**What time is it Eritrea?**

**Amanuel Biedemariam**

A young Eritrean that was born in the US once said, “When I hear people call Eritrea a new nation, it startles me because I grew knowing Eritrea to be a nation.” Most Eritrean children that grew up in the US before independence have encountered people that told them Eritrea does not exist on the map. Their answers were always that Eritrea existed in their heart and they knew that she will be free.

The subtle way the West pulled Eritrea’s annexation left Eritreans empty handed without a country, under primitive tyranny of Ethiopia’s pseudo monarchy. In a flash, they defeated the surrendering Italian army led by British troops into Asmara Palace and not long-after, British soldiers and the US escorted Emperor Haile Selassie into Asmara with his wife and handed him a nation without having to lift a finger. Great Britain’s recently declassified World War II videos show this transaction clearly.

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blEmpAgn-6I> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3nSB0sWL20

Eritreans who dreamt of independent Eritrea were forced to flee, killed or imprisoned. That in effect marked the start of the liberation struggle. Eritrea ceased to exist as a nation then. However, Eritrea was alive in the hearts and minds of Eritreans. Heart is the foundation of the Eritrean psyche, the place where Eritrea lives no matter where and it is where it all starts and still continues to date.

With nothing but determination, Eritreans embarked on a long and arduous journey to freedom. Without resources and military expertise Eritreans flocked to the field to fight against US funded Ethiopian troops. In no time, Eritrea managed to establish a full-fledged army that included tanks captured from enemy soldiers. Moreover, while the fighting was taking place, Eritreans were focused on reestablishing Eritrea after victory hence embarked on a nation building campaign.

First the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and after the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) controlled Eritrea, the people of Eritrea accomplished the unthinkable, unimaginable and seemingly impossible fit. With principled approach to struggle, clear-aim stemming from the iron-willed Eritrean heart, by empowering Eritreans with education, by organizing, arming-them with everything they need to succeed as a unit and by Self Reliance Eritrea won.

The manner in which Eritrea came to life is a history that the Soviet Union, United States and their allies shun to talk or write because it highlights the defeat of their agendas. That also means given a choice these enemies would not have liked to see independent Eritrea.

In 1991, the US tried to block Eritrea’s independence but failed because Eritrea knew what to do and where to go. Eritrea took-out the system in Ethiopia and propelled the current regime, in a sense conducted a regime change; a first seamless transition conducted by an African nation, and ensured the signature that sealed independence. No African nation would admit that the current regime of Ethiopia is a byproduct of the struggle propelled to power by Eritrea.

Eritrea’s independence was significant historical event that reshaped the Horn of Africa’s geostrategic map. It came at a time when the Soviet Union fell and the US became the sole-superpower. The breakup of the USSR accorded the US opportunity to control the region. Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya and Ethiopia became US client-states with Ethiopia as a hub. Eritrea was also a part of that equation.

After the Cold War, the US controlled the region by proxies. At the time the Clinton administration lauded these “new generation African leaders” including His Excellency President Isaias Afwerki as the hope for the future. That was short-lived because while the others kowtowed to US interests Eritrea forged independent path to the dismay of US marking new Era of US Eritrea relations. Eritrea was the only nation thus a spoiler of US hegemony. Cooperation, mutual interests-based bilateral relations with Eritrea would set a bad precedent; hence, a regime change policy was initiated against Eritrea.

The machinations to ensnare Eritrea under the pretext of border-war were initiated leading to countless death, loss of limbs and population displacement. Had they succeeded, Eritrea would have been soaked-in-blood for generations. Eritrea managed to foil all their sinister attempts. However, these machinations continued. The UN was manipulated to pass punitive measures that denied Eritrea her inalienable rights for self-defense with illegally manipulated and fabricated sanctions under the guise of “African nation’s initiative” when the actual violators were Ethiopia and the US that brazenly and violently invaded Somalia, a sovereign nation.

