

# **The Fall of American Soft Diplomacy in Ethiopia: A Victim of its own Success<sup>17</sup>**

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**Abstract:** Ethiopia's soft diplomatic history with the United States goes back to the dawn of the twentieth century when King Menelik in 1905 responded favorably to the overtures by the United States for official relations between the two countries when Ethiopia was the only independent country in Africa. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the benchmarks of a successful engagement that had lasted for over seventy years only to suffer reversals from critical events both internal and external. A brief historical analysis will be rendered to highlight the role of the United States in the modernization of Ethiopia and how that virtuous soft-power diplomacy was destroyed by cold war calculations for détente with the Soviet Union ignoring the geopolitical reality in the Horn that eventually spelled disaster for Ethiopia. One of the friendliest official relations that the U.S. has had with an African country in the twentieth century became a casualty when U.S. foreign policy failed to match the challenges in the Horn of Africa in the early 1970s, giving way to a brutal military regime aided and abated by some highly educated Marxists many of whom went to school in some of the best institutions of higher learning in the U.S. and Europe.

## **Introduction**

The U.S.-Ethiopian bilateral relationship was about three-quarters of a century old when it faced a major crisis in 1974 with the beleaguered Nixon's presidency by the Watergate scandal, saw the overthrow of King of Kings Haile Sellassie by a military coup d'état even though the King had visited the White House just months earlier. This was made worse by the unfortunate preoccupation of Carter's White House a few years later in 1977 when it ignored Ethiopian plight facing major geopolitical belligerence from Somalia backed by the Soviet Union. The rupture in friendly relations between the U.S. government and Ethiopia's military junta known as Derg, happened when the United States failed to honor the delivery of defensive military hardware to Ethiopia with the excuse of the dubious so called Carter Doctrine of détente with the Soviets (Nye 2004). That was enough for the Derg to go to Moscow, declare Marxism and Leninism, and offer Ethiopia's government as an ideological client state of Soviet Union. This produced a strange play in musical chairs in which the Soviets moved into Ethiopia, displacing the Americans who were then considered an imperial power and an ideological adversary. The U.S. was asked by the Derg regime in April of 1977 to scale down its presence in Ethiopia, close long-standing structures like

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the United States Information Service (USIS), the Military Advisory and Assistant Group (MAAG), the Peace Corps and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), among others. To make matters look even more comical, the US moved into Somalia filling the void left by its cold war antagonist.

That essentially ended three quarters of a century of friendly alliance for progress and development between the U.S. and Ethiopia and began one of the most traumatic periods in Ethiopia's recent political, economic and institutional history.

When the U.S. and Ethiopia began interested in each other, neither country had much knowledge of the other and nor has there been official contacts between the two countries until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ethiopian leaders were too preoccupied in defending the homeland from European colonizers and unfriendly sultanates that they had little time to explore relations with distant countries like the United States. Ethiopia was in the early stages of the "age of princes" in which the country had descended into balkanized fiefdoms (Marcus 2002, 46-47; Pankhurst 2001, 126-142) at the time of American independence. When the "age of princes" ended in 1855, the U.S. was an isolationist and anti-colonial power with disdain for European powers so much so that it proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 to minimize European meddling in the Americas (Mead 2002, 199-204). The two countries had to wait for half a century following the end of the Civil War in 1865 for the U.S. and King Tewodros II's consolidation of Ethiopia in 1855 for official overtures toward each other.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the impressive development outcomes that came from over 70 years of friendship and alliance between the U.S. and Ethiopia and how most of those outcomes, especially in the areas of human capital and institution building, were ruined by the governments that followed the overthrow of the U.S. supported royal government in 1974. Three years later, the nationalist Derg regime that rode the crest of a wave of dissatisfaction and anger at the country's poverty and food insecurity was itself coming under major challenge especially from the ideological left that has been lurking behind the scenes for many years. The left saw a chance to take state power by penetrating and steering the nationalist Derg. Unfortunately, for the radical left in Ethiopia, many developments intersected at that critical time in the last 1970s. First, the left was split into two factions, one siding with the Derg and other taking the adversarial option and began to assassinate members of the radical left that joined the Derg. Second, belligerent and Soviet backed Somalia began to engage Ethiopia's forces along the border. Third, the conflict in secessionist Eritrea began to enter a critical stage in its militancy. Fourth, the U.S. government, using the unfortunate Carter Doctrine refused to support the Derg in its geopolitical challenges especially with Somalia. Faced with these concatenated crises, the Derg first lashed out at the opposition radical left by trying to eliminate its members with the "red terror" assassination project. Following that brutal bloodletting in 1977 in Addis and other major cities, and embracing the more pliant left that sided with it, it crafted a Marxist-Leninist discourse and declared Ethiopia as a communist state declaring the Soviet Union as its ideological ally, asking the U.S. to scale down its presence in Ethiopia.

## Early Ethiopian Contacts with Americans

Ethiopian-American early contacts have many interesting characteristics. First, they started out as people-to-people contacts with little to no official imprimatur. Second, early relations between the two countries featured many African Americans who were aware of and sang praised for independent black Ethiopia. Third, Ethiopian-American official partnerships between 1903 and 1977 were based on the Wilsonian paradigm in the use of American soft-power “to attract others by the legitimacy of (its) policies and the values that underlie them” (Nye 2004). Finally, the lumpy Carter Doctrine which misread the seriousness of Ethiopia’s internal and external challenges in 1970s, and the withholding of critical military support to the Derg regime between 1974 and 1977, led to the catastrophic collapse of the monarchy and the reformist military nationalist government that followed it. That paved the way for a Soviet-backed Derg regime to take power in 1977 and down-grade relations with the United States and ruin the many accomplishments of its soft power that took 70 years to build (Metaferia 2009, 62-70; Jackson 2007, 4-5; Woodward 2003, 134-142). The paper is essentially a chronological account of significant U.S.-led innovations in Ethiopia that resulted from the positive resolution of the dual forces of Wilsonian soft-power idealism for growth and development as contrasted to Hamiltonian hard-power realism for U.S. geopolitical expediency in the Horn of Africa (Nye 2004; Brzezinski 2012, 37-74; Jackson 2007, 19; Mead 2009, 99-173).

Ethiopia’s legendary international fame prior to 1970s dwarfs its shrunken and diminished stature within or outside Africa. Its history has been told as one of the oldest civilizations in the world with some of the most significant achievements of humankind. It played a prominent role in world diplomacy as the only independent African state that continued to manage its own affairs for millennia (Rubensson 1976, 1-5). It survived the colonial scramble of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and served as an icon for black independence not only in Africa but also in the New World. Africans under colonial occupation and those in the Diaspora made reference to its significance as an ancient polity immortalized in the tales of ancient lands and the holy books of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in which mention is made of the legendary Queen of Sheba who ruled over large territories in two continents and had dealings with the ancient kingdoms of Egypt and Israel over 3000 years ago (Marcus 2002, 17-19; Pankhurst 2001, 19; Gebrekidan 2005, 7-16). Africa and Ethiopia were interchangeable terms for ancient Greeks. Homer in the tenth century BC described the people of Africa as “blameless Ethiopians” among whom the Greek gods rested and feasted. Five centuries later, Herodotus, the father of History, paid similar accolades to the wise Ethiopians (Perham 1969, 13-18; Pankhurst 2001, 18-19). Ethiopians controlled the Meroetic and Axumite kingdoms of the pre and post Christian eras with their impressive artifacts in evidence today (Marcus 2002, 8). It is the home of the only extant African script called Ethiopic dating back to the pre-Axumite period of Ethiopia’s history (Harden 1926, 2-4; Gebrekidan 2005, 17-18).

