

THE HERALD

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The Herald #21 is in two parts. #1 focuses on topics relating to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Africa. #2, which will arrive separately, has all other topics usually covered in *The Herald*— news of friends, the Peace Corps, our group, books of interest, etc.

A REPORT

Peace Initiative efforts

by Leo Cecchini (Asmara 62–64)

Inside

Letter to the UN Secretary-General	3
The response	3
A follow-up on the grain issue ...	4
News from the Horn	6
Ambassador Shinn comments ..	17
East Coast Regional Summit on Africa: a report	19
Report on assessment trip to camps for war displaced in Gash-Barka	20
Steering Committee	30
Other Contacts	30

THIS ARTICLE COVERS TWO recent activities involving E&E RPCV's peace initiative and the prospects for peace.

Food Politics

After receiving an appeal from Eritrean UN Ambassador Haile Menkerios, I approached the State Department to see why the US government had told Eritrea that the US had no grain available for it now. I had told Menkerios that the US has plenty of grain and that there must be some policy snag. State told me that I should talk to the US Department of Agriculture. I then arranged a briefing at Agriculture for Eritrean Ambassador to the US Semere Russom and his staff. The Ag people told Russom that they like working with Eritrea because it gets the grain distributed quickly and efficiently. It also confirmed that it was planning to include Eritrea in the coming year's allocations of grant food

(PL 480 and Section 416 programs for those versed in US Government jargon). However, this would only be available after clearing up the "problem" with USAID. Russom took advantage of the meeting to state that there are 63,000 Eritreans evicted from Ethiopia and over 400,000 Eritreans displaced by the war all of whom are in dire need of food.

After the meeting I asked Russom about the "problem" with USAID. He said that the outbreak of the war last year left some 50,000 tons of grain for Ethiopia at the port of Assab. Rather than let it go to waste, Eritrea appropriated the grain and distributed it in the Assab area. USAID had demanded an accounting of the disposal of this grain.

I then called Ambassador Menkerios in New York who informed me that subsequent to our last meeting he had been made aware of the problem and had given a written reply to the UN in which Eritrea accepted all responsibility

for the appropriated grain and gave an accounting of its use. He said that the UN accepted Eritrea's report as fulfilling its demands. I asked him to send me a copy of the UN reply to pass on to Agriculture.

[NOTE: For more about this topic, see "A follow-up on the grain shipment issue" on page 4.]

Meeting at State Department

I went with National Peace Corps Association president Dane Smith (Asmara 63-65)* to call on the new Director of the Office of East African Affairs at the State Department on October 13th. The Director, Jeff Millington, is an old colleague of mine from the days of bringing an end to the war in Mozambique. We reviewed the state of play in negotiating an end to the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Millington repeated what we know from other sources: The Eritreans have accepted the OAU cease-fire proposal while Ethiopia is still insisting on clarifications and assurances. I said it appeared as though the Ethiopians want a precooked deal that will allow them to stay in the territories they regain under the cease-fire no matter how the border is demarcated. Jeff said the Ethiopians are delaying because they question the ability of the international community to deliver an honest, unbiased solution, i.e. something acceptable to the Ethiopians. Nevertheless the US Government is working full-tilt to get the Ethiopians to sign the OAU plan before a hot war begins again now that the dry season has begun. He said a resolution will be achieved within the next few weeks.

* See article about Dane's appointment in the "Friends" section of *The Herald*, Part 2.

I noted that Ambassador Menkerios has gone out on a limb by getting his government to accept the OAU formula and agree to withdraw from all areas claimed by the Ethiopians. I said that further delay weakens his position and if he should be removed from the scene there is little chance of any peaceful resolution of the conflict.

I raised the point that the Ethiopians will not yield until the US and other donors cut off all aid and assistance to them. Jeff said that the Ethiopians know that the "full weight of the US and international organizations will fall on them if they renew hostilities." Dane asked what actions the US and others would take should that happen. Jeff responded that we would make our displeasure clear and unambiguous. It would appear from these comments that the US Government will not cut off aid and assistance unless the Ethiopians attack Eritrea again, thus allowing the Ethiopians to continue to stall and bleed the Eritreans slowly while negotiations proceed. However, most observers expect renewed heavy fighting if no cease-fire is achieved. All know that they are working against the clock.

Dane asked Jeff about the proposal made during the [John] Garamendi (Metu 66-68) visit and by others to hold peace negotiations in the US ala the Camp David Accords for the Middle East or the Dayton Accord for Bosnia. Jeff said that they are 90% of the way to getting the OAU plan accepted and thus the US sees no reason to launch another formula for peace at this time. My suspicion is that if the OAU plan fails, the US will simply defer to the UN for a next step, most likely a Security Council resolution to force both parties to adopt a cease-fire, rather than try to resolve it itself.

I described E&E RPCV's work over the last year. I said that we are still prepared to help administer the disputed area while the UN settles the border. Jeff said that after a cease-fire is in place the OAU will send in about 50 military people to supervise the cease-fire. The UN will later send some 100 people to help the Ethiopians and Eritreans administer the disputed areas. (Subsequently, Dane sent a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan once more offering E&E RPCV's services as an administrator in the disputed areas.) [Note: See letter on page 3, plus response.]

I raised the matter of no US grain for Eritrea saying it posed two problems, first, Eritreans will suffer if they do not receive any food aid, and second, since we continue to supply grain to the Ethiopians, our refusal to do so for Eritrea suggests that the US is biased in its dealings with the two countries. Jeff said that USAID still demands a full accounting from Eritrea of the appropriated grain. I said that since the UN accepts Eritrea's *mea culpa* and apologies with explanations about the grain, why are we still demanding our pound of flesh. I added that the USAID operation in Eritrea has been a disaster since its inception and this action proves my point. Jeff said that the US Government is negotiating a resolution to the problem and he expects grain will be available when needed.

Jeff asked me why I had gone to the Department of Agriculture with this problem since it is not blocking the grain shipments. I said that his office told me to go there and when Agriculture told me to go to USAID I realized that I was on the old Washington Merry-Go-Round. I reiterated that, with the UN absolving Eritrea for the grain appropriation, it is time for the US to follow suit.

Whither the War?

The US Government continues to lean more toward Ethiopia in this contest than Eritrea. The rationale behind this tilt is that our government believes it must sustain what it perceives to be a fragile regime in Ethiopia to prevent chaos in the Horn of Africa. My reply is that with no government and a lawless society in Somalia and a brutal war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, how much more chaos could there be? However, if the Ethiopians should attack again, the US will call them to task. My fear is that Ethiopia will eventually prevail in armed conflict by sheer force of numbers. Again, keep your fingers crossed and hope the Ethiopians accept the cease-fire.

Letter to the UN Secretary-General

October 15, 1999

H.E. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General
The United Nations
New York NY 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

My organization, the National Peace Corps Association, represents more than 100,000 Americans who have served as Volunteers of the U.S. Peace Corps, doing development work at the local level in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific Islands and Eastern Europe.

Our members continue to have a strong interest in the welfare and well-being of the peoples of the developing world. Over the past few years a number of our members — Returned Peace Corps Volunteers — have played an active role in trying to resolve peacefully conflicts

in several countries in which they have served. For example, when I was U.S. Ambassador to Guinea, and subsequently, as President Clinton's Special Envoy to Liberia (a role in which I met with you as Under Secretary for Peace - Keeping), I worked closely with the FRIENDS OF LIBERIA, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who had served in that country and an NPCA affiliate, to mobilize American public support for a peace settlement. FRIENDS OF LIBERIA contributed a number of monitors to the Liberian election of 1996.

Another of our member groups, ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS (E&E RPCVs), has been engaged in the search for a peaceful resolution to the border war between those two countries. Over the past year this group has met the leaders of both countries in the United States and in their respective capitals, as well as with other concerned parties such as the U.N. and representatives of several African states, keeping the U.S. State Department informed. As a result the E&E RPCVs have developed and put forward proposals to assist the efforts of the peace efforts of the U.N. and the O.A.U.

One particularly creative and useful proposal has been that E&E RPCVs serve temporarily as neutral administrators of the disputed areas, alongside U.N. or O.A.U. peace-keepers, during the period between the withdrawal of the contending armed forces and the final demarcation of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. This proposal is based on the evident acceptance by both sides of the absolute neutrality of the RPCV administrators, their proven ability to function effectively in both countries, the respect in which they are held by populations on both sides of the border, and their singular commitment

to bringing an end to this very destructive conflict.

As the two sides hopefully enter the final stages of adopting the O.A.U.-proposed cease-fire and final resolution of the dispute, I ask that you consider taking advantage of the E&E RPCVs' proposal to deploy certain of its members as administrators of the disputed areas, during the peace-keeping phase until the border question is resolved.

We will be happy to provide additional information on the group and its plan for administering the areas, if you are interested. We would be pleased to arrange a briefing for you and your staff on their qualifications and how they plan to do the job.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dane F. Smith, Jr.
President (and Ambassador *ret'd*)

c. Dr. Susan Rice, Asst Secretary of State
for African Affairs

The response

28 October 1999

Dear Mr. Smith,

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 15 October on the possible contribution of the ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS to the search for peace in the tragic conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Following the acceptance by both sides of the OAU Framework Agreement and the Modalities for its Implementation, the Technical Arrangements for the Implementation of the framework Agreement were prepared through a

joint effort of OAU/UN/US and have been presented to the two parties. Eritrea accepted the Technical Arrangements on 8 August whereas Ethiopia has reserved its position and requested clarifications, which were given on 23 August.

With Ethiopia reaffirming its intention to pursue further consultations with OAU in order to resolve the conflict peacefully, efforts are under way, spear-headed by the Special Envoy of the OAU Current Chairman, to overcome the remaining difficulties. The OAU Special Envoy enjoys the full confidence and support of the United Nations.