The levels of covert and overt activities on Eritrea remain relentless. All the defamatory campaigns and destabilizing activities against Eritrea trace their roots to Ethiopia and US. The US continues the assault with the youth as their key target. Recent State Department regarding Eritrean refugees from the Afar region indicate continuation of a hostile policy geared at encouraging youth flight. The regime change policy is still on play. US authorities are still trying to divide the people of Eritrea from the government.

In 2009, on Christmas Eve, when Ambassador Susan Rice boasted the sanction she placed upon the people of Eritrea, she said the US supports the people of Eritrea. In a similar Fashion, when Secretary John Kerry extended his warped independence letter in May of 2014, he also said the US stands with the people of Eritrea.

Although it is an open secret, why deny congratulations to the government that brought independence of Eritrea? That is duplicity and sign of continuation of the policy. Nothing in the history of the US demonstrates US support for the people of Eritrea. The fact that Secretary Kerry deliberately misrepresented Boston Marathon-winner Meb Kiflezgi’s identity by calling him Kenyan when he knows that Meb is Eritrean-American is evidence that they do not want to acknowledge Eritrea.

**Cold War Part II**

During the Cold War, due to the global-geopolitical juxtaposition, Eritrea was caught on a seesaw that affected her negatively. That ended at the time when Eritrea won independence and the fall of USSR.

Over the last two decades, the world witnessed the destruction of Iraq, Libya, Syria and unforeseen changes in many places such as Egypt. However, after 23 years of US adventurism, the world is experiencing yet another transition that will influence nations. The situation in Ukraine seems to be the game-changer having monumental impact on world politics.

When the US pressured Russia with swift actions including sanctions for Crimea, Russia and China lashed back in ways that changed the world. With a stroke of pen, China and Russia brought down-to-earth the notion of US as sole-super-power. By signing huge energy trade agreement, they invalidated the sanction threat and placed the EU-nations that supported the sanctions on a precarious position. Countries such as Germany were forced to retract, in a sense created a wedge between EU and the US.

The agreement is diminishing the role of the petro-dollar and re-establishing a new economic order that could counter US’s. The bilateral agreements will have implications on relations between nations, on the UN working-pecking-order, on the global economy, on previously US engineered-UN and other sanctions, and on global politics.  A shift on global-alliances independent from US is in place. Hence, for the first time in years, it appears the world is poised for a multi-polar world-order independent from US control.

The most import impact however is on the US dollar. When countries start to trade with other currencies, the value of the dollar falls precipitously and it damages the reserve currency that enabled the US to print money with impunity. Countries that depended on US finances to sustain their economies will crush. This includes countries like Ethiopia that receive billions of US dollars as food and security aid. Absent of new funding sources these countries will crush.

These new geopolitical developments will influence the political dynamics of various regions in Africa. The penetration of China by using/dumping the dollar to gain influence, Russia’s assertive-stances at the UN Security council is dissolving previously US dominated roles, thus diminishing US influences profoundly. For example China is building rail infrastructure that connects Kenya, to South Sudan, Uganda, and Rwanda.

These global developments will lead to changes of outdated US Africa policy. However, these changes will not come willfully. It will come due to US’s inability to manage situations that are spiraling out of control, changing global realities, and lack of funding. At the end, cost- benefit analysis will force US policy changes.

For example Ethiopia will, in short time, be too expensive to manage. To divide-and-rule the TPLF junta divided Ethiopia along ethnic and religious lines.  Many Ethiopians have been crying foul due to fears that religious clashes could lead to genocide in Oromia and other places. Dr. Gregory Stanton of Genocide Watch has been warning about genocide in Ethiopia. Moreover, Ethiopia’s interventions in various parts of the region will undoubtedly have repercussions.

Ethiopian authorities are also concerned that instability in Southern Sudan (SS) will lead to instability in Ethiopia. Refugees from SS are flooding Western Ethiopia. Ethiopia’s role on the SS civil war negotiations is transparent. With threats of arrest Ethiopian authorities forced signatures that forced President Salva Kiir to share power with the rebels. The signature was an effort to legitimize the SS rebel leader Riek Machar in pursuit of US interests.

