

**The auspices of a neutral
mandate**
**Crossborder operations
into Eritrea**

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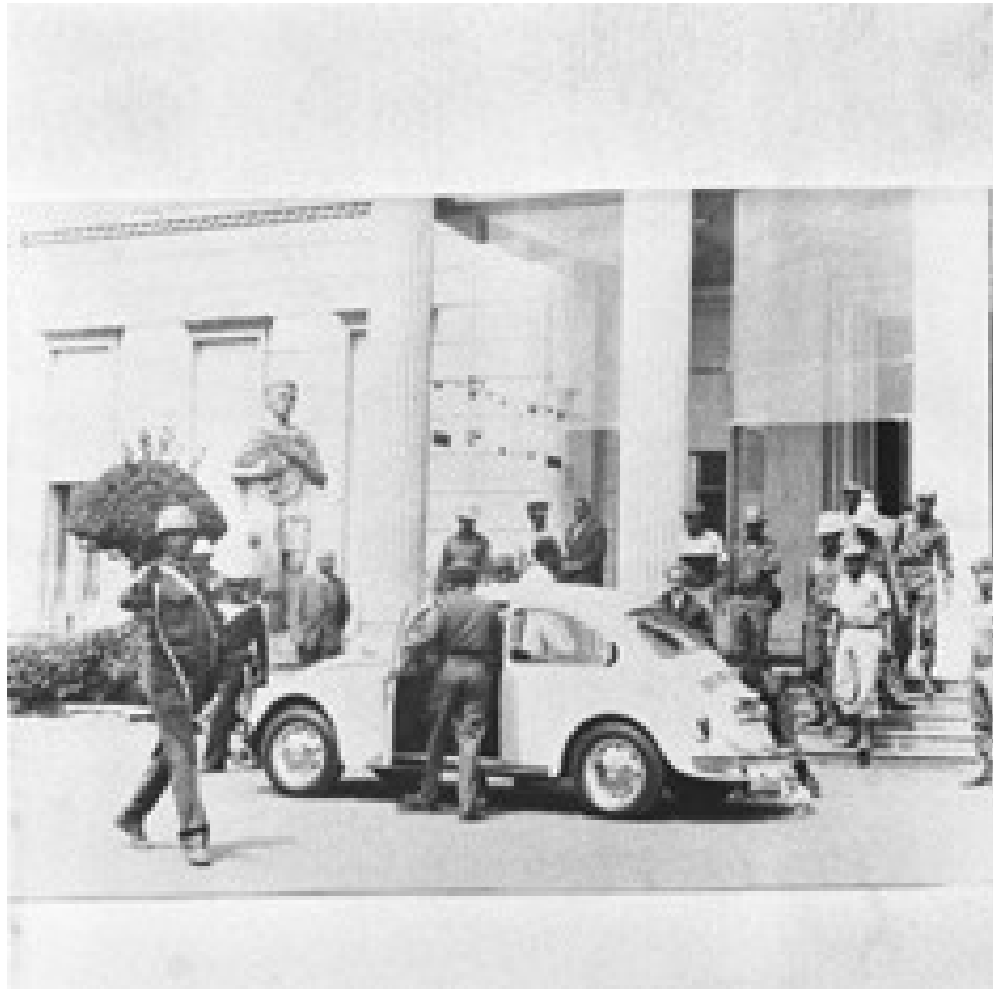
Italian colony 1890 - 1941



- British Military Administration 1941-1952
- Federation 1952
- 1962; annexation
 - Eritrea as Ethiopia's 14th province
- 1961; the emergence of a liberation movement



1974 Ethiopian revolution



- ELF and EPLF controversies
- EPLF and TPLF collaboration
- May 24 1991; independence de facto
 - May 24 1993; independence de jure



The beginnings of crossborder operations



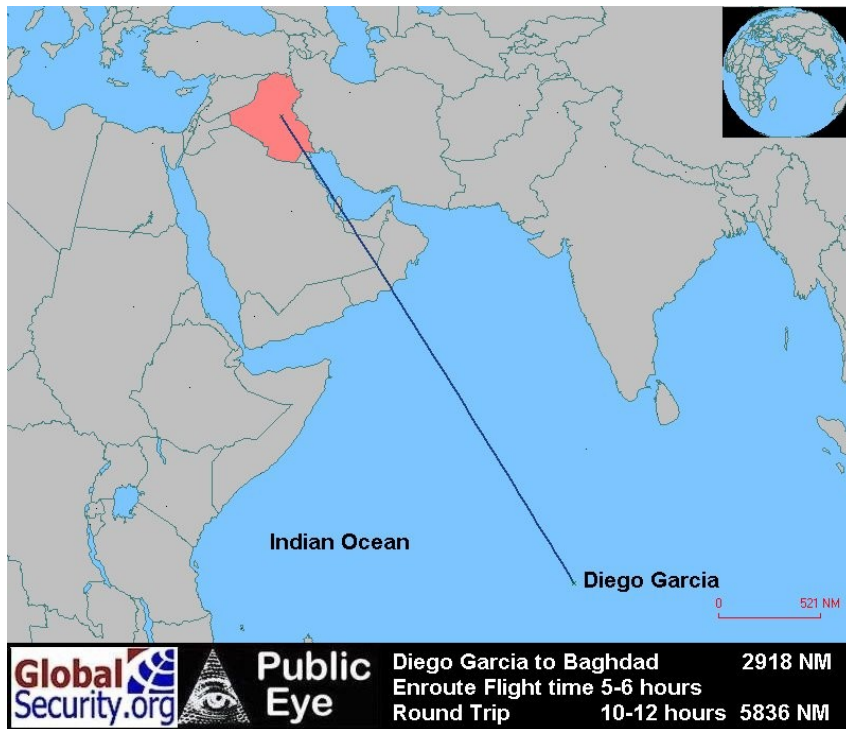
- Norwegian involvement; 1949 UN Eritrea Commission
- 1970s; Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in Sudan and Ethiopia
- EPLF Emergency Relief Association approaches NCA
- Emergency Relief Desk:
 - coordination by NCA
 - distribution by EPLF/ELF
- A strictly neutral mandate
 - humanitarian intervention
 - liberation theology
 - cooperate only with the humanitarian branches of the ELM
- Funding: US and EU

Cold war perspective



The U.S. base at Kagnew.

Diego Garcia





- Eritrean liberation movement supported by Soviet
- US leaves Ethiopia, Menghistu turns to Soviet
- Just pawns or able actors? A pericentric framework
- Serious setback for EPLF
- Reagan doctrine
 - counterforce strategy
 - intervention by proxy

The attributes of NGOs

- Channels for donations
 - Flexible and with local networks
 - Buffers and shortcuts through sovereignty issues
- The big five;
 - politically neutral; NCA (Christian), SC (children), RC (refugees)
 - political objective (leftist/solidarity); NPA, DF
- Non-neutral:
 - NPA and DF; parallel operations (EIAC and TTAC)
- Neutral:
 - RC never operative in Eritrea (sovereignty issue)
 - SC and NCA in Sudan/Eritrea/Tigray/Ethiopia
- NCA in charge of the largest operation into Eritrea, attributed to its neutral mandate
 - SC not part of the ERD; direct support to ERA and REST

A neutral mandate?

- Prolonging the war?
- Securing local support for EPLF?
- Transparency and deviations?
- Military equipment?





The EPLF attraction



The principle of self-reliance



Life at the front



Social welfare; soldiers and civilians



The politics of humanitarian intervention



- Relief is power, both when given and when not
- Neutral mandate a powerful instrument:
 - The paradoxical relationship between neutrality and political influence
- NCA allowed to remain in Eritrea in spite of the 1998 foreign NGO expulsion
- The personal factor