We are at present very concerned about a possible resumption of hostilities as we witness the almost daily exchange of hostile propaganda between the two parties, and the Secretary-General has been appealing for maximum restraint on the military front as well as in their public statements. However, let me assure you that we will keep in mind the offer of the National Peace Corps Association in the context of assisting in the implementation of a peace agreement that hopefully will be reached soon.

Ibrahima Fall
Assistant Secretary-General
for Political Affairs

A follow-up on the grain shipment issue

by Marian Haley Beil



ON NOVEMBER 4 THE FOLLOWING email was sent to all those for whom we have email addresses in our database. It was also posted at our web site.

Steering Committee member and chairman of our group's Peace Initiative project, Leo Cecchini, has sent this plea for help in a vital matter:

Eritrea needs your help. Following a comment made by Eritrean Ambassador to the UN Haile Menkarios to me in New York, I have taken several steps to clear an impediment to continued supply of US food assistance to Eritrea.

The problem, in quick terms:

When the war broke out, a considerable amount of grain supplied by the US and other countries, under the World Food Program (WFP) of the UN, for Ethiopia was trapped in the port of Assab, Eritrea [prior to the war, Assab was the primary port used by Ethiopia]. The grain was subsequently used by the Eritreans. Following inquiries by the UN as to the grain's whereabouts, Eritrea told the UN that it is responsible for any lost grain. The UN subsequently instructed the WFP to work with the Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Commis-

sion (ERREC) to account for the grain. USAID, which is also demanding an accounting for the missing grain, is not satisfied with the arrangement made by the UN and demands a better reply from Eritrea before any additional grain can be shipped from the USA to Eritrea.

I am told that the US administration, except for USAID, is willing to accept the Eritrean reply to the UN and move on, especially to be ready to supply emergency grain to Eritrea if required. However, the rest of the administration has been unable to get USAID to change its position.

It would be helpful if you would send email letters to USAID's Administrator, J. Brady Anderson at branderson@usaid.gov urging him to clear this obstacle to US grain shipments to Eritrea. You should make the following points:

1. At this time the war is relatively quiet but now that the rainy season is at an end it could erupt at any time into full-fledged battle. On the peace-seeking front, Eritrea has accepted the peace formula presented by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Ethiopia has not.

In spite of this fact, the US refuses to supply vital food assistance to Eritrea but continues to supply it to Ethiopia without interruption.

2. The US refusal to supply food assistance to Eritrea demonstrates a clear US Government bias toward Ethiopia thus severely diminishing any chance that it can play a role in bringing a peaceful end to this war.
3. The UN has accepted the Eritrean reply on the lost grain matter. It would make sense for the US to follow its lead.
4. In the interests of promoting the peace process and ensuring that no Eritreans suffer food shortages, we ask that USAID resolves the lost grain issue using the WFP/ERREC format and resume the supply of grain to Eritrea.

I believe that if we can get this food assistance issue resolved, the peace process may get some new life. At present the Eritreans say that the rest of the world has abandoned them and they are preparing to go it alone.

BEGINNING IN EARLY DECEMBER, E&E RPCVs began receiving emails from Ethiopians and Eritreans — eight in all — who had seen the above notice at our website, and some who appear to have seen my email address posted at an Ethiopian web site that evidently had

erroneously quoted me as saying “robbery is not a crime” and heaven knows what else. Most of the messages from Ethiopians have voiced strong condemnation of our email — some in nicer terms than others. Those from Eritreans support our message.

Should you find yourself in a discussion on this topic, let me add a few points from Leo and Steering Committee member Jim Solomon:

1. The lost grain was replaced by the US and other donors so Ethiopian children did not suffer. Ethiopia has received full allocations of all grain aid earmarked for it.
2. Eritrea has given the UN a satisfactory accounting of the grain and has pledged to compensate for the loss.
3. If the grain had not been utilized by the Eritreans it would have rotted on the docks for lack of transport to Ethiopia.
4. In spite of Ethiopia now rejecting the OAU peace formula, the US has still not cut off aid to Ethiopia including food aid — unlike other donor countries. The US still denies aid to Eritrea.
5. There is a large body of opinion arguing that all aid be cut off to both Ethiopia and Eritrea until they accept the OAU peace formula. Eritrea has accepted. Ethiopia has not. It would appear that Ethiopia needs to be pressed to accept the peace proposal.
6. The OAU formula for peace is an African response to an African problem. It is not being imposed by those outside Africa. It is a fair and

impartial beginning for finding a peaceful end to this terrible war.

7. People who served as Peace Corps Volunteers or staff in Ethiopia and Eritrea don't want to see anyone suffering, much less starving — neither Ethiopians nor Eritreans.
8. ETHIOPIA & ERITREA RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS, as an organization concerned about the welfare of people of both countries, was presented with an opportunity to help alleviate suffering in Eritrea. We have in the past, and we stand ready now and in the future, to do whatever we can to ease suffering in Ethiopia and bring the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea to an end. We welcome any suggestions along these lines.



And now for the news —

► December 24, 1998 Professor Asrat Woldeyes, renowned surgeon and human rights activist, was released from an Ethiopian prison due to health reasons. He had been in prison since 1994, accused with inciting a rebellion as the President of the AAPO [All-Amhara People's Org.]. He then underwent medical treatment in Houston, Texas for a heart condition, diabetes and loss of vision. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas visited him at the hospital. His release was only for medical treatment abroad as a result of long standing protests by Amnesty International and other human rights organizations. Further charges and a return to prison would follow upon his return to Ethiopia. (Note: Dr. Asrat Woldeyes died in Philadelphia in late May. His legacy for a patriotic and unifying national leadership will be sorely missed.) ERev 1-3/99

► The case of Dr. Taye Woldesemayat, president of the Ethiopian Teachers Association, was postponed until April 11. Dr. Taye has been in prison since 1996 on charges of armed conspiracy against the government. His rights as a political prisoner have been denied while in prison. ERev 1-3/99

► Ethiopia's bid to get back the one-thousand year old Obelisk of Axum has been delayed by the border war and because of the closeness of Axum to the front. The great statue was taken to Rome in 1937 by Mussolini. It is the only obelisk carved on all four sides. It is now on display outside the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome.

Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini recently reaffirmed Italy's intention to return the obelisk. ERev 1-3/99

► January 9, 1999 The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia has confiscated the property of more than 200 Eritreans who were departed. An auction will be held in an effort to recover outstanding loans. ERev 1-3/99

► January 9–16 Representatives of students and youth of African countries and the Diaspora, meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, issued a peace proposal statement which they will send to the two governments involved in the border conflict, the UN and the government of the United States. It called on the South African Students' Congress to endorse the peace plan. ErProf

► January 12 Eritrea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused Ethiopia of planning attacks against Eritrea. The Ethiopian government was reported to have declared "the peace process has come to an end," despite continued efforts by the OAU to resolve the conflict. ErProf

► January 15 The Oromo Liberation Army claimed that it had overrun two military garrisons of "Tigrean occupation forces" in the Borana region and had wiped them out. Civilians were warned to keep away from the area. ErProf

► January 18 Anthony Lake, who is heading U.S. efforts to bring a peaceful resolution to the border dispute, met with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki after having earlier met with Ethiopian officials. ErProf

► January 21 The Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the issuance of a travel warning to Eritrea by the US State Department: "The Government of Eritrea therefore finds the travel warning issued by the US Government on account of the threat of war emanating from the TPLF regime both unjustified and unfair. The letter and spirit of the warning is not acceptable as it can only exacerbate the current tension. In our view, the right course of action . . . should have been to employ its diplomatic leverage to exert the necessary pressure to avert war rather than giving in . . . to the threats and ultimatums that are being issued by the TPLF regime . . ." ErProf

► January 21 Ethiopia ordered the closing of primary and secondary schools and the college of agriculture in the Tigray Region which were along the border with Eritrea. A diplomatic source also told the Al-Hayat news of Addis Ababa that many Ethiopians are emigrating toward the center of the country away from the Eritrean border. ErProf

► January 22 The *Daily Nation*, Nairobi, Kenya, reported that Kenya has expanded its security on its border with Ethiopia after the Oromo Liberation Army attacked two military garrisons in southern Ethiopia. More than 60 Ethiopian forces were reported killed and hundreds of others were wounded. ERev 1-3/99

► January 23–24 A second peace conference for religious leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea was held in Frankfurt, Germany. ErProf



▶ January 24 President Daniel Moi of Kenya met Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki to discuss the border conflict. ErProf

▶ Amnesty International representatives visited Ethiopia in October, 1998, and Eritrea in January, 1999, to examine allegations from both sides of human rights abuses by interviewing returnees from both countries. At least 22,000 Ethiopians have returned to Ethiopia from Eritrea since May, 1998, most after losing their jobs and becoming destitute and some in fear of reprisals. No evidence was found to support Ethiopia's allegations that 40,000 of its citizens had been forcibly deported from Eritrea since May, 1998. Amnesty Int'l appealed to Ethiopia to stop the deportations and the ill treatment of deportees. ErProf

▶ February 5 Agence France Presse reported statistics of the Ethiopian and Eritrean militaries as a result of the border dispute buildup:

Ethiopia is reported to have 320,000 soldiers versus 270,000 Eritrean troops facing off along the 600 mile long border. Ethiopia has purchased Sukhoi-27 fighter-bombers and Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopters from Russia. It also has 30 reconditioned MiG-21s and MiG-23s in its Air Force. One hundred Soviet technicians are training the military at Debre Zeit. Ethiopia also has two US Hercules C-130 transport planes. It also received approximately 100 T-55 tanks in late 1998 from Bulgaria. China has supplied field artillery. It is estimated that Ethiopia has spent more than \$300 million. Officially, 12% of Ethiopia's annual budget of \$1.6 billion (or \$192 million goes for the armed forces. Eritrea has received MiG-29s and Italian-helicopters.

