

## OTHER NATIONS

*The Crescent  
and the Horn*

"Arabische Politik rund um das Horn von Afrika" [Arab politics in the Horn of Africa] by Udo Steinbach, in *Aussenpolitik* (Fall 1977), Übersee Verlag, Schönes Aussicht 23, 2 Hamburg 76, Federal Republic of Germany.

For economic and strategic reasons, the major Arab nations on or near the Red Sea have long sought to influence events—and forestall leftist tendencies—in the volatile Horn of Africa. Since 1973, this has taken the form of increased military effort and development aid.

However, contends Steinbach, director of the German Orient Institute, recent clashes in the Horn, including the 1974 Ethiopian civil war and the 1977 Somali invasion of Ethiopia, bode ill for agreement among such disparate regimes as those of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Yemen.

The biggest question: the state of Ethiopian politics since the ouster of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. The ruling Provisional Military Council (PMC) has provoked widespread opposition through unpopular socialist programs, including wholesale nationalization. The PMC's most dangerous foes however, are the several Ethiopian separatist movements—particularly the 50,000-man Eritrean Liberation Front, which hopes to achieve UN-mandated autonomy for its region.

Led by the oil-rich Saudis, the Arabs are trying to strengthen conservative, nonsocialist forces in the region (such as Oman and the Sudan) while excluding the United States and the U.S.S.R. from a major role in the area. Worries over Ethiopia's political orientation and its military ties to Israel (the Israelis have trained Ethiopian troops) have led the Arabs to support Eritrean autonomy, short of independence. The Arabs have failed to curb leftist Somalia's designs on Ethiopia's Ogaden region; they have attempted, with more success, to restrain socialist South Yemen in its border disputes with North Yemen.

Steinbach's conclusion: Even if the competing claims of Somalia, Ethiopia, the Eritrean rebels, and others can be resolved, prospects for a stable, "Arabized Peace zone" in the Horn of Africa are bleak.

*Regional conflicts on Africa's Horn bode ill for a stable Arab sphere of influence in the area. The biggest question mark: the future evolution of Ethiopia's leftist regime.*

