

NATIONAL SECURITY, LEADERSHIP, AND SURVIVAL

Tecola W Hagos, 11 November 2018

I. Foreign Relations:

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed continues to irritate me with his obsequious behavior toward President Issayas Afeworki, and now his fawning over President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (Farmajo) of Somalia. Pictures from the recent Meeting of the three Leaders show Abiy's deplorable behavior the source of irritation for me and very many Ethiopians. The singular such picture of the three leaders huddled together like some giggling school girls is both disturbing and unbecoming of the dignified proper conduct of individuals representing sovereign people, I expected. [See the picture below.] Of the three, the most sycophantic is Abiy Ahmed wearing his ridiculous *Jano* in the fashion of dressing of an *Agafare*, not appropriate for a head of government. [Abiy, if you wear our National Dress, which is a good idea, but do it properly.] He is acting like a chihuahua beaming and wagging off his tail (in his case, his hands) in the presence of his owner. Look at Abiy's posture and the look in his face, the way he is adoringly salivating fixated on the face of Issayas Afeworki. I simply could not stand watching an Ethiopian leader in such subservient and servile posture. How I wish we have Emperor Haile Selassie I with us now with his great imperial dignity and wisdom in a trying time like the present.



The old school of diplomacy and foreign relations emphasizes personal direct relations as the most desirable form of diplomacy for its effectiveness in the short run. But that is often misunderstood and misinterpreted as a “buddy-buddy” system. Far from such loose and over dependency of conduct on friendship in a buddy-buddy relation, personal relationship of leaders of different sovereign nations requires very careful tending and attention. It does not allow a sport's locker-room familiarity or liberties at all or the friendly pulling and shoving of team mates. Abiy in his eagerness to please his guests is crowding his guests to such a degree of discomfort that I doubt they will ever accept any invitation with him again. Or sit in close proximity.

International relations when conducted by seasoned statesmen is always dignified, courteous, and circumspect. Neither Issayas Afeworki nor Farmajo will surrender or abandon the security and national interest of his country just on a whim, or just because other leaders fawn over him because such a leader knows that form of overt friendly approach is seeking some advantage against his own national self-interest. Neither the Eritrean Leader nor the Somali Leader would forego a single item of his national interest just because Abiy is acting like a lap-dog. In fact, they will have less respect even contempt for Abiy and seek to squeeze out of him more concessions. The meeting is billed as a national security consultation. The question is who are these Leaders concerned about? Djibouti? Somaliland? China? Saudi Arabia? Egypt? None of the countries I mentioned are considered as immediate threats to any of the three Leaders.

What is the political situation that triggered such regional meeting of the Leaders of the three main countries of the Horn? The answer is not that difficult to come by. Though not a state, TPLF is the organization all three leaders Abiy, Issayas, and Farmajo want to liquidate:

1. In case of Issayas, TPLF physically and ideologically stands in the way and is a stumbling block to Issayas's ambition to exploit the wealth of the rest of Ethiopia without restriction or oversight as he did before the war where Eritrea was even listed as the World coffee exporter country despite the fact there is almost no coffee grown in Eritrea. Over a long period, even during the time of rebellion against the Ethiopian government/Military, TPLF had a tumultuous relationship with EPLF for decades.
2. In case of Farmajo, it is a time of settling of score for the marginalization of Somalia by Meles and the TPLF dominated Ethiopian Army; the creation of a boogeyman to blame is existential or a necessity because of the challenge of homegrown rebel group. It is an astute move to thwart or impede any possible collaboration between TPLF and the Somaliland Government (Hargeisa) in the future.
3. For Abiy it is the ideal chance to liquidate the Leadership of TPLF and dissolve the organization thereby removing one real check on his ambition for absolute dictatorial power. The liquidation of TPLF has begun with arrest of some Ethiopian Military Commanders. Eritrean operatives might be involved in the that purging. By carrying out such atrocities both the Amhara and Oromo Kilil Leaders would achieve the condition to redraw the territorial map of the Federation and reduce Tigray to some insignificant territory to be trampled on by Dergists, Gedu Andargachew, Demeke Mekonnen, Fikreselassie Wogderese, et cetera.

Abiy is the Manchurian Candidate manipulated in place to facilitate the recovery of power by the vengeful defeated murderous Officials of the Derg and by that of Amhara and Oromo Kilils Leaders. In all such intrigue, no one is thinking about Ethiopia's interest and the future of the people of Ethiopia. What we have are individuals in leadership positions that are in almost all instances with appalling limited abilities to carryout the minimal demands of their respective societies. If the degree of development of the people in each country is the measurement by which we judge the statesmanship skills of leaders, Abiy Ahmed is a complete failure compared to Issayas or Farmajo. This Bahre Dar meeting undermines severely Ethiopia's relationships between two great friends Djibouti and Somaliland who had been supportive of Ethiopia throughout the 45 years period since 1974. By Contrast both Eritrea and Somalia had fought and occupied Ethiopian territories without provocation from the Ethiopian side in the past.

II. Development and Survival

Let me bring you down to the level where real Ethiopians are to be found eking a living under difficult present time and uncertain future to help you prioritize your interest. We, the people of Ethiopia are caught in a loop that seems day by day impossible to break through. The main reason is the low degree and level of constructive intelligence and knowledge of the population. A recent article about a foreigner from New Zealand raising funds to build a little bridge in a remote part of Lalibela area brought to my attention the very core reason why we Ethiopians are living in great poverty and squalor for thousands of years even though we were never colonized and had led a sovereign existence.

The short article by Alex Loo, "Manawatū charity to hold an art auction for a good cause" [*Stuff*, 10 November 2018] describes how a small community of people in Baregota (near Lalibela) and surrounding area scattered over an area on both sides of a small river had difficulties crossing a small river for decades maybe even for centuries. It is an area that has ample resources of raw material to build a bridge, but the people nor the government did anything.

"Villagers cross the river daily, as it effectively splits the village in two, with some housing, the church on one side and the remainder of the houses and the grain mill on the other. The river crossing is also used by those travelling further into the hinterland, and Foxley estimates it is used by 10,000 people a year. ...

"The auction, aptly named To Ethiopia With Love, will feature donated pieces from artists such as John Tidball and Colin Hoare. Organiser and Bricks for Life committee member Helen Pratt estimates there are 50 pieces of work for sale, including a piece she painted herself.

"Initially, Foxley had a vision that the bridge could be built by the locals with wood from gum trees around the village. However, he soon realised the village would need a bridge designed by engineers, so he reached out to Bridge the Gap Africa, an American organisation that specialises in building footbridges across dangerous rivers."

This situation is not unique to this particular community of Baregota, but is true throughout Ethiopia in tens of thousands of similar situations and even with other more pressing problems where the female members of such Ethiopian communities travel for miles to get water from disgustingly polluted rivers and springs with people and animal waste and garbage et cetera. Ethiopian men did not even have the simple decency to carry such burden of carrying heavy water pots or jerrica to alleviate the painful labor imposed on Ethiopian females and children by tradition. And yet for thousands of years such Ethiopians, generations after generations, did not build safe drinking water sources, nor manage their filth properly et cetera. Not only that, but also the trashing and storing of cereals, such as *Teff*, *Wheat*, *Oats*, *Shimbra* et cetera, and the processing of *Chili* into *Berbere*, *Kike* into *Shiro* et cetera is unhygienic, literally such products are admixture of animal droppings, soiled with *shint*, et cetera due to the primitive methods of using animals and the physical labor of human beings without safe hygienic procedures. Again what is missing is not raw material or resources, but acute constructive intelligence and wisdom in the creation of some form of technology to facilitate efficient and hygienic form in the production and processing of food products.

Conclusion:

Rather than focusing on the acute existential (survival) challenges facing over a hundred million Ethiopians, Abiy Ahmed and his co-conspirators are meeting with foreign leaders to discuss the fictitious security threat facing them all. In reality what they seem to be focusing is on the process to liquidate the leaders of the TPLF and the Tigray State. Abiy Ahmed is a manipulative spineless sycophant who is leading Ethiopia into destructive confrontations with Tigrayans, Afars, Somalis, et cetera. I urge political and military leaders to learn from the experience of leaders around the world in history how to lead a nascent democracy as is the case in Ethiopia.

I recommend that you all, including Abiy Ahmed, read the history of Kamal Attaturk of Turkey, the *Anabasis* of Xenophon (on the Persian expedition), and the history of the brave commander Yi Seong Gye of Korea (of his unique role in the creation of Joseon Korea in the 14th Century). I suggest for your considerations the history of those leaders for the simple reason because they illustrate the power of having loyal soldiers, even though few in numbers, in order to survive an expedition through enemy held vast territory, and even establish a dynasty, in the case of Yi Seong Gye lasting almost a thousand years to our time.

We do have great history of our own leaders that could provide our leaders with insight on the preservation of Ethiopia. Whether it is Emperors Yohannes, Menelik, or Haile Selassie each showed great dignity in dealing with foreign leaders and their representatives. I have never read or heard of any Ethiopian leader except Abiy Ahmed who acted like a servile servant to foreign leaders.

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