Ethiopia is also one of the few countries which became one of the oldest cradles for the development of the three great religions of the world: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. It was also one of the ancient hearths for the development of sedentary agriculture and crop and animal

domestication including coffee, teff, barley, cotton, dromedary, and donkey (Marcus 2002, 3; Stutz and Warf 2005, 189). More recently, thanks to modern archeology, Ethiopia's Rift Valley held the remains of the first known and oldest hominid in the world (Pankhurst 2001, 1-9; Marcus 2002, 1-3).

The early relations between American and Ethiopians were characterized by truly people-to-people relations with African Americans using independent and civilized Ethiopia as a source of inspiration for progress and freedom of people of African descent in the new world (Gebrekidan 2005, 27-31; Alehegn 2008). As far back as 1865, Frederick Douglass declared that "arts, appliances and the blessings of civilization flourished in ...Ethiopia, at a time when all Europe floundered in the depth of ignorance and barbarism" (quoted in Ayele 2003, 24). However we may view Mr. Douglass's observation, what is clear is how Ethiopia was idolized in the African Diaspora. Ethiopia of course is known to African Americans well before that. In 1808, a mere 32 years following the American Declaration of Independence and a year before the birth of Abraham Lincoln, Ethiopian merchants and African Americans in lower Manhattan made news when they refused to sit in segregated pews and walked out from the First Baptist Church of New York and established the first Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York to serve all Christians. The legendary church later moved to Harlem and became one of the most renowned houses of worship committed to struggles for freedom of African peoples and racial justice in the United States (ABC 2011; Ayele 2003, 22; Gebrekidan 2005, 39-46; Chapelle 2011).

### **The Dawn of American Soft-Power Diplomacy with Ethiopia**

King Menelik II of Ethiopia was known for his diplomatic skills in dealing with foreign powers of his time. It came as no surprise when he decided to welcome the enthusiastic overtures from the United States to send its first diplomatic mission to the Ethiopian court in 1903. Confident of his international diplomatic stature as the victor over an invading European colonial power when he defeated Italy in Adwa in 1896, and having succeeded in his dealings with the two most powerful colonial powers of the time by achieving the Franco-Ethiopian and Anglo-Ethiopian diplomatic settlements in 1897 which ended European threats against Ethiopia's sovereignty (Marcus 1995, 174-185; Marcus 2002, 103; Pankhurst 2001, 194), his bold diplomatic reach to the New World was a logical outcome of his legendary foresight. What was interesting about Menelik's diplomatic initiative with the Americans did not start with bilateral links between the two countries. It began in 1897 with the persistence of a Haitian intellectual Benito Sylvain when he met King Menelik and suggested that Ethiopia and Haiti have diplomatic relations.

He was not successful but two years later his deep interest in the matter gave rise to an African American Texan cotton farmer and later a Wall Street stock broker, William H. Ellis who, after having visited Ethiopia in 1899 to start a business, was so impressed with Menelik that he proposed a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States. This led to another disappointment when American authorities did not take William Ellis seriously. This led to another individual by the name of Robert Skinner (Skinner 1906; Gebrekidan 2005, 39-41; Marcus

1995, 198-200), who was America's Council General in Marseilles, France, and who shared Sylvain's and Ellis's enthusiasm for Ethiopia and the court of Menelik (Ayele 2003, 41-56). Skinner persisted through three years of correspondence with the State Department until he secured the sympathetic hearing from Presidents McKinley and later Theodore Roosevelt, to be appointed Commissioner and lead a mission to Ethiopia in 1903 (Skinner 1906; Metaferia 2009, 13-23; Ayele 2003, 45-56).

Skinner's arrival in Addis Ababa in December 1903, marked the first time that Americans visited the Ethiopian state and its legendary leader Menelik II. It was a benchmark achievement for all those early advocates like Silvain, Ellis and Skinner, to advance Ethiopian-American relations. Menelik's signature of the "Treaty of Amity, Reciprocal Establishments and Commerce", which was later ratified by the U.S. Senate and signed by President Roosevelt in 1904, became the cornerstone for a long and fruitful friendship between Ethiopia and the United States (Skinner 1906, 73-82; Zewde 2001, 184; Metaferia 2009, 19). William Ellis, who persisted to play a role in the friendship agreements between the two countries was once again passed over when the U.S. State Department chose a certain Kent J. Loomis, brother of then Assistant Secretary of State, to take the signed treaty to Ethiopia. But Ellis was asked to accompany Loomis. As fate had it, Loomis died at sea and Ellis ended up delivering the ratified Treaty to Menelik (Ayele 2003, 55-56; Metaferia 2009, 19).

Menelik's increasing diplomatic stature in the international scene as well as the feeling among Americans that Ethiopia was an African "El Dorado" was enhanced when President Theodore Roosevelt invited the Ethiopian King to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Lewis in 1904 (Skinner 1906, 79). Although Menelik was unable to make the trip to the United States, the invitation was considered a significant gesture of amity and respect for Ethiopia and the King especially. The words of the invitation were engraved in the middle of a large handsome silver salver from Governor Francis of Missouri, President of the Exposition (Skinner 1906, 79). Menelik's voracious appetite for technology and infrastructure enabled him to overlook colonial European reservations on an African country reaching out for an American friendship. Menelik told Skinner that the typewriter he brought as a gift was received with gratitude but it was useless to him if it did not type the Amharic alphabet (Skinner 1906, 119-120). Menelik got his Amharic typewriter in 1908 thanks to an Ethiopian engineer and Italians at Oliveti.

Menelik's appetite for modern machines were evident later in him learning how to ride a bike and later received one of the early Ford Model Ts (now at the Addis Ababa University Museum) and became the first Ethiopian King to drive an automobile. He was interested in photography, trains, weapons and communication systems. He had the French build the first and only railway link between Addis Ababa and the port city of Djibouti. He also had Ethiopia connected to the rest of the world by joining the International Postal Union in 1908, and soon after, he saw the installation of telegraph and telephone systems (Marcus 1995, 75-213).

The U.S. mission in Ethiopia was closed upon Menelik's death in 1913 and remained closed during the first term of Woodrow Wilson's administration (Metaferia 2009, 20). During World War I and the Great Depression, U.S.-Ethiopian relations remained in hiatus. During the

same period, Ethiopia was also going through a transitional turmoil with many royal personalities jockeying for the throne following Menelik's death. Menelik's youngest grandson, Lij Iyasu, became the head of state in 1913 before court intrigues for succession were fully settled. But this led to a coup d'état in 1916 with Menelik's daughter installed in the Solomonic throne as Queen Zewditu with Ras Teferi (later King of Kings Haile Sellasie I) as regent. When Queen Zewditu died in 1930, Ras Teferi was crowned King of Kings bringing an end to almost two decades of unrelenting power struggle within the Ethiopian aristocracy (Marcus 2002, 116-129; Pankhurst 2001, 200-218; Zewde 2001, 114-148).

### **World War II and its Aftermath for Ethiopia**

King Haile Sellasie followed Menelik's lead in the modernization of Ethiopia with deliberate focus and determination. However, his country faced an unexpected challenge when fascist Italy, as an Axis Power under Benito Mussolini, revived its colonial ambitions that Menelik thwarted in 1896. Even though, Ethiopia was a signatory of the League of Nations, the only African country to do so when it joined the organization on September 28, 1923, neither the U.S. (which was not a member of the League) or the League itself could save Ethiopia from being invaded by an Axis power of World War II. Ironically, President Woodrow Wilson, who got the 1919 Nobel Peace Prize for his innovative international alliance for collective security, failed in 1920 to have the League of Nations ratified by the U.S. congress (Ayele 2003, 78; Zewde 2001, 131; Perham 1969, 224-225). The Europeans, who hailed its principles, were soon to witness its disastrous failure to uphold its key covenant of collective security and witness Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan launch their unjust wars against sovereign nations in Europe, Africa and Asia. Ethiopia was one of the victims. Strangely, the U.S. claimed neutrality in the face of a clear violation by Italy of the international law (Marcus 2002, 138-141; Metaferia 2009, 35-38). King Haile Sellasie went into exile when fascist Italy used weapons of mass destruction and massacred Ethiopian fighters with mustard gas.

He then showed up at the League's headquarters in Geneva, draped in black cape over his traditional garment, stood at the podium on June 30, 1936 (heckled by fascist sympathizers in the galleries) and offered his historic admonition (consistent with Wilson's ideals) with eloquence and grace, on the failure of the League of Nations to live up to its covenant and protect his country from a rogue regime invading his sovereign country (Pankhurst 2001, 236-238). In his indictment of the League for its embarrassing appeasement of an axis power (in its veiled endorsement of a colonial occupation), he concluded his speech with the prophetic words that rang throughout the world: "It is us today, it will be you tomorrow .... God and history shall remember your judgment" (Ayele 2003, 137-139; Pankhurst 2001, 236-238). As the only African leader that was able to stand up to those anachronistic colonialists of the time, Time Magazine honored the King by naming him *Man of the Year* in January 1936, and his stand became an indelible market for all people who yearned for liberty and justice (Marcus 2002, 141-146).

What is most striking was that the United States government not only prevaricated about Ethiopia's plight for material assistance to defend itself from fascist Italy (Gebrekidan 2005, 49-58; Ayele 2003, 85-100; Metaferia 2009, 35-38), but also it cleared the way for fascist forces to enter the city of Addis Ababa by closing its embassy with a message to Benito Mussolini to occupy Addis Ababa immediately to avert chaos (Metaferia 2009, 35). This was a historic disappointment for Americans of African origin who have been called to action by luminaries like Langston Hughes who composed the poem "Call of Ethiopia" (Hughes 1935) to bemoan that the loss of Ethiopia's independence was regarded as the loss of an icon of black power in general (Scott 1978). African Americans mobilized their ranks in solidarity with Ethiopia with Harlem and Washington D.C. serving as hubs of pro-Ethiopian agitation that spanned from Texas to New York. Many were willing to go to Ethiopia to fight the Italian invaders (Metaferia 2009, 35-38). A pan-Africanist Ethiopian by the name of Dr. Melaku Beyan campaigned on his country's behalf to mobilize American help for his native land (Pankhurst 2001, 238; Scott 1978; Gebrekidan 2005, 98-104). Mississippi-born John C. Robinson, known as the Brown Condor and Father of the Tuskegee Airmen, who volunteered to fight for Ethiopia and arrived in Addis Ababa in 1935, was one of Beya's recruits.

### **Ethiopia's Alliance Formation after WW II**

Ethiopians did not forget what happened to their independence and the ultimate sacrifice their heroic fighters paid when the foundational covenant of the League of Nations was left in tatters with the appeasement of Italian fascists to occupy Ethiopia. They also knew that they owed a debt of gratitude to the victorious Americans and their European allies to put an end to Nazism and fascism in Europe and liberate occupied territories like Ethiopia.

King Haile Sellasie's victorious arrival in Gojjam on Jan 20, 1941 and then in Addis Ababa on May 5, 1941, marked the beginning of the golden era of Ethiopian-American partnership for progress and development which initially targeted the advancement of education. King Haile Sellasie began his modernization campaign with two significant changes upon independence. First, in 1941 Haile Sellasie (HSI) altered the parity between French and English in Ethiopia's schools in favor of English. There was also a major change in men's fashion. The King and most of his entourage went into exile still wearing the Ethiopian traditional garment sometimes covered under a black cape. Upon his triumphant return, the King wore a British general's uniform. Soon after, many male government employees also began to wear more widely "western" style outfits with *soof* (wool) jackets, *bolale soori* (western pants with wide cuffs) (often with a *kuta* (white cotton toga) over the jacket), neck ties, and fedoras. Some male fashions were also accessorized with riding pants (known as *Teferi soori*), riding boots, black umbrellas and walking canes. During the post-war recovery and reconstruction, Americans became a more favored partner to help drive Ethiopia's modernization (Zewde 2001, 179-189). This was made vivid when, Haile Sellasie, still in the "shadow of Britain" following the war's end (Spencer 1984, 141-144; Marcus 2002, 152-154; Vestal 2011, 33-39; Pankhurst 2001, 251-256), made it known that he wanted to meet President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Vestal 2011, 36) while FDR was at the Yalta Conference in 1945.

HSI was flown to Cairo with the blessing of the American envoy to Ethiopia to meet Roosevelt on his ship USS Quincy anchored in the Great Bitter Lake off the Egyptian Red Sea coast. The successful meeting with FDR opened the door for friendly relations between the two countries for over four decades. FDR invited the HSI to visit the United States which the King accepted (Marcus 2002, 156). In a smart diplomatic move, HSI also met Winston Churchill in a quickly arranged meeting with the Prime Minister in Cairo as a show of goodwill and respect that Ethiopia had for U.K. even as it sought American involvement in its modernization efforts (Vestal 2011, 36-37; Pankhurst 2001, 256-260).

FDR death caused the postponement of HSI's planned visit to the U.S. until 1954, when Truman, upon winning his own new term as President in 1949, had launched, in his inaugural address, his "Point Four" program for international development with particular focus on the Third World to "help the people" of Asia and Africa to "learn the methods of our science and our industry and use these methods to develop their own resources" (McVety 2008). Haile Sellassie could not have made his first visit of the U.S. at a better time and he could not have been more pleased with Truman's focus, as it was exactly in line with his thinking about U.S. involvement in the modernization of Ethiopia (see also Metaferia 2009, 40-41; Vestal 2011, 35-37; Zewde 2001, 184). As Negussay Ayele observed, "relations between the

United States and Ethiopia entered a new marathon era in the second decade of the twentieth century" with Haile Sellassie outlasting the terms of U.S. Presidents from Woodrow Wilson to Richard Nixon (Ayele 2003, 61), but his 1954 American visit was the first and most important to cement American involvement in the modernization of Ethiopia.

### **Improving Ethiopia's Agriculture**

Ethiopia is one of the oldest hearths of agricultural domestication. However, the country's agricultural sector remained traditional, small-holder, and low-technology enterprise. Haile Sellassie realized this early in his post-war modernization plans. He also knew that the Americans were highly advanced in agrarian innovations. Therefore, it came as no surprise that the most remarkable feature of the initial thrust of the Ethiopian-American partnership for progress was based on "low modernist" and soft-power ideals of the Point Four program (McVety 2008, 387). Haile Sellassie first step toward this was to invite Henry G. Bennett, the then President of Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University) to visit Ethiopia to discuss the institutional needs to improve Ethiopia's agriculture. Bennett visited Ethiopia in April 1950, a year after Truman gave his inaugural speech on Point Four on January 20, 1949 (Vestal 2011, 35-37; OSU 1969, 4). Bennett and Haile Sellassie became friends, and Bennett had tremendous confidence in the progressive monarch and did his best to help Ethiopia's agriculture as President of Oklahoma A&M and later as Truman's Assistant Secretary of State and head of the Point Four program. Ethiopian and American government representatives signed the "Point Four Agreement for Technical Cooperation" in 1951. The objective of the agreement was "to cooperate with each other in the interchange of technical knowledge and skills and related activities designed to



contribute to the balanced and integrated development of the economic resources and productive capacities of Ethiopia” (quoted by McVety 2008, 383-388).

U.S. and Ethiopian signed the first project agreement under the Point Four program in 1952 to build the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts in Alemaya (now renamed Haramaya University) with academic and technical assistance from Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University) in Stillwater (Vestal 2011, 3-39; McVety 2008, 387-388). The objectives were to transform Ethiopia into the breadbasket of the region and to “building up Ethiopia’s major potential contribution to the economic strength of the free nations of the world” (McVety 2008, 387). There was so much confidence in Ethiopia's abilities and tremendous enthusiasm on all sides that both the Americans and their Ethiopian counterparts did not want to wait until buildings for the college were constructed in Alemaya. They launched the educational program and began to hold college classes in 1952 at the Jimma Agricultural Technical School which had been established in 1947 (Bechere c2008, 3).

When the new campus was ready in Harer in 1958, Jimma and a similar institution in Ambo had already become exemplary community-based agricultural technological schools in Ethiopia since their inception in 1947 (OSU 1969).

By 1974, when the Derg came to power and caused a massive brain drain, Alemaya College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (now Haramaya University) had become one of the most successful of HSI’s innovations resulting from the first Ethiopian-American academic partnership for progress and modernization (Shinn 2002; Metaferia 2009, 56). Alemaya had produced hundreds of scientists that not only contributed to the growth the older agricultural schools in Jimma and Ambo but also triggered the mushrooming of new colleges and research institutes all over the country including the first research institute of the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR) established in Holeta in 1963 to improve yields in highland crops, vegetables and dairy products (Bechere c2008). Other IARs were to follow in Nazreth (Adama), Jimma, Debre Zeit (Bishoftu), Bako, Melka Werer, Ambo, Kulumsa and Pawe (see also Bechere c2008, 4).

The 1952 agreement between the U.S. and Ethiopia was a remarkable success. In 1952, there were no Ethiopian graduates in the agricultural sciences. By the mid-80s, Haramaya had issued over 1600 diplomas, 2500 B.S. degrees and over 80 M.S. degrees. In 1970s and 80s, there were hundreds of them working as deans of faculty, directors of IARs and college faculty, agronomists, soil scientists, crop breeders, extension agents, and scientists in many international agricultural research organizations like CYMMIT, ILCA and others. They also came from the most prestigious schools of agriculture in the US including Oklahoma State, Cornell, Michigan State, Illinois, Iowa, UC Davis, Ohio State, Purdue, Indiana, Minnesota and many others. There were over 50 PhD holders in the agricultural sciences. Gebisa Ejeta, an internationally known sorghum breeder and Professor of Agriculture at Purdue, who won the World Food Prize and the National Hero Award, Ethiopia’s highest honor, is among some of the most distinguished alumni of the Alemaya College of Agriculture (ILRI 2009).

## **American Contributions to Ethiopia's Educational System**

In 1952, U.S. and Ethiopia entered another agreement. That agreement was to help “the Ministry of Education in developing a modern educational program and school system adapted to the needs of Ethiopia” (McVety 2008, 389; see also Metaferia 2009, 55-57). The agreement included instituting teacher education, improving school equipment and provision of books. King Haile Sellassie held the portfolio for Minister of Education until the late 1960s demonstrating his strong commitment to education. In the 1950s, most modern schools in Ethiopia were dominated by the British, Canadian and French nationals and they were concentrated in Addis Ababa.

Americans had little to no visibility in educational establishments until the 1952 Point Four agreement which led to the establishment of the largest day school in Addis Ababa known as Haile Sellassie I (Kokebe Tsibah) Day School in Kebena with an American Director, the famous Dr. Perry Carmichael, perhaps the first American PhD school principal hired by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. Perry Carmichael who directed the school for over ten years was also an Oklahoman as Henry G. Bennett, the Oklahoma A&M University President, who helped found Alemaya, was. Perry Carmichael and a few American teachers, a few also from Oklahoma, fashioned the new day school along American lines with classroom facilities, labs, and campus environment complete with play grounds, a theatre and a school band. Unlike the elite Wingate and Teferi Makonnen schools, the HSI Day School was the first major public school for the common folk and coeducational from the start. It had the largest enrollment in both elementary and high school grades. It also served American families in Addis Ababa before the American Community School (now called the International Community School) opened in 1966.

Beginning in the 1950s, American system of higher education in Ethiopia went beyond agriculture and proceeded to influence arts and letters, social science, law, business, medical sciences, and engineering sciences. When King Haile Sellassie founded the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) in 1950 at Arat Kilo, it was modeled after British university colleges, although it was headed and mostly staffed by Canadian Jesuits. The late 1950s and early 1960s brought many changes in Ethiopia's higher education that intensified American involvement. UCAA was elevated to a university status in 1962, and renamed Haile Sellassie I University with a new campus on the former palace grounds donated by Haile Sellasie himself. More American faculty and administrators began to arrive through a variety of programs including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the successor of the Point Four program, and the Fulbright scholars program, another vital instrument in the arsenal of America's soft-power. An outstanding contribution of American soft-power was the education of Ethiopia's high-level human power. The scholarships made available through the USAID, USIS, Fulbright and private donors like Ford and Rockefeller, supported numerous graduates from Ethiopian colleges to attend graduate schools in some of the elite universities in the U.S.

The first law school opened in 1963 and its was led a Dean from Rutgers University (who later in 1968 became Vice President of Haile Sellassie I University, the first American to attain that position). In the same year, another American headed the establishment of the first College

of Business Administration (CBA). A few years later, the USAID funded the building of the Kennedy Library. The USAID also contributed to the establishment the first development research institute called the Institute of Development Research (IDR) which opened in 1972.

With initial funds coming from the USAID, Rockefeller and Ford Foundation, an American Professor Robert West, Professor of Economics, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, became the Interim Director and established what had become a very productive social science research organ, now renamed Institute of Development and Policy Research (IDPR). All of these were made part of the Haile Sellassie University.

Ethiopia also became one of the beneficiaries of the Peace Corps, perhaps one of the best institutions of American soft-power. The first contingent of Peace Corps Volunteers, 279 strong, arrived in Addis Ababa in September 1962 and were placed in teaching positions throughout the country. By the time Peace Corps Ethiopia had to close in 1977 because of the Derg's sudden anti-American indiscretion, over 3,000 volunteers had served in Ethiopia (PC 2009; Metaferia 2009, 56-57). The United States Information Service/Agency (USIS/USIA) (which became defunct in 1999), was another American institution of soft-power (albeit with some propagandist undertones) that played a vital role in the 1960s and 1970s in demonstrating American politics, culture and material life as an inspiration for young Ethiopians with its well-stocked library and comfortable reading rooms to which Ethiopian students had access including borrowing privileges. A variety of films and audiovisual equipment were made available by USIS to schools to show films of educational and cultural content in their classrooms. The USIS also published a Newsletter that was distributed free to high school students in in Addis Ababa. It anchored a variety of programs for cultural exchanges in which American academics and persons of fine arts came to address Ethiopian students. Some of these programs sponsored Ethiopian teachers and students to travel to the United States for short term visits of schools and cultural establishments. Perhaps more importantly, the USIS played an important role in administering U.S. scholarships funded by the U.S. government as well as private donors. It also administered standardized tests for entrance by Ethiopian graduates into U.S. colleges and universities for graduate training.

### **American Role in Ethiopia's Infrastructure**

Another laudable innovation of American soft-power diplomacy was the establishment the Ethiopian Air Lines (EAL) in 1945. This is without a doubt one of the most resilient establishments that the Americans helped modernize. Its success had two major reasons. The first was that Ethiopia has had a small but well-functioning Ethiopian Air Force (see below) fifteen years before the establishment of EAL. It had produced many Ethiopian aviators and aircraft engineers. The second reasons was that Ethiopia established a joint venture with the American Trans World Airlines (TWA), which was then a premier international airline, to assemble the necessary facilities and training to run the fledgling EAF (Vestal 2011, 37-38; Marcus 2002, 159; Zewde 2001, 186-187). EAF began flight service in 1946 using American built five C-47 (or DC-3s) Skytrains purchased from U.S. military surplus.

DC-3s were EAL's work-horse for domestic flights until the 1980s. American made Convair aircraft came into service with a pressurized cabin and a more comfortable ride to international destinations (Ethiopian 2011). With the purchase of Boeing 720B and the completion of the more modern Bole Airport in 1962, EAL (which later became called simply as "Ethiopian") entered the jet age in 1963. By early 1970s, Ethiopian had become one of the successful and popular airlines in Africa. In 1971 EAL hired its first Ethiopian General Manager, why which time most of the EAF flight crew and ground personnel had been Ethiopianized. The TWA link ended in 1977 and Ethiopian became self-sufficient in aircraft maintenance not only for itself but also for several airlines in the region (Metaferia 2009, 57-58). Ethiopian is one of the best examples of an institution that had a strong indigenous base which flourished when it came in contact with an American partner with skills in technology and management to run a modern and technologically sophisticated establishment. Another factor that helped Ethiopian survive the ruinous Derg, that similar modern institutions like the commercial bank system, insurance companies, the highway and power authorities, and higher education establishments were not lucky to have had, was it was left alone with its autonomy with little to no interference from the communist and tribalist apparatchiks and cadres.

In the 1970s, it became the first African airline to fly to many African capitals, European cities (Athens, Rome, Madrid), and East Asian capitals (including Mumbai, Bangkok and Beijing). It operates Boeing 737s, 757s, 767s and 777s, 787s, Airbus A350 placed orders for the Boeing Dreamliner and Airbus A350-900s. Ethiopian has joined the S-900s. Its reputation as a reliable and successful international airline with a geographic scope that spans the world, it has become a member of the Star Alliance in 2010 with a direct service to New York and DC from Addis (Ethiopian 2011).

U.S.-Ethiopian partnership in aviation had other very important spinoffs. One of them was the establishment of the Ethiopian-U.S. Mapping Mission in 1963 whose objective for the U.S. Government to supply the Government of Ethiopian with up-to-date maps and photogrammetric technologies. About a thousand U.S. military personnel came to Ethiopia to work with their Ethiopian counterparts up until its closure in 1970 with the completion of the topographic survey of all of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Mapping and Geography Institute served as the Ethiopian counterpart to the U.S. Mapping Mission and later became the custodian of the maps, photogrammetric and cartographic expertise of the country. The Ethiopian Mapping Institute (now renamed Ethiopian Mapping Authority) was again an example of a very successful collaboration between the two countries in which a critical innovation of mapping and cadastral service became part of the cluster of very advanced institutions that were to serve the launching of Ethiopia into a modern state for purposes ranging from the defense of the homeland to highway construction (Savage 1973; UN 1964, 1).

Another significant U.S.-Ethiopian partnership was to build Ethiopia's highways. As a mountainous country with little to no navigable waters, Ethiopians lived in isolated villages many of which were not connected to a national highways system. The establishment of the Imperial Highway Authority (IHA) in 1951 was meant to solve that problem of inaccessibility. The

occupying force of Italians had built about 7,000 kilometers of roads, half of them paved with asphalt, to secure what they hoped was going to be their colony. After independence, Ethiopia did not have the knowhow, human power or funds to maintain and add to what Italians left behind. American assistance to meet this challenge came also in 1951 with technical assistance from the United States Bureau of Public Roads headed by soon to be famous American, John Humbar: (Master Road Builder) with a loan of \$9,000,000 from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), now the World Bank. The loan was backed by the U.S. government. IHA embarked on improving the rapidly crumbling Italian built roads and launched an impressive road building program to connect the various provincial capitals and much of the remote hinterlands of Ethiopia from which came most of the cash crops shipped to Addis Ababa and then to the ports of Assab and Massawa (before Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia). Just as the other examples of American assisted innovations like the Ethiopian Airlines and Ethiopian Mapping Institute, IHA was recognized as one of Haile Sellassie best run modern establishments patterned along American styles of management and staffed by some of most competent Ethiopian and American engineers and planners (Zewde 2001, 187-188; Metaferia 2009, 58).

### **Americans and the Ethiopian Military**

Although America's investment in Ethiopia's modernization and development was most remarkable in building institutions for high-level human power and strategic infrastructure, it also helped Ethiopia modernize its defense forces beginning in the 1940s. Military cooperation between the two countries had its origin in King Haile Sellassie being highly interested in building an Ethiopian air force. He cannot forget how much difference that made in Italy's defeat of Ethiopia when fascists rained bombs and poison gas from the air in which Ethiopian fighting forces, lacking air power, could not defend themselves. His interest in planes was so keen that Haile Sellassie requested the staging of an air show at his coronation in 1930. American Hubert Fauntleroy Julian, the "Black Eagle of Harlem" (also known as the "Negro Lindbergh at the time), was invited to fly during the coronation ceremonies (Shaftel 2009; Ayele 2003, 115-116). Julian first parachuted on the ceremonial grounds from one of the French piloted planes and then flew one of the biplanes (Ayele 2003, 115). HSI was so impressed with the demonstration that he decided to build an air force, a decision that was one of his foundational initiatives that not only led to creation of the Ethiopian air force but an entire modern innovation in Ethiopian aviation which had both military and civilian implications.

The Ethiopian Air Force remained small and of insignificant fighting force until 1947 when Haile Sellassie asked Sweden to help in building the Ethiopian Air Force in Bishoftu, about 30 miles south of Addis Ababa. A Swedish General took command of the Ethiopian Air Force with 20 Saab aircraft, most of which were trainers. The Swedes were successful in training many Ethiopian pilots and aircraft mechanics. However, significant combat capability followed only after 1953 when the United States-Ethiopian Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement made it possible for Ethiopia to acquire B-17A light bombers, F-86 and F-5 jet fighters and C-47 transport from the 1950s to 70s (Metaferia 2009, 58). In 1962, the command of the Ethiopian Air Force

was transferred from the Swedes with an Ethiopian Brigadier General taking full command with a compliment of senior and junior officers. At the time, all of the air force's planes were flown and maintained by an all-Ethiopian team. Until Ethiopia changed alliances and went to the Soviet Union in 1977, the Ethiopian Air Force was one of the best success stories in Ethiopia's modernization for which Ethiopian-Swedish and Ethiopian-American partnerships were primarily responsible.

Ethiopia remained an American ally during the Cold War and played a significant role at the time to safeguard U.S.'s geostrategic interests (Zewde 2001, 185-186). The modernization of the Ethiopian Air Force coincided with the introduction of American equipment and technology to also upgrade the other armed forces of the time, the elite royal body guard, the army, and the navy. Ethiopian-American partnership in military affairs began the initial investment by Roosevelt in 1943 to modernize Ethiopia's military through the American lend-lease program (Zewde 2001, 184-186; Ayele 2003, 170). That investment paid off handsomely with Korean War (1950-53) when Ethiopia became the only African country to stand with the U.S and other UN combatants against the Chinese and North Koreans. Ethiopia sent to Korea over 3,000 from the elite Ethiopian Royal Body Guard to fight alongside the American 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Marcus 2002, 159; Metaferia 2009, 4). The year the Korean War ended in 1953, Ethiopia and the United States entered into two major military cooperative regimes. The first was the establishment of the Kagnew Communication Station in Asmara, Eritrea (which at the time was a federal province of Ethiopia). Kagnew Station was the largest radio communication and monitoring stations in the world which the U.S. used to monitor Soviet radio communication in the region (Vestal 2011, 40-42; Zewde 2001, 184-186; Metaferia 2009, 49-50). Kagnew Station had over 4,000 American military personnel in Asmara alone. In 1953, Ethiopia and the United States signed Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement which was operationalized by the establishment in Addis Ababa of a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). MAAG reached its peak in the 1960s with over 300 American military personnel with technical and financial assistance to train tens of thousands of Ethiopian soldiers (Zewde 2001, 186).

Another innovation by Haile Sellassie that was later supported by American equipment was the Royal Ethiopian Navy which was established in 1956 in Massawa with Norwegians and the British responsible for training naval officers whereas the United States supplied the equipment including several coast guard cutters, torpedo boats, and a frigate-type seaplane tender.

King Haile Sellasie's last military innovation was the establishment of a Sandhust-style Military Academy in 1957 to train the office corps for the growing Ethiopian army. Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Panditru and King Haile Sellassie came to an agreement for the Indian army to train the future elite officers the Ethiopian army (Zewde 2001, 186). Within a few years of its creation, Americans, which were not involved in the Military Academy later extended American advanced training for some of the top graduates to pursue advanced training in U.S. military academies and installations. Some furthered their studies in military affairs and others studied law and other subjects in Ethiopia and the U.S. and assumed high leadership positions in the defense and ministerial establishments of Ethiopia.

The U.S. continued to honor its role in modernization of the Ethiopian armed forces with a promise to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade the military equipment including the delivery of a squadron of F-5 fighters in 1975. However, relations began to sour quickly when the U.S. refused to meet requests from the Derg for U.S. to deliver military hardware both purchased and donated. The U.S. reluctance was based on two things. First, it was pushing detente with the Soviets and did not want to change the balance of power in the Horn with belligerent Somalia which at the time was an ally of the communist power. The second reasons was that the U.S. was concerned about the human-rights abuses with imprisonment and extrajudicial killings by the Derg following the overthrow of the royal regime in 1974 (Korn 1986, 7-9; Metaferia 2009, 62-70).

### **The Demise of American Soft-Power in Ethiopia**

Unfortunately for Ethiopia, the 1970s saw an intersection of many developments some of which spelled dire consequences for the modernizing forces that Americans helped build. The problems that contributed to the disruption had both Ethiopian and American origins. The Ethiopian problems had to do with the concatenated challenges in the mid-1970s which started out with the mid-East oil embargo of 1973-74 which raised petroleum prices and triggered taxi strikes in Addis Ababa which were then followed by other work stoppages, student unrest, and a mutiny in the armed forces (Marcus 2002, 181-201). There was also the 1973 famine in Wollo which was grossly mishandled by the government and manipulated by the disloyal opposition for political ends. On top of that, Somalia's military build-up with Soviet help in the early-70s prior to the full-scale Ogaden War of 1977, had become a serious concern for the Ethiopian ground forces deployed along the border between the two countries.

Faced with these challenges that came at the same time and unable to resolve them quickly, HSI's government collapsed in 1974 (Marcus 2002, 181-189; Metaferia 2009, 61-65). The creeping coup d'état that was pulled into the power vacuum soon evolved into a brutal Marxist regime that spelled disaster to the entire country and caused a major setback for American modernizing soft-power diplomacy in Ethiopia. The Derg regime, especially following the Red Terror that began in 1977, caused a drastic reversal in the modernization process as thousands of highly trained Ethiopians lost their lives, were intimidated into silence, were co-opted, fled the country, and those abroad for studies failed to return home afraid of the human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings (Shinn 2002; Metaferia 2009, 59-60, 62-65; Zewde 2001, 236-239).

However, the Derg was not alone on the Ethiopian side in undermining the Ethiopian-American partnership for progress and modernization. Ironically, the very success of HSI's modernization efforts especially in education was the source of much of the problems the monarchy faced in the 1960s and 1970s. At this juncture, it may be important to point out the remarkable achievements in education and human capital development that occurred as part of HSI's modernization process as follows: (a) the high quality of tertiary institutions in social science, arts and letters and the hard sciences that matched their peers in Europe and the United States in the quality of students they produced, (b) the number of Ethiopians placed and trained in

some of the best schools in the United States and Europe, (c) the high rate of returnees of Ethiopians after completing their training overseas some of whom began to pose serious challenges to the legitimacy of the royal regime, and (d) the fast pace of Ethiopianization of key positions in critical establishments that were staffed by foreign nationals. The overall success of the modernization process was evidenced by the fact that in just over 25 years from the establishment of the first University College of Addis Ababa in 1950, almost all of the institutions of higher learning and most of the key modern establishments like the cabinet ministries, armed forces, banks, insurance companies, airlines, power plants, communication establishments, the highways system, water resources, and corporate headquarters were almost entirely staffed by Ethiopian graduates.

However, the outcomes of the Ethiopian-American partnership and the modernization efforts by HSI's government were not always assessed in positive terms. According to some of the elite, HSI's modernization efforts were a ruse to cement the colonial empire-state launched by Menilik II and sustain Ethiopia as a "prison of nationalities" (Holcomb and Ibssa 1990, 235-258; Gebremedhin 1989, 2-36; Jalata 2005, 105-125; Iyob 1995, 41-46). For others, it was an instrumentalist subterfuge for HSI "to reconstruct feudalism on a new and advanced basis" (Zewde 2001, 140; Tareke 1996, 42-54). And still others considered that HSI, despite his undemocratic ways, was an authentic modernizer who "viewed himself as a model for other African nations struggling to break free of their European oppressors" (McVety 2008, 393; see also Pankhurst 2001, 208-218, 256-265; Marcus 2002, 130-180; Zewde 2002, 20-34; Ambachew 2009, 18-33; Metaferia 2009, 45-60; Gebrekidan 2005, 20-23). HSI went against the advice of many of his contemporary royal and aristocratic families and proceeded with the modernization track especially in educating children from ordinary backgrounds (Zewde 2002, 24-34; Clapham 1969, 49-51; Ambatchew 2009, 18-20). He pleaded with parents in the countryside to send their children to schools in Addis Ababa, personally assuring them of their wellbeing and safety (Ambatchew 2009, 25-30). There was a whole set of incentives ranging from boarding privileges, uniforms, Christmas-day treats and gifts to every student in Addis Ababa, gifts of books, gold watches, fountain pens, and other gifts he personally handed out to students who excelled in their studies, and college uniforms of suits and ties and fancy woven badges on blazers that matched those of Cambridge and Oxford (Ambatchew 2009, 20-21). In this regard, it is also remarkable to note that his initial focus on tertiary education was the establishment of the first liberal University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) in 1950. This was the very establishment that incubated some of his worst detractors that cried "feudalism" ad infinitum and did more to undermine his authority than anything else in the 1960s and 1970s (Kebede 2008, 32-36). The elite Military Academy at Harar established in 1957 was populated mostly by students from poor families. Although military decorum did not allow them to shout "feudal" at the King, many of its graduates were as radical as those from UCAA or HSI University. HSI also gave priority to America's soft-power and "low-modernist" (as opposed to high-tech) objectives in technical assistance with a focus on "small-scale technologies and capital transfer" to improving agriculture (McVety 2008, 385), the mainstay of over 80 percent of Ethiopia's population. His first address to the Joint Session of Congress in his first visit of the U.S. in 1954 makes this very clear. It made particular focus on the role the



U.S. can play to advance Ethiopia's education and economy (McVety 2008, 391). Although the U.S. had some concerns about possible Soviet designs in the Red Sea and had recognized Ethiopia's key role in the geopolitics of the Horn, HSI did not dwell on hard-power cold-war military dealings in his first visit to the United States in 1954.

On the American side, a major criticism was why the U.S., with all its political capital with the Ethiopian royal government, did not bring some pressure for meaningful and lasting reforms especially on the feudal system of land tenure. President Nixon takes some blame for ignoring Ethiopia's requests to ease up the crisis in Ethiopia especially as it faced a belligerent Somalia armed by the Soviet Union. Embroiled in the Watergate scandal in 1973, Nixon was unable to help HSI get control of the internal strife coupled with Somalia's hostility when he last visited the White House in May 1973 (Korn 1986, 7-8). Nixon resigned in August 1974. His successor, Gerald Ford, was burdened by economic recession and by his domestic troubles including the Nixon pardon, to pay that much attention to Ethiopia's defense and economic needs (Woodward 2003, 136-142; Korn 1986, 7-21; Metaferia 2009, 61-63). HSI was removed from power that same year.

After Jimmy Carter became President in 1977, he put forth his own "Carter Doctrine" of international relations which was built on optimistic assumptions about "détente" with the Soviet Union. Carter wanted to "deemphasize traditional Cold War themes", and instead advanced "a quiet strength" based on "nobility of ideas" to advance human rights (Jackson 2007, 4-5; Woodward 2003, 136-142). For Ethiopian progressives, except perhaps the extreme pro-Soviet radicals (Kebede 2008, 23-32), his otherwise noble ideas could not have come at a worse time for Ethiopia. The country was facing its worst domestic and international challenges since the Derg took power. A deadly "Red Terror" was underway in which a Derg-supported radical group was dueling with another violently opposed to it with assassinations and extrajudicial killings by the government in the streets of Addis Ababa. A national security threat was being felt from Somalia as that country was gearing up to occupy the Ogaden. There was also a heightened hostility in secessionist province of Eritrea. President Carter, eager to push his doctrinal point on Cold War themes, was disinclined to help the Derg regime to obtain badly needed military hardware to respond to the Soviet-backed provocation from Somalia. When it was faced with American reluctance for support, the Derg quickly changed alliances and concluded an arms agreement with the Soviet Union. A faction of the Marxist opposition, led by some of Ethiopia's best and brightest, most educated in the elite schools of the United States and Europe, soon joined the Derg as the military junta opportunistically embraced Soviet communism. Other opposition groups were classified as "counter revolutionaries" and were brutally crushed with the "Red Terror". The Derg downgraded its diplomatic relations with the United States in 1977, and invited the Soviets to switch sides from Somalia into Ethiopia.

Thus, in 1977, three quarters of a century of American soft-power diplomacy in Ethiopian-American cooperation for the modernization of Ethiopia came to a halt (Korn 1986, 23-26; Shinn 2002; Metaferia 2009, 65-70). President Carter, blindfolded by his inflexible doctrine, sadly realized the worst case scenario in the geopolitical realignment of the Horn for the United States.

Ethiopia was gripped by a communist regime that became one of the worst offenders of human rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The U.S. “lost” Ethiopia to the Russians, and had to counter that move by jumping from the pan into the fire, supporting Somalia’s General Siade Barre, one of Africa’s notorious dictators (Korn 1986, 26-46; Woodward 2003, 136-149; Lewis 2002, 226-242). Somalia tried to use what it perceived as Ethiopia’s transitional period of weakness and invaded the Ogaden (Woodward 2003, 65-88). With Soviet and Cuban military help, Ethiopia won the war in the Ogaden and pushed the Somali military back into their country. As Carter’s own Secretary of State, Zbigniew Brzezinski, put it, “detent was buried in the sands of the Ogaden” (Jackson 2007, p. 19; Korn 1986, 26-29). So were many of the outcomes of American soft-power diplomacy with Ethiopia for over 70 years.

Although the Derg’s brutal governance was mostly to blame for the whole debacle, the Ethiopian radical left which backed it, at the cost of its own ignominious demise, was also responsible (Gebrekidan 2005, 20-22; Kebede 2008, 79-81). It was also the lack of foresight by the U.S. administration of the time which underestimated the mercurial Derg and failed to listen to the more moderate voices of reason that its own soft-power helped inculcate (Jackson 2007; Korn 1986, 29-46; Lewis 2002, 236-261; Nye 2004).

Ethiopia squandered an impressive modernization processes and a significant loss of its human capital (Shinn 2002) that took over 70 years of Ethiopian-American partnership to build. By the early 1990s, Ethiopia became so exhausted, divided and demoralized that the Derg was incapable to hold it together and was eventually defeated by the insurgencies in two of its northern provinces, Eritrea and Tigray. In the aftermath, the post-Derg government in Ethiopia failed to recapture the virtues of America’s soft-power resources that the Derg had submerged, and instead opted to pursue a non-secular ethnic-based group-rights agenda cleverly feigning “federal” democracy but ended up as equally hostile to democratic principles and individual freedoms (Aalen and Tronvoll 2009). Eritrea took the option given to it by the new Ethiopian government to secede from Ethiopia. That made Ethiopia the most populated and self-determined land-locked country in the world (Abbai 1999). Eritrea itself became one of the poorest and most oppressive countries in Africa (Kendie 2005, 137-165; Araya 1997; Reid 2005; Lyons 2009). Somalia, which in 1996 had shot down U.S. helicopters, and killed over a dozen American soldiers in what was indelibly dramatized in “Black Hawk Down”, broke up among infighting warlords and essentially became a failed state (Lewis 2002, 262-275; Hagmann 2005; Menkhaus 2007; Holne 2006). It has been forty years since the overthrow of HSI. Little did President Carter knew that his well-intentioned “Carter Doctrine” based on “human rights” would bring such a nihilistic resolution to what was a more stable, if politically challenged, Horn of Africa in the mid-1970s (Abbink 2006; Araya 1997; Lyons 2009; Perndergast and Thomas-Jensen 2007; Korn 1986, 32-46). The debacle in the Horn is a lesson in how regressive outcomes result from a relentless pursuit of unworkable ideological and ethnic dogmas that defy more enlightened resolutions for multiculturalism, human rights, democratic freedoms, and socioeconomic progress.

## Conclusion

The Ethiopian-American encounter, twenty six years after the Declaration of Independence of the United States, is the oldest encounter between a New World state and an independent African country. It started out with a historic event in New York in 1808 where Ethiopian visitors and African Americans stood for basic principles of equality and justice. Ever since, Ethiopia served as an icon of freedom for Africa and the African Diaspora in the Americas. Until 1903, Ethiopian-American encounters were people-to-people relations that later culminated in storied references to Ethiopia from abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, intellectuals like W.E.B. Du Bois and pan Africanists like Marcus Garvey (Gebrekidan 2005, 27-46). When agreements for official relations between the two countries were made by Menelik II and Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, Ethiopia was well-known among the educated elite especially in the African American community. When Ethiopia's independence came under threat by colonial Italy with American official relations suspended after the death of Menelik II, Americans, especially those of African descent, stood by the beleaguered country not only at the battlefield in Ethiopia but also at the Hague before the League of Nations (Metaferia 2009, 35-38).

Haile Sellassie's return from exile in 1941 and his reinstallation as King of Kings of Ethiopia, opened a new and more dynamic chapter for Ethiopian-American relations (Ayele 2003, 61; Zewde 2001, 184-191). As his predecessor King Menelik II, Haile Sellassie's foreign policy for Ethiopia was to diversify her alliance outside those circumscribed by the colonial powers of UK, France and Italy. This was exemplified by HSI's daring overture to the Americans by his secret trip (without the knowledge of his post-liberation British handlers) from Addis to Cairo to visit FDR on the U.S. boat anchored off the coast of Egypt in 1945 when FDR was in the region for the Yalta Conference. During the same trip, he also met Churchill to assure the Prime Minister of Ethiopia's continuing friendship with the U.K. (Vestal 2011, 36-37). HSI took advantage of the abundance of goodwill among progressive elites in Europe (e.g. Sylvia Pankhurst in the U.K.) as well as in the United States (e.g. Eleanor Roosevelt) for Ethiopia to benefit from the post-war euphoria in reconstructive development. Ethiopia's place in global politics was also restored. In 1941, it became the only member in the United Nations from Africa, and one of the first signatories of the U.N. Charter in San Francisco in 1945. Backed by U.S., Ethiopia introduced a new currency in 1945 which became widely accepted partly because of coins minted with silver provided by the U.S. (Vestal 2011, 37). By the time Ethiopia and the United States elevated their diplomatic relations to ambassadorial level in 1949, HSI had managed to build Ethiopia's stature to unimaginable prominence and reverence for a poor Third World country. FDR died in 1945, only a couple of months after he met HSI and invited him to visit the US.

When HSI visited the U.S. for the first time in 1954, President Eisenhower received him at the White House with pageantry and fanfare and honored the Ethiopian leader in his White House address by saying "never has any company here gathered been honored by the presence in their guest of honor of an individual more noted for his fierce defense of freedom and for his courage in defending the independence of his people than the guest of honor this evening" (Woolley and Peters 2011).

Ethiopia and Haile Sellassie were accorded similar honors by Kennedy and Nixon at successive White House visits by the King. Ethiopian-American relations between 1941 and 1977 were therefore grounded in such mutual respect and admiration. Ethiopia deserved the cordial treatment it received because, first it was Ethiopian citizens who refused to accept racial discrimination in the U.S. as far back as 1808 and reminded Americans of the violation of their own covenant on human dignity; second, Ethiopia taught a lesson to the world about the dangers of failing to respect basic principle of multilateralism by appeasement of the strong against the weak in global diplomacy; third, Ethiopia fought heroically, a guerilla war against the Italian occupiers to regain its independence in 1941 with the help of allied powers; four, it fully met its UN obligations by deploying its forces in the Korean and Congo Wars; five, it helped establish the Organization of African Unity (now African Union) and donated its headquarters in Addis Ababa; and finally, it was successful in partnering with western powers like the U.S. to earn their goodwill to deploy their soft-power resources in the interest of Ethiopian progress and modernization. In the final analysis, the U.S. will find and/or has found other ways to pursue its vital interests in the Horn of Africa. Much of it has been in hard-power diplomacy for military defense and security especially in view of the global war on terror and America's search for an effective deterrent on the unorthodox geopolitical challenge. Hard-power options like the *U.S. Africa Command* would claim more attention and resources than America's vital institutions of soft-power like the USAID, Fulbright, Peace Corps, and the defunded USIA/USIS. As Joseph Nye pointed in his book, "wielding soft power is far less unilateral than employing hard power" and "the United States' most striking failure is the low priority and paucity of resources it has devoted to producing soft power" (Nye 2004). However, of equal significance is the predisposition of current governments in Ethiopia and others in the Horn of Africa in making smart choices between America's hard-power and soft-power overtures with lessons from best practices in the past for their countries' sustainable progress and modernization.