the U.S.S.R.; its failure to compensate expropriated U.S. corporations (roughly $28 million dollars); criticism of U.S. policy in regard to South Africa, Puerto Rico and

the failure to criticize Soviet policy in Afghanistan. The same policy-makers perceived little prospect for improvement in relations in the near future. As a result, U.S. aid is directed toward those regimes that serve its larger interests. Or as one policy-maker stated: "We will stand closest to our best friends in the area... These are Kenya, Sudan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia." U.S. aid figures for 1982 confirm this statement:

U.S. Aid 1982
(in millions of dollars)

Sudan	206.6
Kenya	116.2
Somalia	78.5
Djibonti	5.3
Ethiopia	3.4

Nevertheless, Washington is aware of the superficial nature of Ethiopian military Marxism, the willingness of the regime to maneuver and, most fundamentally, that the Ethiopian regime continues to be basically integrated into the capitalist world market. Soviet involvement has not changed this basic link since it has mainly provided military assistance and sales and Soviet links to the Ethiopian economy are much weaker. The economic basis exists, therefore, for the Ethiopian regime to make a shift in its international policy once it has exhausted its strategic needs from the U.S.S.R. and once it decides to tap into Western financial resources and marketplaces. Washington policy-makers are aware of these possibilities. As one U.S. official stated in 1981: "...We seek to continue a dialogue with the Ethiopian Government. We provide humanitarian assistance and we intend to continue to do so and we are ready to take advantage of opportunities which may come up in the future to improve our relations with Ethiopia"[1] (my emphasis). In 1982 there were the first signs that in fact a rapproachment between Washington and the Menghistu regime were in the offering. One influential policy-maker in Washington testified that: "We

have indications from the Ethiopians that they desire to improve relations between our two countries and they have taken some steps in this direction. For example, the government of Ethiopia has begun to settle various nationalization claims."[2] It would be no great surprise then -- given the class nature of the Ethiopian state to see it switch sides in the Cold War, shifting its supplier from Moscow to Washington. The latter was virtually unaffected by the 'nationalization' -- most of those expropriated were local landlords -- hence there are few 'pressures' among U.S. businessmen for a hostile policy. The key is Washington's ability to replace Soviet influence and retake strategic military positions and what they can offer the Ethiopian regime in exchange.

Conclusion

In the final analysis the Ethiopian experience demonstrates that no progressive social reform can be sustained internally while an imperial war is pursued abroad. This is true from a practical point of view (expenditures) and from an ideological perspective (military brutalization abroad reverberates at home and vice versa). The initial responsiveness of the military regime to mass demands was eroded by the constant pressure of war abroad. The stagnation of the economy is directly related to the growth of the military. Prior to 1974 there were 44,000 soldiers in the armed forces and expenditures of 40 million. By 1980 there were 230,000 soldiers and expenditures reached $385 million. Meanwhile, in the areas of education and health the central government's expenditures per capita were the same in 1978 as they were under the Selassie regime. With agricultural and industrial production virtually stagnant, it is obvious that the regime cannot sustain its commitments to development and military expansion in Eritrea.

The peasants, being the recipients of land reform, were pressed into the military as cannon fodder to sustain the imperial pretensions of the regime.

The forced conscription of peasants by the regime and their subsequent death marches are in their own fashion as exploitative of the peasants as the rent-gouging carried out under Selassie feudal monarchy. The location of peasant sacrifice is different, the rhetoric is certainly novel, but the result is the same: peasant life and labor is sacrificed for alien ends. The overall balance sheet of military-agrarianism or, better still, reformism harnessed to military conquest, clearly demonstrates that from the perspective of the peasant, life has not improved: landlord induced insecurities are replaced by new state inflicted concerns.

While some writers on the left have emphasized the international realignments and internal changes carried out by the regime, they have with grand simplicity overlooked the state and class context within which those changes have taken place. The harnessing of the peasants and workers to an expansive chauvanist state, the alignment with the U.S.S.R. precisely in order to secure arms to maintain a colonial relationship do not speak to a revolutionary regime but describe a colonial version of state capitalism -- one in profound crisis and without the internal flexibility to rectify its course.

Footnotes

[1]Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Year 1981 (Part 7), Sub-Committee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives.

[2]Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Year 1982 (Part 8), Sub-Committee on Africa, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives.