**Ethiopia: Prime Minister Bereket Simon**

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After the late genocidal dictator Meles Zenawi was rumored to have been sick, incapacitated or dead, Bereket Simon used the time cunningly to direct the course of the current Ethiopian political direction to suit his needs and the needs of few of his close allies. I have in the past written that “the End of TPLF is here”; and current political developments in Ethiopia prove that in deed, has happened. TPLF revolution, Gedli Tigray is over, caput because Bereket Simon is the undisputed victor for now.

Gedli Tigray died when the TPLF abandoned their number one agenda, Greater Tigray (Abay Tigray) after they decided to rule Ethiopia instead of Tigray. As Ambassador Cohen stated, the minority hegemony in Ethiopia is unsustainable. However, and unfortunately for the people of Ethiopia, the minority regime was able to hold-on to power using force, intimidation and by rigging elections. They managed for a while by dividing the nation along ethnic lines and with the blessing of Western donors that funded the dictatorship unreservedly in pursuit of their agendas and interests.

The disappearance of Meles Zenawi fueled speculations about succession and the country’s future. The cloud of secrecy favored one person and that person is information Minister Bereket Simon who used the time to plot Ethiopia’s future political makeup and leadership. Bereket’s agenda are based on his need for his personal safety, since he has made many enemies from within the political circles of TPLF. And to ensure that the successors are friendly to him as well as his allies.

Bereket also had a lot in his favor. He had the ears of Meles Zenawi throughout, hence he was privy to classified information, the process, contacts, the agendas, strategies and he understood the messages, the tone, and the methodology of the regime since he directed it. Therefore, it was easy for Bereket to maintain the contacts and, importantly, to sell his succession agenda to the West particularly the US, which he was able to do rather easily.

The US recognized the transition immediately. Firstly, Hillary Clinton met with Hailemariam Desalegn and soon thereafter a call from President Barack Obama was made acknowledging US support for Hailemariam. This was a major victory for Bereket since it meant the continuation of US support and that translated to continuity for the regime.

That set off the juxtaposition by the various factions of the regimes inner-circle against those previously marginalized by Meles, Bereket and Azeb Mesfin. These include characters like Sibhat Nega that felt that they may have an opportunity to get back into the game after the death of Meles Zenawi.

Initially, there was a great deal of campaigning by these parties to gain public support. That fizzled because they hid the inner-tassel from the public until the mouthpiece of Bereket Simon, Aigaforum.com, posted red inked headline that announced,

“Passing the Torch, TPLF Style! Veteran leaders of the TPLF, Amb Seyoum Mesfin, Amb Berhan G/kirstos, Arkebe Equbay and Zeray Asgedom have resigned and will be replaced in the TPLF CC as part of the ongoing process to renew the TPLF leadership by newcomers. The veterans contribution to the success of the TPLF/EPRDF was immense. Sources told us Seyoum's farewell speech was so touchy many cried! (March 20, 2013)”

The statement above is laughable, childish however true to the duplicitous nature of these thugs that have terrorized the people of Ethiopia and the region for over two decades.

For long, the people of the region have seen these thugs undermine their intelligence when they make up stories like, “Sources told us Seyoum's farewell speech was so touchy many cried!” The reality however is that Seyoum was forced-out. Many have reported that Seyoum was trying to mediate between the two factions and worked hard to bring them together fruitlessly. He was not expecting his eviction. Berhan G/kirstos was also forced out. In fact, he did not show up to the so called gathering of farewells because he was angry.

Moreover, what does it mean when they claim, “Passing the Torch, TPLF Style?” TPLF stands for Tigray People Liberation Front, Tigrayan revolution or Gedli Tigray. This raises some questions: A) is TPLF handing off power, B) if these ejected individuals were members of the TPLF politburo and thus revolutionaries does that mean that they retired from being revolutionaries and, C) is Gedli Tigray/TPLF done as a revolutionary entity…

The reality is that the TPLF core is sidelined, marginalized and replaced by a handful that have devised a new strategy on how to rule Ethiopia. In a strategy designed to set stage for the next election, the mouth piece of Bereket Simon, Aigaforum.com, released a list of the names in an attachment as part the statement quoted. But what is glaringly obvious is how dangerously divisive it is and how deceptive they try to be. The headline is about the TPLF passing the torch but the question is to whom. The list of names the duplicitous Aigaforum attached to its declaration is for IHADEG or the central committee members of Ethiopia. Therefore, does it mean that the TPLF handed its powers to this central committee? The fact remains; this is a way that Bereket and Azieb are maneuvering in order to deceive the people of Ethiopia and Tigray in particular.

In addition, it is worth noting how the key actors namely Bereket Simon and Azeb Mesfin positioned themselves within the political dynamic of the newly formed political structure; Azieb Mesfin as a the TPLF and curiously Bereket Simon as Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) central committee members.

The question how is it possible for Bereket to position himself with the Amhara group and Azieb with TPLF? The history of this duo is tied to TPLF’s. Thence, why position in this manner? But that is precisely the point. Azieb and Bereket have positioned themselves strategically to ensure control of these groups and regions and to pin them against each other if needed.

The alliance of Bereket and Azieb is far more dangerous than that of Meles because they do not represent the core of the constituencies they claim to represent. Azieb could not represent TPLF or Tigray after knocking off all those who came to power with Meles as TPLF. And how is Bereket Simon of TPLF going to represent Amhara?

It is also worth noting, if one goes through the entire list of the newly elected members of TPLF and ANDM, there is a huge gap in the way that Ethiopian Muslims are represented or, not at all. Are there no Muslims in the Amhara and Tigray regions of Ethiopia? This is a sign that these individuals are not interested on the unity of the people or future stability of Ethiopia, just the power.

Conclusion

Ethiopia is going through another major transition. This transition will determine the long and short term future of the country for worse. Because there is no way that the alliance between Azieb and Bereket can indefinitely marginalize major ethnic, religious communities and political organizations of the nation. The transition signals a power shift in motion; fait accompli. The reason, the US will always opts for continuity and stability and Bereket Simon has sold that effectively to the US, a major financier of the regime and the Ethiopia’s military. Hence, any change that comes could only be expected from the people. Bereket Simon has done everything to ensure continuity and positioned himself as a major player. In fact, he is the undisputed key or main figure in Ethiopia.

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