Also reported by the Ethiopian government: Eritrea bombarded Ethiopian positions in the Badme region on Feb. 4. EForum

▶ February 5 The Ethiopian Embassy in Washington reported that two Eritrean planes dropped bombs on Adigrat. Eritrea has denied the report. EForum

▶ February 5 Reuters News Agency reported that an Eritrean official said the Adigrat bombing was a lie. EForum

▶ February 5 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused Ethiopia of opening a new front in Tsorona, central Eritrea with a deployment of 55,000 men. Ethiopia's stated reason was to combat an imminent attack by Eritrea on industrial cities in northern Tigray and the obelisk in Axum. ErProf

▶ February 6 Eritrea claims to have defeated two Ethiopian brigades on two fronts (Badme and Zala Ambessa), taking more than 100 soldiers prisoner with thousands more wounded or killed. Ethiopia is accused of bombing raids in Adi Quala (south of Mendefera) and Lailai Deda.

Each side accused the other of renewing the fighting which took place at the Badme-Sheraro and Mereb-Setit fronts. ErProf EForum

▶ February 6 Ethiopian Airlines changed its hub of operations to Nairobi due to the threats of border conflict. ERev 1-3/99

▶ February 7 Heavy fighting continued on various fronts along the border.

▶ February 8 Fighting expands to the Tsorona front, strategic in its position controlling access to Dekemahare. EForum

▶ February 8 The White House issues a statement of concern regarding the outbreak of heavy fighting.

▶ Both countries claim victory in the current fighting. PanAfrican News Agency

▶ February 10 Fighting raged with artillery attacks by both sides as President Clinton, the UN Security Council

and the OAU called for an immediate halt to the fighting. "I urge both parties to halt the fighting immediately. If the conflict continues, its human and economic cost will be incalculable for the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea. A peaceful solution can and must be found without delay," Clinton's statement said. He also called on both sides to honor a June, 1998 moratorium on air strikes. The opposition Eritrean Liberation Front called on all nations to pressure Eritrea to accept the peace plan. Ethiopia reportedly accepted the OAU proposals but Eritrea asked for clarification on two key points. ERev 1-3/99

▶ February 10 The Joint Task Force of Ethiopian Political and Civic Organizations organized worldwide prayer services at Ethiopian Orthodox churches on the occasion of Ethiopian Christmas. International human rights groups estimated that there are 13,000 prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia. ERev 1-3/99

▶ February 11 Ethiopia declares Eritrean ambassador to Ethiopia persona non grata and gives him 24 hours to leave the country. Other embassy staff had been previously expelled. EForum

▶ February 11 US advises Americans to leave both Ethiopia and Eritrea. NY Times

▶ February 12 The Associated Press reported on the growing number of misplaced persons due to the war. 12,000 are displaced in the area around Tsorona. Three camps are located near the battlefield, and, on occasion, civilians there have been killed or wounded by shelling.

▶ February 12 Residents of Massawa marked the 9th anniversary of its liberation from Ethiopian forces back in 1990. ErProf

▶ February 13 Eritreans deny Ethiopia's claims of 7,000 Eritreans killed or wounded. Eritrea says it killed



1,500, wounded 3,000 in fighting in the last week.

► February 14 Ethiopia bombs near Assab, troops from both countries mass at Bure on the border southeast of Assab. Eritrea orders residents of Zala Ambessa to evacuate. AP, Reuters

► February 15 According to a report by Patrick Gilkes of The BBC World Service, Ethiopia took delivery of eight Sukhoi 27 fighter aircraft, and Eritrea acquired eight to ten Mig-29s. These are much improved from the MiG-21s and MiG-23 from the Marxist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Libya, Bulgaria, Italy, and Qatar reportedly helped fund weapons for Eritrea. Russia and China have helped fund Ethiopian planes and attack helicopters. The aircraft reportedly cost Eritrea \$150 million and Ethiopia \$160 million. Ethiopia is raising money from Ethiopians abroad and asking for “voluntary donations” locally to provide food and medical supplies for the troops. ERev 1-3/99

► February 20 Alexander Last of Reuters reported that a European Union delegation could not mediate a cease-fire agreement based on the OAU framework agreement calling for Eritrea to withdraw to territory it held before the border conflict started on May 6, 1998. Eritrea has repeatedly demanded the withdrawal of both armies from the disputed territory and the introduction of a monitoring force into the area. Ethiopia launched a major infantry attack after intensive artillery attacks on the Badme Front. James Foley of the US State Department issued a statement saying “The US government deeply regrets the use of air power by Ethiopia in the current conflict, in particular against economic targets and near civilian population centers.” ERev 1-3/99

► February 26 After four days of fierce fighting Ethiopian forces broke through the Badme line and recaptured the town. ERev 1-3/99

► February 10 Ethiopia says it will accept no truce without the pullback of Eritrea forces from contested lands.

► February 10 Ethiopia says heavy fighting continues, Eritrea says it is quiet along the border.

► Eritrea says that thousands have been displaced from their homes by the border fighting.

► February 11 Ethiopia apologizes for 5 civilian deaths in deportee camps near Badme.

► February 19 Regional expert, Mr. Patrick Gilkes, wrote for the BBC: “It has been estimated that each side is spending a million dollars a day. But this is likely to be a considerable underestimate.”

► February 21 Ethiopia bombs Assab airport.

► February 23 Ethiopia says it has inflicted heavy losses on Eritrea in fighting at the Badme and Tsonora fronts during the last two days. AfNews

► February 26 Eritrea says Ethiopia broke through the line at Badme. Ethiopia claims victory. AfNews

► February 27 Eritrea pulls out of Badme after 4 days of fierce fighting.

► February 28 Paul Lewis of *The New York Times* reported that Eritrea had accepted the OAU plan calling for the withdraw of Eritrean forces from Badme and a redefinition of the disputed border by neutral experts after Ethiopian forces apparently smashed through its defenses and appeared to be pushing deep in the direction of the Red Sea. ERev 1-3/99

► Thirty-nine university exchange students from Asmara were released after being in detention for eight months in an Ethiopian camp. ErProf

► The residence of the former Eritrean ambassador to Ethiopia was raided, and his luggage was taken before he was expelled from Ethiopia. Embassy staff were also arrested and their where-

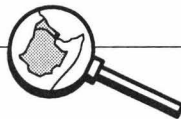
abouts were unknown. Eritrea filed a protest with the International Court of Justice at the Hague. ErProf

► Representative Tom Campbell of California is reported by *The Washington Post* Foreign Service to have advocated a one-to-one meeting between the two leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia. ErProf

► March Eritrea rejected an Ethiopian demand that “Eritrea withdraw completely, unilateral, and unconditionally from remaining Ethiopian territory.” The OAU plan requests that Eritrean troops redeploy from Badme and its environs. This is asked of Eritrea as a sign of goodwill. “This shall not prejudice the final status of this area.” ErProf

► March 5 Eritrean Minister of Foreign Affairs, Haile Weldensae held talks with an OAU high level delegation. He reaffirmed Eritrea’s acceptance of the OAU Framework Agreement which was communicated to the chairman of the OAU on February 27. He stated that Eritrea is committed to an immediate cease fire and cessation of hostilities, and that a high-level body is established to implement the provisions of the Framework Agreement. ErProf

► Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki in a National Television interview accused Ethiopia of refusing the same framework agreement it had accepted before. He stated three preconditions Ethiopia has demanded: 1. Eritrea must pull out of all areas “occupied” before May 6, 1998. These disputed areas have not been defined. 2. Ethiopia would reestablish administration again after Eritrea pulls out of the “disputed” area. 3. Eritrea must pay for the destruction it caused — after expelling 54,000 Eritreans from Ethiopia and confiscating their property. He stated that “It seems that the TPLF regime is intent on continuing the war until either we or itself is finally destroyed. A kind of suicidal war . . . trying to drive a wedge



between the people and the government of Eritrea is futile and the TPLF know it. The idea is to humiliate the otherwise indomitable and unyielding Eritrean people." ErProf

► A two million year old fossil was discovered in Dander, Eritrea. The fossil has not been definitely identified but is one meter long and weighs 55 kilos. It is guessed that it is either a warthog or a hippopotamus. ErProf

► March 9 The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in a joint statement called on their respective peoples not to take part in the border war stating "this border conflict can be resolved peacefully and there is no need to go to war . . . This trend of events must come to an end. Oppressed peoples should not fight wars that do not concern them. There we renew our call to our peoples not to take part in this border war." ErProf

► March 18-19 *The Economist* reported that in the four days of fighting in late February at the battle for Badme up to 40,000 soldiers were killed or injured. After its initial attacks were turned back, Ethiopia launched a barrage of air strikes from bombers, fighters and helicopter gunships followed by attacks by division after division to drive Eritrea out. Eritrea acknowledged defeat by announcing it would accept the OAU peace proposal. Other bitter issues to be settled include demands for reparations and the cruel legacy from the mass deportation of tens of thousands of Eritreans as well as thousands of Ethiopians who have returned from Eritrea claiming abusive treatment. ERev 1-3/99

► It was reported by Ato Wolday Fittur, Advisor to the Eritrean Ministry of Finance that Eritrea's growth rate has been cut in half from 8% to 4% following the severance of trade through the port of Assab. The result was a loss of

90% of the revenue generated from Assab. Eritrea's foreign exchange has dropped to a level lasting for three months from seven months. Inflation has risen to 9% from 2%. According to Ato Habte Abraha of the Eritrean Refugee and Rehab. Commission, over 500,000 Eritreans were exposed to famine and needed immediate relief supplies. Eritrea has appealed to 15 international aid agencies for cash which would purchase food and to contribute blankets, medicine, tents and vehicles. Attempts to buy teff through third parties and sorghum from Sudan have been turned back. EReg 5/99

► Reports persist that the Ethiopian government is forcing young men and women aged 18 to 25 to join the army as regular soldiers in Addis Ababa and Oromia in the South. Farmers are being coerced into rural militias. The Eritrea Youths National Association has reported gathered 25,000 from ages 18

INTERESTED IN SOME BACKGROUND?

There was an excellent article in *The New York Times*, Sunday, March 14, 1999, page 16 of the "Week in Review" section entitled "Wherever That Town Is, Someone Will Die for It" by Ian Fisher. It includes a summary of the major treaties that have been referenced in the the setting of the boundary between Ethiopia and Eritrea and discussion of how each side interprets them. The article is available from our librarian.

to 60 to join in military training. EReg 5/99

► March 13-16 Eritrea says Ethiopia has launched a major offensive on the Tsorona front. Eritrean counteroffensives to recapture Badme were unsuccessful. Ethiopia claimed air superiority in the destruction of a convoy of 30 military trucks full of soldiers heading for the front on March 18. EReg 5/99

► March 20 The Associated Press reported hundreds of bodies of Ethiopian soldiers lay on the battlefield at the Tsorona front following three days of battle which ended on 3/16. Eritrea claims to have killed 10,000 Ethiopian soldiers in that fight, Ethiopia accused Eritrea of lying. Fighting was also reported on two other fronts: along the Mereb River and at Zalambessa.

► March 22 Ethiopia expelled Ato Girma Asmerom, Eritrea's Ambassador to Ethiopia and the OAU, charging that Ato Girma was involved in a network to destabilize the country. EReg 5/99

► March 26 Eritreans in 35 major cities in the world took part in a peace march to bring about an immediate end to the border war.

► March 29 Eritrea accuses Ethiopia of an air strike against civilian targets at Adi Keshi and the Koferenko area. ErProf

► March 29 The African Caribbean Pacific European Union (ACP-EU), meeting in Strasbourg, France, adopted a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire in the border conflict and the implementation of the OAU Framework Agreement. ErProf

► March 31 Twenty-one codefendants of Professor Asrat Woldeyes were sentenced from three up to 20 years after witnesses testified that the codefendants were victims of torture and were forced to sign false confessions. The court did not address the claims of torture. Dr. Asrat was allowed to go to Houston, Texas for health reasons but is



to return for trial. EReg 5/99

- ▶ Students of Awassa Agricultural College and Alemaya Agricultural University held protests over various issues. Students took their president hostage for one day following the suspension of their representative and his detainment by police. Classes resumed following the release of the student. EReg 5/99
- ▶ Students of grades 11 and 12 from Medhane Alem and Harar Secondary Schools accused local officials of the Harari Killil of discriminating in the recruitment of students for the war effort. They asked that Harari students be recruited as were students from other ethnic groups. EReg 5/99
- ▶ April 8 Somali warlords Hussein Aideed and Ali Mohammed complained to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that Ethiopia had taken control of the administration of the towns of Buluhawo and Dolo and that the government was sending arms to destabilize Somalia. UN intervention was requested. EReg 5/99
- ▶ April 14 Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told journalist Richard Dawson that Ethiopia was ready to agree to a cease-fire if Eritrea first agreed to pull out of all occupied Ethiopian territory by a certain deadline. This was a step forward from a previous policy of only offering to stop fighting if Eritrea first withdrew from all occupied territories including Badme (prior to any cease-fire agreement). EReg 5/99
- ▶ April 14–15 Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki met with Sudan's President Omar Al-Beshir in Libya with a goal of normalizing relations between the two countries. ErProf
- ▶ April 14 Ethiopia offered a cease-fire to Eritrea in exchange for Eritrea's promise to withdraw from "occupied" territories.

- ▶ April 15 Ethiopia launched air attacks against Sawa — Eritrea's main military training camp where all youth must train, north of Tesseneay, as well as Adi Keih and Mendefera. The deaths of 2 children were reported. This after a lull in the fighting since late March.
- ▶ April 15 U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia calls for Eritrea to withdraw from a contested areas.
- ▶ April 16 The US State Department issued a statement that "the US does not support any preconditions for an immediate cease-fire." ErProf
- ▶ Eritreans in California have raised US \$3.2 million on the way to a goal of US \$9 million.
- ▶ Lions in eastern Harege have killed 30 hyenas in the worst war between lions and hyenas in years. Six lions were reportedly killed. Local residents dared not intervene and were kept awake by the intense noise. EReg 5/99
- ▶ April 19 Fatuma Roba won her third straight Boston Marathon with her fourth best time ever of 2 hours, 23 minutes and 25 seconds, She said "The flag they (her countrymen) gave me in the hilly area gave me a boost, and I started running.
- ▶ April 26 State Dept. spokesman James Rubin stated that the U.S. is again

calling for a cease-fire in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement saying, "The regime in Addis Ababa is satisfied that it has successfully thwarted any chance for peace through the introduction of 11th hour preconditions and seeks to continue a war of aggression against Eritrea. ErProf 6/12/99

- ▶ April 28 Two Ethiopian fighter planes bombed grazing areas in western Eritrean on the day of a visit by UN Special Envoy Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun. On April 26, Mr. Sahnoun had praised Eritrea's readiness to put into effect the OAU Framework Agreement. The Ethiopian regime claims that Eritrea "has accepted the cease-fire alone without agreeing to the full package." Eritrea calls this a false statement, and claims Ethiopia is using its own preconditions to stall the peace process. ErProf
- ▶ May 1 Meeting in Doha, Qatar, President Isaias Afwerki and Sudan's General Omar Al-Beshir agreed to restore and normalize relations between the two countries. Qatar and Eritrea also agreed to promote close cooperation in trade and investment. ErProf
- ▶ May 3 Eritrea and Sudan restore diplomatic ties.
- ▶ May 8 The first plant in Ethiopia to produce television sets opened in Kaliti. The parent company is Turkish.
- ▶ The OAU called for an immediate cease-fire in the fighting and agreed to send President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, the current Chairman of the OAU, to try to end the fighting. ErProf
- ▶ Eritrea's People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) went to Libya to review progress in the cooperation accord signed in 1998. ErProf
- ▶ President Isaias Afwerki held talks with a delegation sent by current Chairman of the OAU, President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso. ErProf



This map is *very crude*, and is only meant to give you a rough idea of where places are (at least the ones I could find on the several maps I have).



► In many staged demonstrations in Washington DC, members of the Solidarity of Ethiopian Political Prisoners Committee have denounced the government for recruiting children as soldiers, human rights violations, and exposing tens of thousands of Ethiopians to warfare and death. ErProf

► May 10 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that two full divisions of Ethiopian troops invaded the Burie front, 70 kilometers west of Asseb. An Ethiopian offensive on the Mereb Setit front was repulsed. The next day an all-day assault was made by Ethiopia, along the Burie and Alitena-Mereb fronts.

► May 13 President Isaias met with Libya's President Moammar Khadafi of Libya to try to peacefully resolve the crisis in the African Great Lakes region. ErProf

► May 15 Ethiopia announces air attack on Zalambessa causing heavy damage.

► May 16 Ethiopia bombs sites in Massawa.

► May 17 Ethiopia has raised question of "interpretation" regarding the OAU peace proposal.

► May 25 Eritrea reports new fighting on border initiated by Ethiopia which sustained over 2,000 casualties.

► The Ethiopian Human Rights Council has been registered as a nongovernmental, nonpolitical, nonpartisan, civic organization by the government following an application for same in 1991.

► June 9–16 A team lead by **JOHN GARAMENDI** (Metu 66–68) travelled to Asmara and Addis Ababa in an effort to find a peaceful solution to the border conflict. The team, including **MELVIN FOOTE** (73–75) [Executive Director of the Constituency for Africa], **BILL CANBY** (staff 62–64) [U.S. Federal Appellate Court Judge in Phoenix], **MIKE MCCASKEY** (Fiche 65–67) [Chairman of the Chicago Bears] and

CHIC DAMBACH (Colombia 67–69) [former president of the NPCA], met with Isaias Afwerki, President of Eritrea and Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, as well as other government and religious leaders in both countries.

► In his meeting with the group of returned Peace Corps volunteers President Isaias Afwerki told the group of Eritrea's acceptance of the OAU framework and readiness to implement it in good faith. President Isaias stated that "the restoration of the status quo that existed before May 6, 1998 is not tenable. The status quo constitutes and cannot be other than the respect of colonial treaties and associated boundaries." He stated that "administration of the disputed areas cannot be a problem as administration in the legal sense cannot be divorced from sovereignty. The framework agreement has provisions for these issues . . . Eritrea welcomes direct talks at any level." The team then took its peace mission to Addis Ababa. ErProf 6/12/99

► John Garamendi's report about the peace efforts of the team of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers appeared in the *Eritrean Profile*. Quoting a part of his report's conclusion: "Since the team does not have adequate resources to investigate the actual events and boundaries that are in question, it did not attempt to assess responsibility for the cause of the war . . . The team's message was consistent in both capitals — the war must end now! The war has become a stalemate with neither side capable of achieving a military victory. Too many lives have already been lost, economic and social progress has been arrested and set back, and chaos and conflict threaten to engulf the entire region. Ultimately Ethiopia and Eritrea must live together and get along peacefully because they are locked into a symbiotic relationship that is dictated by geography and culture. The solutions to end the conflict are the same today as

the ones that will be available six days, six months, six years, or thousands more dead from today. The issues separating the leaders are no longer insurmountable. We believe face-to-face meetings, facilitated by a third party, between representatives of the leaders and then between the leaders will produce a reasonable, fair and lasting peace. It is the time for leaders on both sides to become heroes for peace, not for war . . . The team will do all it can to encourage President Clinton to invite the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea to a peace conference in America." ErProf

► June 16 The Humanitarian Times reports that there were more than 20,000 casualties from heavy fighting during the previous week.

► June 22 A new airlift of Ethiopian Jews to Israel began. A total of 3,800 expect to emigrate by the end of the year.

► A new secondary school has been inaugurated at Adi Tekelezan, Zoba Anseba, Eritrea, at a cost of 2.2 million nakfa. Local residents raised ten percent of the cost.

► June 26 Eritrea reports Ethiopian planes bombed the Assab airport area with no loss of life. It also reported that 18,000 Ethiopian soldiers were killed or wounded in intense fighting June 9-16. Ethiopia claimed 32,000 Eritrean casualties. Both denied the other's claims. Additional fighting was said to have taken place June 25.

► June 28 Kenya closed its border with Somalia after more than 400 Somali militia-pursued by the Eritrean-backed Oromo Liberation Front of Ethiopia crossed into Kenya, surrounded a Kenyan army unit, took its vehicles and fled back to Somalia. The items were returned after Kenyan jets flew missions over Somalia. EReg 8/99



► Ethiopia sent more than 2,000 troops equipped with heavy artillery and armored personnel carriers into Somalia crossing the border at Dolo. Their mission was to pursue rebels from the Oromo Liberation Front, the Ogadeni National Liberation Front and Al-Ittihad Allslamiyya which Ethiopia believes are all getting support from Eritrea through Hussein Aideed. Mr. Aideed condemned the Ethiopian military intervention, accusing Ethiopia of trying to divide Somalia into six clan-based regions. The government of Libya is trying to mediate. Ethiopia suspects that Libya and Egypt are backing Hussein Aideed and also Eritrea. Eritrea is believed to have been sending arms shipments to the clan of Hussein Aideed. Ethiopia is reported to want to intervene to break Hussein Aideed's dominance in southern Somalia and also to prop up the factions opposed to Aideed.

On July 13 Colonel Abdullahi Ira, a leader of the Al-Ittihad party, was assassinated in Mogadishu. He was suspected of being a leader of the ONLF, a Somali group wanting to secede the Ogaden Region of Ethiopia from Ethiopia. EReg 8/99

► The Eritrean government claimed that a new group of approximately 15,000 Eritreans are awaiting deportation at the Bure front, bringing the total to 60,000. The Ethiopian government says this latest group are those who want to leave the country, some to rejoin their families who were deported earlier. Ethiopia accused Eritrea of indirectly forcing more than 41,000 Ethiopians to leave Eritrea because of a loss of their jobs and property. EReg 8/99

► June 30 The Ethiopian House of People's Representatives approved a budget of 14 billion birr for the 1999/2000 fiscal year. It was an increase of 2 billion birr over the previous year. The budget for military expenditures is 2.5

billion. Already in mid-June, 1 billion birr was transferred from the capital budget to be used for the military. So the total military budget is 3.5 billion birr. There is a 3 billion birr budget deficit for next year, according to the Minister of Finance of the OPDO. This is to be covered with the sale of bonds and treasury bills and possibly borrowing from banks. The budget for the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission is 15.3 million birr. It is estimated that over 5 million people are near starvation due to drought and displacement. Besides drought, governmental policies regarding high interest rates charged for fertilizers, ethnic dislocations, and the curtailment of fertilizer subsidies have contributed to the food shortages. The number of displaced people was 384,697 since May 25, 1999. EReg 8/99

► July 2 The Egyptian ambassador to Ethiopia, Mr. Marwan Baddir, violently attacked the Ethiopian independent press, calling the papers "organs of opposition and Amharas who had lost their power." He characterized the free press as "rumor mongers, filled with hatred and bent on inciting conflict." The ambassador also denied that Egypt was supporting Eritrea in the border war. He did acknowledge that some retired Egyptian military officers may have been hired individually to join the Eritrean forces, and that Egyptian companies may have sold weapons to the Eritrean government. He vowed not to give any interview to the free press until they changed their methods. EReg 8/99

► July Hundreds of Ethiopians were streaming into Dessie trying to escape the famine in the northern part of the country.

► July 3 Libya News Agency reported that Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed to stop fighting under a Libyan initiative complementing the Organization of

African Unity (OAU) framework agreement accepted by the warring parties.

► July 5 Eritrea reported that 1,410 Eritrean civilians deported from Addis Ababa arrived at the port city of Assab.

► July 10-14 At the OAU Peace Summit in Algeria, a peace proposal involving the Framework Agreement and implementation was adopted. The U.S. representatives were Dr. Susan Rice and Anthony Lake. Mr. Kofi Anan, and the IMF Africa Director met with the Ambassadors of the two countries along with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia had attended a pre-conference meeting in Tripoli on July 10 with Moammar Ghaddafi. EReg 8/99

► July 13 U.S. envoy Anthony Lake predicted an end to the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea shortly.

► July 14 Eritrea formally accepts the Modalities for the Implementation of the OAU Framework Agreement at the end of the Algerian meetings.

► July 14 An agency called Action by Churches Together (ACT) made an appeal for humanitarian aid for 500,000 war-affected people in need and 61,500 Eritreans who were expelled from Ethiopia. ErProf

► July 15 In a statement printed in an Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) magazine, former president of the Oromia Region, Ato Hassen Ali, claimed that government soldiers tried to kill him at his home but he escaped. His guard was killed. The assassins were captured and taken to the local police station but were released. His followers were then expelled from the Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO). Ato Hassen has applied for political asylum in the United States. He believes this attack was because he had opposed the interference of the federal government in the affairs of the Oromia regional administration. EReg 8/99



▶ July 27 President Bill Clinton welcomed the acceptance by Eritrea and Ethiopia of the OAU Framework Agreement and the implementation modalities, saying “this is a significant step toward peace” He also stated that “We have worked intensively with the OAU in recent weeks to help bring an end to this devastating conflict. . . . The United States will continue to support the efforts of the OAU under the Chairmanship of Algerian President Bouteflika to bring this tragic conflict to a speedy conclusion.” [Yet to be settled — the Technical Arrangements.] ErProf

▶ July 27–Aug 9 Textile workers at the Awassa Textile Factory went on strike to demand a wage increase. Soldiers took control after fighting took place between workers and a group from the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions. EReg 8/99

▶ A BBC report from Mogadishu which quoted eyewitnesses, said that more than 2,000 armed Ethiopian troops were pushing south past the Somali town of Louk, and that another 3,000 soldiers with heavy artillery and armor were stationed deep inside Somalia. The objective was to seize the airport at Baledogle. ErProf

▶ July 29 Experts from Algeria, the US, the UN and the OAU met in Algiers to work out the Technical Arrangements of the cease-fire. ErProf

▶ July 30 Ethiopia entered Somalia and captures Baidoa in central Somalia. The Humanitarian Times

▶ July 31 The Ministry of Health has made malaria eradication a main priority in a conference at Mendefera. Many UN agencies participated along with USAID and the World Bank. ErProf

▶ Eritrea accepted the OAU Framework Agreement and the implementation principles. The TPLF government accused Eritrea of accepting the plan with the precondition of compensating the people displaced by the war or had property confiscated from them. The Ethiopian government was reported to have lifted its demand to be paid a war indemnity. EReg 8/99

▶ Farmers in the districts of Eastern Shoa region were taken to jail because they were not able to pay for the fertilizer they had brought on credit. EReg 8/99

▶ August 4 Ethiopia asked for more clarification regarding the technical plan for implementation of both the November, 1998 Framework Agreement

and the July, 1999 Implementation Modalities. Eritrea had accepted the draft document.

Ato Haile Wolde Tinsae, Eritrea’s Foreign Minister, said that the technical plan dealt with three main points: When the implementation would commence, who would monitor it, and when it would be completed. He said that a proposal would deploy an OAU observer force and the UN would be deployed along the border to oversee the troop pullback and redeployment as well as the setting up of a provisional civilian administration in the contested areas. This process is expected to last six months to be followed by the delimitation and demarcation of the border during the following six months. However he asked for compensation for Eritreans who had lost property through deportation and displacement. This precondition has been rejected by the Ethiopian government. It may be the clarification Ethiopia had asked about. EReg 8/99

▶ The Swiss government has given Eritrea a grant and collaboration since 1995 in the preservation of archival materials. ErProf

▶ Ethiopia set in motion a new program to register Eritreans which may be a response to the issuance of a new identity paper for Ethiopians residing in Eritrea. EReg 8/99

▶ August 5 Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki received the President of the Int’l Committee of the Red Cross. Violations of human rights against Eritreans who resided in Ethiopia were explained. The leaders agreed to strengthen ties. ErProf

▶ August 5 The International Committee of the Red Cross, in a visit to Ethiopia, heard allegations charging that abusive treatment was being given to Ethiopian prisoners in Eritrea, which is alleged to have denied access to the ICRC. EReg 8/99

NOTE: In reading the “News from the Horn,” keep in mind that the Organization of African States peace proposal that was drafted at their meetings held July 10–14, 1999 in Algeria provided for three separate aspects of the agreement:

- ▶ The Framework Agreement
- ▶ The Modalities for its Implementation
- ▶ The Technical Arrangements for the implementation of the modalities

Ethiopia and Eritrea must accept each of the three aspects in order for the peace proposal to be adopted. (Currently, Eritrea has accepted all three, Ethiopia has rejected the Technical Arrangements.)



▶ August 6 A memorandum of understanding was signed between the US and Eritrea for cooperation in establishing a national Internet gateway in Eritrea. The goal is to use the Internet as a global information tool and to explore ways to assist in the national education development and electronic commerce within Eritrea. ErProf

▶ Disaster aid is being sent by the US Government to Ethiopia in the amount of an additional 90,000 metric tons of food aid, in addition to donations of 42,000 metric tons. Japan has given US \$500,000 for the displaced people of Tigray region. UNICEF has provided US \$ 1.8 million worth of assistance to the displaced people of Tigray in 1999. A reported 28,000 children are reported to be in need of urgent shelter and health care from unhealthy living conditions. EReg 8/99

▶ In Ethiopia, a one-day prison hunger strike to protest their prison conditions reportedly brought promises for improvement. Among those who protested was Dr. Taye Wolde Semayat, former president of the Ethiopian Teachers Assn, who is serving a 15-year sentence, and Ato Tamrat Layne, former Deputy Prime Minister. EReg 8/99

▶ Factions of the All Amhara Peoples Organization (AAPO) have been at odds with each other following the death of Professor Asrat Woldeyes in their attempts to invigorate the AAPO. EReg 8/99

▶ From February through June, approximately 15,000 Eritreans acquired basic literacy at 350 centers in seven national languages. ErProf

▶ Land in Ethiopia has gone from 40% forested to 3%.

▶ August 10 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused Ethiopia of refusing to accept the Technical Arrangements. Ethiopia has sought "clarifications"

which were seen as a delaying tactic to resolving the peace plan. ErProf

▶ August 11, 18 Radio Ethiopia reported that Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) terrorist groups, who tried to cross the Ethiopian border from their base in Somalia, were annihilated by Ethiopian forces. The government claims the OLF is supported by Eritrea. The OLF, which has been fighting for a separate state since 1995, reported heavy losses by the Ethiopians. There was also fighting reported between the two in north east Kenya.

▶ August 12 Ethiopia issued a press release claiming several successes against the Oromo Liberation Front, Al-Ittihad, and the UOPLO who had reportedly invaded Ethiopia from May 26 to August 10, 1999. EReg 8/99

▶ August 14 Sudanese Airlines resumed flights to and from Ethiopia. EReg 8/99

▶ August 17 Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki held talks in Washington with officials of the US State Department and Madeline Albright. The president assured Mrs. Albright that by signing the cease-fire agreement, it will fully cooperate with the implementation of the peace plan to resolve the border dispute. Others attending were Mr. Pickering and Ms. Susan Rice, Head of African Affairs at the State Department. President Afwerki also met with National Security Adviser Sandy Burger. He also attended the Eritrean Festival. ErProf

▶ Aug 26 Eritrea received an OAU delegation which informed its leaders of the clarifications of the Technical Arrangements that the OAU delivered to the Ethiopian authorities. ErProf

▶ August 26 It was reported that Ethiopian troops entered Somalia. The Ethiopian government denied the report.

▶ Aug. 26 Foreign Minister Haile Woldensae declared that Eritrea has accepted the Framework Agreement on February 27, the Modalities of Implementation on July 14, and the Technical Arrangements on August 7, 1999. He stated that "The OAU has stated that the three documents must be taken as a package and the Technical Arrangements are not open to any amendment or interpretation." ErProf

▶ August 27 Nearly a week ago Ethiopia received "clarifications" to the Technical Arrangements from the Organization for African Unity, but they have not responded. Eritrea has already agreed to sign and withdraw from contested areas.

▶ Sept. The former Prime Minister of Algeria and special envoy delivered a document detailing the Modalities for the Implementation of the Framework Agreement to President Isaias Afwerki. He then proceeded to Addis Ababa with a similar mission. ErProf

▶ Sept. Approximately 30,000 secondary school students as well as 800 teachers and university students are involved in the Students Summer Work Campaign Program in 166 centers across Eritrea. The projects involve environmental work and census taking. ErProf

▶ September 2 The Ethiopian government accused Eritrea's First Battalion of the Third Division of launching an attack on Ethiopian positions at the Zalanbesa front. However, the Eritrean Presidential Advisor, Ato Yemane Gebre Mesqel, denied that there had been any fighting. He said this accusation by Ethiopia was to divert attention from Ethiopia's opposition to the placement of observers and to the cessation of hostilities. He conceded, however, that there have



been occasional shellings along the border. A group of foreign correspondents have confirmed that there has been fresh fighting.

- ▶ September Ethiopia registers reservations about the Technical Arrangements for the Implementation of the OAU peace proposal.
- ▶ September 3 US envoys seek approval of OAU peace agreement in visit to Ethiopian and OAU officials in Addis.
- ▶ September 3 Ethiopia reports it repulsed an attack in the Zalambessa area. Eritrea denies the attack.
- ▶ September 4 Ethiopia says it cannot be held responsible for the Learjet aircraft owned by a South African company that was shot down in a no-fly zone over its territory close to the Eritrean border on 29 August.
- ▶ September 15 Ethiopia and Cuba signed an agreement to promote economic, scientific and technical cooperation.
- ▶ September 23 USAID reports that more than 5 million people in Ethiopia are affected by food shortages due to prolonged and severe drought caused by a diminished "big rains" and the border conflict with Eritrea.
- ▶ September 27 Eritrea reports that Germany and Russia have called for acceptance of the OAU peace plan.
- ▶ October 1 The Ethiopian election board invited all parties to register for national and regional elections scheduled for May 20, 2000
- ▶ October 2 The new US ambassador to Ethiopia, Tibor Nagy, Jr., arrived in country. He was ambassador in Guinea from 1996 to '99. Previously, he had been an administrative officer in Addis Ababa from '84 to '86.
- ▶ October 4 Eritrea claimed Zallambessa to be in its territory. Later, Ethiopia strongly objected.
- ▶ October 8 Former Deputy Prime

Minister and Defense Minister, Tamrat Layne, told the Supreme Court that he has been in danger of being poisoned to death while in prison. He claimed he has been denied access to proper medical treatment. He shares the same prison cell with Dr. Taye Woldesemayat, former president of the Ethiopian Teacher's Association.

- ▶ October 14 The documentary filmmaker Yvan Patry, died at age 51 of a heart attack while on a trip to New York. He was a great friend of Eritrea. His first film was "Eritrea, The Longest War." He then directed a series of three films: "The Forgotten War," "A Time to Heal," and "Songs of the Next Harvest." The film "Night and Silence" was filmed in Massawa during the Derg regime's bombing raids in 1991. ErProf
- ▶ October 15 The new US ambassador to Ethiopia signed an agreement to provide \$51.8M to Ethiopia for food security and for education.
- ▶ October 21 Eritrea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused Ethiopia of rounding up 1,300 Eritreans for transport on busses for the purpose of deportation through the Burie war zone front in defiance of In'tl Committee of the Red Cross regulations. ErProf
- ▶ October 25 Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told the OAU that clarification on "technical arrangements" on the modalities for implementing the OAU peace proposal were requested. He also said that Ethiopia is committed to working with the OAU to reach a peace agreement.
- ▶ October 23-24 Ethiopia claimed it repulsed two Eritrean attacks in the Badme region.
- ▶ October 27 Eritrea denied that it had launched an assault the past weekend.
- ▶ Heavy floods in the Ogaden area of eastern Ethiopia claimed 34 lives and left over 79,000 homeless.

▶ October 31 In a statement from the Ministry of Foreign affairs, Ethiopia said it will need dialogue with the OAU over its misgivings concerning the technical arrangements in the peace accord.

▶ October 31 In an interview with Reuters, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki said he would be prepared to pull Eritrean troops back from the disputed areas.

▶ October The Walaita people (formerly Wollamo) have rejected the regimes attempt to force them to adopt Wogagoda, a new language which local authorities have molded from the languages spoken by the Walaita, Gamo, Gofa, and Dawro people. Students and teachers were forced to use new textbooks but they refused.

Local officials addressed a petition to the Prime Minister on May 30, 1999 about the imposition of a language they did not speak nor understand and appealed for the government's intervention. Much pressure was put on the local people to adopt the language including the offer of relief aid if they would accept. Several meetings were called and the Wolaita representatives demanded that the seven districts of Walaita be brought together under one administration and one language. The resistance is spreading. EReg

▶ October The General Election for the Year 2000 is scheduled for Ginbot 6 (mid-May), with the results to be announced on Ginbot 30 by (early June) the National Electoral Board. The representatives of two opposition parties, SEPDC (Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition) and AAPO (The All Amhara Political Organization), called on the government to create an environment for the conduct of a free and fair election. However Ato Dawit Yohannes, the Speaker of the House, stated that there



can be no such dialogue or “negotiation” under a constitutional system of governance. He said, “at this juncture, the EPRDF does not have the mandate to relinquish its political power through such negotiation.” He said that these calls were “constitutionally out of place.”

There are 58 national and regional parties currently operating in the country. Ato Dawit, in a response to a plea for external observers, said that the OAU and IGAD are not considered by Ethiopia as “external observers” as they are already present in Ethiopia. No other observers will be invited.

- ▶ October The trials against former Derg members have proceeded at a very slow rate during the past three years. This is because there are only 12 judges to process 6,400 files. Only 600 of the 6,000 prosecutor's witnesses have testified. There have been many adjournments in order to make a ruling on a given case. The Special Prosecutor's Office has a caseload of 90 files, but has not heard witnesses in 23 of the files. EReg

- ▶ October The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have refused to release loans and foreign assistance to Ethiopia and Eritrea. Mr. Callisto Modavo, World Bank Vice-President for Africa, stated that “the only battles these two countries ought to be involved in are battles against poverty, battles to reverse poor living conditions of these people. These are the aspirations of ordinary Ethiopians and Eritreans. We have told the two countries that there cannot be new lending before they revert to these important battles.” Existing projects will continue to be funded and will not be affected. Uganda reportedly received funding by Germany for development work which was originally meant for Ethiopia and Eritrea.

- ▶ November 2 Ethiopia described Tuesday as “all talk, no action” the offer made by Eritrean President Issaias Afewerki to pull out his troops from contested areas.

- ▶ November 4–6 A conference on AIDS in Ethiopia was held in Addis Ababa. It included efforts to make the general public aware of the epidemic. It is estimated that between 3 and 3.5 million people are infected with HIV in Ethiopia.

- ▶ November 12 Ethiopia says 17 were killed in attacks across the border by Eritrean forces.

- ▶ The Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation internet manager said that Ethiopia's number of internet subscribers has grown to 2,560.

- ▶ November 22 The President of the Sudan held meetings in Addis Ababa as part of on-going efforts to normalize relations between Ethiopia and the Sudan.

- ▶ December 6 Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi announces that he rejects the “technical arrangements” for the OAU peace proposal — “Ethiopia will not sign any document that fails to ensure its sovereignty.”

The arrangements had been worked out by the OAU, the UN, the governments of Algeria and the United States in July. At that time Ethiopia sought clarification of some of the technical arrangements.

Meles now contends that only African heads of state and government have the mandate to “change the peace proposals.”

Eritrea has accepted all three OAU peace documents — the Framework for Agreement, the Modalities for its Implementation and the Technical Arrangements. Ethiopia has rejected the Technical Arrangements.

- ▶ December 16 An OAU team is meeting in Algiers to prepare replies to

Ethiopia's misgivings towards technicalities provided for implementing a plan for resolving its border conflict with Eritrea.

- ▶ December 24 In a bid to counter international pressure for harbouring Mengistu Haile Mariam, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe disclosed that the American and Canadian governments had offered to help his government look after Mengistu. The U.S. embassy in Harare, today, confirmed the information. The U.S. also was actively involved in finding a safe-haven for Mengistu.

- ▶ December 25 According to a report from the Embassy of Eritrea, Ethiopia deported 1,500 additional ethnic Eritreans.

- ▶ December 28 In an interview in the *Johannesburg Star*, Mengistu Haile Mariam denied having ever killed anyone — including Haile Selassie, refused to be judged for war crimes committed during his rule and blamed his downfall on the Soviet Union's withdrawal of support.

- ▶ December 31 Ethiopia and the Sudan agree to open a road linking the two countries.

- ▶ January 1 5,000 welcomed the Millennium at the Sheraton Addis.

- ▶ January 3, 2000 In an OpEd piece in the *Washington Post*, Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman (R-NY) said, “The time has come for the United States and the international community to condemn the Ethiopian's intransigence and urge them not to launch an attack.”

To read the full article go to: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/WPlate/2000-01/03/0111-010300-idx.html>

- ▶ January 4 A Sudanese delegation completed meetings in Asmara on the normalization of relations between the two countries.

Print media sources of material compiled by John Barnes

(Addis Ababa 66-68)

EthRev= Ethiopian Review (1 yr/\$29) PO Box 98499, Atlanta GA 30359

EthReg= Ethiopian Register (1 yr/\$35) PO Box 580 St. Joseph MN 56374

EthNews = News from Ethiopia (free) Embassy of Ethiopia, 2134 Kalorama Rd NW, Washington DC 20008 (free)

EBir = Ethiopian BIR (1 yr/\$15) PO Box 2334 Westfield NJ 07090

ErProf = Eritrea Profile newspaper PO Box 247 Asmara Eritrea Phone: 11-41-14 or 12-77 48x92 Fax 291-1-12-48-47 Published weekly by the Ministry of Information and distributed by the Eritrean Embassy.

Internet sources from internet sources of material forwarded by Richard Crepeau (Dessie 63-65) and compiled by Marian Beil. Any notes having no attribution are from the internet:

EthForum = News from EthioForum@Ethiolist.com with a web site at <http://www.ethiolist.com/>

AfNews = Panafrikan News Agency. Distributed via Africa News Online www.africanews.org

EriNA= Eritrean News Agency

EriEm=Eritrean Embassy

AddTrib=Addis Tribune

FROM AMBASSADOR SHINN'S COMMENTS WHEN HE DEPARTED ETHIOPIA

From various press sources

excerpted by John Barnes

Outgoing US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Dr. David Shinn completed his tenure in Ethiopia on August 14th and he will teach at UCLA for one year as a "diplomat in residence" with the State Department. Dr. Shinn had visited 59 of the 63 administrative zones in Ethiopia. He was the most widely traveled American diplomat to serve there.

The following is an interview he gave to the *Addis Tribune*, on August 6, 1999.

Q. Looking back in retrospect, do you wish you had done anything differently?

A. I think there have been occasions where I have been perhaps too outspoken on some elements of the democratization process and other elements that I am not outspoken enough. You have to reach that happy medium and that is how you become effective . . . If you are too outspoken . . . all you do is make yourself basically persona non-grata. On the other hand, if you take it easy, you can do nothing and obviously you are not going to be effective or have any impact on change.

Change has to come in all elements of the society; it is not only the government that has to change, but civil society has to change too. Opposition parties have to adapt to the government's constitution. They can't just dismiss a constitution

because they are not willing to adapt to that, as some of the opposition groups are not. Then quite frankly, I don't have much interest in them because you just can't function that way. So change has to come on both sides and there is a lot more room for change on both sides. I think that it is necessary in order to have a society that works the way that most people in Ethiopia would like it to be.

...

Commenting on the need for compromise between the government and the opposition parties in regard to the general election of 2000, he stated:

This is a classic situation. Both sides need to approach the issue in a way that will work for them and the country. And that means on the one hand that the government has to make every effort to assure equitable treatment for the opposition parties, that is those that are legally registered in the country. If you refuse to renounce violence and if you refuse to register under the constitutions of Ethiopia then, as I said, I don't have much sympathy for any such group. Any group who does take the initiative to becoming a legally registered party must be treated equitably and must have access, for example, to those kinds of media outlets that the government party has outlets to. There must be a system in place so that they can feel they have an honest chance of achieving some

electoral victories. It really does work both ways and both sides have to yield something in this process. There will never be a totally level playing field and no political system or process is totally level, but if the slant is too steep then the system won't work. It isn't simply a question of the party in power winning elections because there isn't enough opportunity for opposition parties to contest. This also means that the opposition must operate within the system; it must take some political risk. You can't expect to have everything handed to you on a silver platter. If you are not willing to take some of those risks one should not be in politics because politics is by definition something of a risky business. It is a question of both sides compromising.

...

In reply to a question about current U.S relations with Ethiopia, Dr. Shinn stated that relations were "very much on the upswing", and hoped that once the OAU Framework Agreement is implemented, relations will improve further. He stated: "that (the border conflict) changed the entire nature of my day to day activities. I was engaged full time in developing and strengthening a relationship with the government and people of Ethiopia. Since the outbreak of the conflict with Eritrea, like most, perhaps all of the Western nations in Ethiopia, it has been largely damage limitation, trying to prevent the relationship from slipping backwards. I think the American Embassy has done that with a considerable amount of success because the government and the people of Ethiopia will never know the degree to which they could have slipped backwards in the official relationship . . . But I think that this relationship has been preserved and I think that if we

can just get by the immediate conflict which I mentioned earlier, I believe there are good prospects for it."

...

In an interview with the weekly Amharic newspaper, *Tobia*, Ambassador Shinn noted that one of the great difficulties he faced was his attempt to bring about a more harmonious relationship between the government and the free press and his call for the independent press to act in a more professional manner. Another problem was in the area of respect for human rights. Of course there was also a government critical of American policy towards the resolution of the border conflict. He is reported to have said that he would not have a good attitude toward the OLF until it abandoned violence and accepted the constitution. He declared that the OLF's attempt to form an alliance with some military factions in Somalia in order to make war against the Ethiopian government was a "big tactical mistake". He said that many Oromos also shared this view. Another subject was that there were some improvements in its relationship with NGO's, the free press and in respect for human rights, although much more time is needed to approach the liberal democratic practices of the West. He believed that the "Killil (regional) self-rule is a good option" because of the many nationalities living in Ethiopia. The objective is to establish "unity based on the principle of self-rule". He also stated that he did not want to see Ethiopia disintegrate into several small states. He suggested that the government should speed up the privatization process as well as to convert state banks to international ownership that would allow free competition. This would aid Ethiopia's position when dealing with the World Bank and IMF. Concerning

the Ethiopian-Eritrean war, the UN will work out a compromise on the Framework Agreement and Implementation Modalities. If the sides should fail to implement the peace proposal after signing the documents, massive international pressure would be applied to both countries.

From an article in the Ethiopian Register, September, 1999, pages 8-10 which quoted from interviews Ambassador Shinn gave in Addis.

EAST COAST REGIONAL SUMMIT ON AFRICA

A report by Ray Donaldson (Ambo, Debre Berhan 62–62)

On Sept. 9th through 11th, 1999, I attended the East Coast Regional Summit on Africa in Baltimore. This was one of a series of regional summits leading to The National Summit on Africa, February 16–20, 2000, at the Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C. USA. This five-day event will combine the drafting of a final Policy Plan of Action, a series of educational workshops, seminars, and round-table discussions on U.S.-Africa relations and development, and many special events and performances.

Here are some of my observations from the sessions I attended at the Baltimore summit. This may give you a feeling for the summit and help you decide whether you want to attend the National Summit in Washington. Information about the National Summit is available by phone at 800 934-3418 or on the web at: www.africasummit.org.

Day 1, Session 1

The first day of the conference was a series of parallel programs presented by many different organizations with a wide variety of interests in Africa. The first session I attended: "Grassroots Africa Advocacy in the Faith-Based Community," was presented by Bread for the World. There was discussion about how the U.S. can have an impact on Africa. Two complementary bills in Congress were discussed: 1. Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGO), and 2. Africa: Seeds of Hope Act (ASOH).

The Africa: Seeds of Hope Act was the only Africa-specific legislation to be enacted into law in the 105th Congress.

It was characterized as a "bottom-up" bill that funneled funding through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), an independent government corporation that promotes U.S. private investment in developing countries and emerging markets. OPIC will provide funds to US businesses, private voluntary organizations, and non-governmental organizations that have a track record in Africa. The bill is based on the premise that "if African agriculture doesn't prosper, Africans will not." It provides funds to reinvigorate U.S. engagement with African agriculture, smallholder farmers, and rural community development.

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act was a more "top-down" trade bill that focuses on establishing requirements on African countries that will allow private, multinational corporations to develop Africa. For more information about these bills from Bread for the World's perspective, contact Ray Almeida by phone at 301 608-2400 or by Email at ralmeida@bread.org.

Day 1, Session 2

Another session I attended: "Internet Connectivity, Emerging Technologies, and the Exchange of Global Information," discussed a variety of ways that information technologies are being introduced into Africa. By connecting Africa to the internet, Africans will have access to all the information available to the rest of the world. They can decide themselves which of this information is most useful to them.

South Africa is by far the highest user of the internet among African countries, followed by Ethiopia, Egypt, and Kenya.

One current effort to bring internet access to Africa is the Leland Initiative, a five-year, US government effort to extend internet connectivity to 21 or more African countries including Ethiopia and Eritrea. Information is available about this program on the web at: www.info.usaid.gov/leland.

Dr. Ali B. Ali-Dinar of the University of Pennsylvania said that Africa is receiving more information than it is providing. Not much content information is being put on websites in Africa. The University of Pennsylvania is willing to host African information on its computers until African organizations are able to maintain it themselves. Dr. Ali-Dinar can be contacted by phone at 215 898-6610 or by Email at aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu.

Day 1

Most of the second day was spent in working groups modelled on a United Nations-style debate setting. Each participant chose one of five thematic deliberative sessions: 1. Democracy and Human Rights, 2. Sustainable Development, Quality of Life, and the Environment, 3. Education and Culture, 4. Peace and Security, and 5. Economic Development, Trade & Investment, and Job Creation. At each of the five sessions, participants reviewed, updated, and made additions to a "Draft Policy Plan of Action" (which was the same for each of the regional summits); and created a unique regional plan of action.

I found this process to be extremely tedious. I hope it works at the United Nations where they have an extended amount of time to deliberate. It does not work well where time is limited. Each draft plan of action was created by a different Expert Group whose members came primarily from academia. The drafts were lengthy at the start. The deliberative process made them even longer as words were added to existing sections and entirely new sections were added. Very rarely was a section deleted. Some sections were redundant; some were contradictory. When I asked who was focusing on synthesizing and prioritizing the wealth of data from all of these regional summits, I was told that the National Summit would do that.

The five sections of the Draft Policy Plan can be reviewed on the National Summit website:
www.africasummit.org.

Day 3

On the last (third) day, participants met in state delegations whose primary purpose was to elect state delegates to the National Summit, to elect officers from among the delegates, and to determine how the state delegations would prepare for the National Summit. At the closing session, participants adopted the overall East Coast Regional Plan of Action, incorporating the products of the five thematic working group sessions.

NOTE: The National Summit on Africa will take place in Washington DC, February 16–20. For more information on how to register and participate, write National Summit on Africa, 1819 H St NW, Ste 810, Washington DC 20006. Phone and fax: 202/861-8644; fax 202/861-8645. For more info:
www.africasummit.org.

REPORT ON ASSESSMENT TRIP TO CAMPS FOR WAR DISPLACED IN GASH-BARKA

by Jeff Shannon (*Adi Tekelesan, Eritrea 95–98*)

August 10, 1999 — I've just returned from a visit of several camps for those displaced by the fighting in the Gash-Barka region. Briefly here are the findings:

The people are doing okay considering the circumstances under which they're living.

Shelter

The biggest need is still shelter. There simply aren't enough tents and the rainy season is wreaking havoc in many cases. Also, in Gash-Barka the winds are especially harsh and what shelters are available are often blown down or away during the night (rains and wind usually start around 9:00 pm every night). The lucky few have tents of varying quality, while a great number are using blue plastic tarp held up with sticks, which are completely inadequate and totally inappropriate to the conditions and needs of the people. With the onset of the rainy season, the camps are quickly becoming a morass. Tents cannot be purchased locally and will need to be imported.

Blankets are in very short supply in these camps, despite the cold of the rainy season making them a pressing need. We have located a local supplier in Asmara which can produce 40 wool blankets per day of high quality at an approximate cost of US\$13 each. For US\$1,350, we can supply 100 blankets. There are also possibilities to import

good quality acrylic blankets from Egypt in cooperation with Africare at a cost of US\$5.50 each (including shipping costs, but not including insurance).

Sleeping mats were cited as a major need by the displaced themselves. One woman pointed to the ground and said, "This is our bed. This is where we sleep, and we're so tired." Mats can be purchased locally at low cost and easily distributed.

Food

Food, both staple and supplementary, is in very short supply. The two main camps we visited (Adi Keshi and Ketobia — both 20,000 inhabitants each) were down to low-grade sorghum and DMK. Most of the people still had small amounts of lentils, but that was it. No cooking oil, no sugar, no berbere, no vegetables or fruits, no flour, nothing else.

I noticed a few children with rust-colored hair, marking them as malnourished and protein-deficient. Several babies were quite literally skin and bones. These are still in the minority, but it's on the increase.

Pavoni Social Centre (PSC) is currently working on a proposal to develop a high-protein biscuit factory in Asmara to supply at-risk populations -- children under 5, pregnant and lactating women and the sick -- with vital protein supplements. The factory has already

produced its first test batch and the biscuits are now being analyzed in Italy with very positive initial results. Please see the attached proposal.

Water

Water is still a problem. There are wells and pumps in most camps, but they are inadequate to the population being served. Most pumps are broken and the people are getting water from open puddles left by the rain or from nearby rivers now flowing due to the rainy season.

Naturally, water borne diseases are on the upswing and people report that most children and many adults are suffering from diarrhea. They haven't connected it with drinking river water yet, but the administration in both places have said they will be launching education campaigns to deal both with that and with general sanitation problems (digging latrines, instructing people in their use and upkeep, their necessity, etc.)

Medical

Medicines are in adequate supply for adults in Gash-Barka, but sorely lacking for the children in several camps. They need pediatric protein supplements, antidiarrheal, malaria prophylaxis and about everything else you can imagine. Medical equipment supplies were reported to be sufficient at present in the Gash-Barka region, although camps in Zoba Debub reported severe shortages.

Mosquito netting seems to be fine with every family getting several according to the number of people in the household. We visited the health centers and saw plenty of nets and saw them being handed out. The doctors said there were very few cases of malaria in the camps, but they expected the numbers to start

rising now and to be fairly bad by September. Another education campaign against malaria was underway -- also at a national level.

In conclusion . . .

In general, the camps are doing much better than one would expect, especially considering that practically no aid is coming into the country and not many NGO's have stepped in yet to pick up the slack. The Eritrean government, through its coordinating agency, the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC), are doing an admirable job in keeping the people going and ensuring that they don't become aid-dependent. The people have been encouraged to open shops and try to get on with life as well as possible, which is what they're doing. You don't see people starving, although there is a problem with malnutrition, protein- and Vitamin A-deficiency and so on. It could develop into a catastrophe, but it hasn't due to the government's fine work thus far.

However, these are still people who have been thrust out of their homes by shelling, mortars and aerial bombardments. They have no homes, their fields are going untended, their livestock have been devastated and they are subsisting on the bare minimum.

A humanitarian disaster has thus far been avoided, but it's not over yet. That's where things stand now. You can get more information from my report once it's been submitted and cleared through PSC.

I hope this has been of some help to you and the organizations with whom you're in contact. Thanks for all your excellent work on that side and I hope we'll be able to cooperate in the near future to get something done for the displaced people here.

Contact . . .

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us at:

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Office of Special Projects
Asmara, Eritrea

tel/fax 291 1 12 51 45
e-mail <jlshannon@gemel.com.er>
<wayne@nfetn.gemel.com.er>

Also, for more information, please visit the following websites: www.wvi.com/~johnr/eritrea/ and the Eritrean Development Fund site at www.eridf.org

You can read "Emergency Appeal for Blankets" and "Emergency Appeal for High Protein Biscuits" sent by Jeff at the E&E RPCVs web site at www.geocities.com/~eerpcv/

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THE HERALD wishes to thank them all. They are greatly appreciated.

If you would like to submit an article for publication, it would be appreciated if it is submitted digitally — via email or on disk (labeled as to software and computer used and with a hard copy). Any articles of interest to RPCVs who served in Ethiopia and Eritrea are most welcomed.

Photo submissions are also welcomed. They should be clear, with images large enough to be easily discerned. All photos will be returned.

Send us your email address.

Just in the recent past we've reconnected old friends, sent out a notice of the premiere of an Ethiopian movie and provided news updates. Don't miss out! Send to: mhbeil@servtech.com



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DATES:

March 7 — Peace Corps Day. Go into a school in your community and share your Peace Corps experience by speaking to students about the culture, customs and history of Ethiopia and Eritrea. To receive a presentation kit and more information, contact the Peace Corps at pctday@peacecorps.gov or call (800) 424-8580, press 2 then ext. 1961.

At our web site you can find a listing of children's books about Ethiopia that might be good to read to a class. Also our library contents are listed at the site as well — borrow a resource from there to help develop a presentation.

August 13-15 — ETHIOPIA & ERITREA RPCVs will have a social get-together at The Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort. There will be numerous activities to choose from, a speaker or two and plenty of time to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs

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If it says "Expired," your membership has expired since the publication of the previous issue of *The Herald*. We hope that you will reup. A membership form can be found on the next-to-the-last page.

If it says "Your name . . ." that means your name can be found somewhere in this newsletter. If you are an RPCV or were PC/staff we hope you will consider joining E&E RPCVs.

If it says "Trial #20" we thought you might be interested in seeing what E&E RPCVs does and in seeing our newsletter. Perhaps you'd like to join us?

Married couples — I have arbitrarily selected one of you to receive the newsletter to save duplication. Please don't feel left out if your name isn't on the label.

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