President Slava Kiir knows the geopolitics of the region and Ethiopia’s roles in it. He is also a key player. Prior to the forced signature, President Kiir signed key security agreement with Egypt essentially giving Egypt backdoor access to Ethiopia. This is where Ethiopia’s concern emanates because the agreement accords Egypt a platform to access Ethiopia.

These are entanglements that show Ethiopia’s fragility. In addition to its internal problems, Ethiopia’s involvement in SS, Somalia and the hostilities against Eritrea will have repercussions. By no means can the US manage and afford to maintain funding a failing government. These types of events are running ahead of US foreign policy objectives.

**The effect on Eritrea**

The difference between 1991 and now Eritrea was stripped-bare then. Today, the reality in Eritrea is different. The mere fact that food security is attained is a game changer. Eritrea is in much better place and able to stand independently. Eritrea is the only country able to withstand aggressive US adventurism. It is ironic that Eritrea, a country that ascended at the fall USSR is managing to witness yet another cold war like event on the offing. Except this time the table appears to be turning with US super-power status on the decline while China and Russia rise.

Eritrea faced the wrath of US adventures alone. Even when nations knew Eritrea is standing truthfully by the law, no one stood for justice on the side of Eritrea for fear of retaliation by US. Regardless, the people of Eritrea knew, as President Isaias Afewerki said, “That this adventurism will not last.” The people of Eritrea stood together and fought knowing that the fight is for the very-existence of Eritrea and paid the price demonstrating that Eritrea can stand without having to depend on any power. As a result, today, countries are looking for allies and Eritrea is a perfect choice. Eritrea’s ability to defend herself and the neutral stances are bearing fruit.

Eritrea was able to withstand the wrath because of the UNITY of the people, and successful national-service program. Every Eritrean, no matter where they live or who they are, has to participate. As a result Eritrea has the most disciplined military population on the world. The people of Eritrea know how to respect the gun and live with it while protecting the nation. The mature-nature and the discipline makes Eritrea the most peaceful nation in Africa.

Eritrea’s greatest resources are the people not the rich natural resources the nation is endowed with. It is also national service and the unity of the people. And not surprisingly the enemies’ main targets are Eritrea’s human resources. The US and Ethiopia are doing everything to deny Eritrea her youth; attack the national service program and create divisions amongst the people. Their main aim is to find or create a crack.

**Conclusion**

Eritrea stood strong by the incorruptible leadership that bought Eritrea the time and space necessary to roll-with-the-punches. They secured the room necessary that allowed Eritreans to see global developments and learned from it with patience. Eritrea focused on the bigger picture avoiding traps of temporary PR gains. They showed sacrifice and selflessness that the people can identify. They showed resilience under pressure and told the world we will do it our way, the Eritrean way. Most importantly Eritrea is here by the united-will and strength of the people.

It is time to strengthen our unity and stand for what the martyrs gave their lives. Above all, be smart; lift each-other and our communities no matter where we are. That is what time it is.

 Wetru Awet N-Hafash

 Zel-Alemawi Zikri N-Sema-e-tatna

 Awetnayu@hotmail.com

  https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CB8QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Freliefweb.int%2Freport%2Fsouth-sudan%2Fsouth-sudan-crisis-spilling-over-regional-emergency-warns-christian-aid&ei=cROdU4\_ZK5GUyAScroKoAg&usg=AFQjCNF0t6Z\_bU7Db4Q4y5nf1vs4kHnwWA&sig2=-YodNl-XKI1R7aNu-Sp2Jw&bvm=bv.68911936,d.aWw

<http://www.google.com/url?url=http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/at/summary/v050/50.3onyango.html&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ei=tX2cU8SCF7LKsQTryIKgAg&ved=0CDkQFjAJ&sig2=pnB53orsjhxMRxrkKZBoiw&usg=AFQjCNHa_99islaz2KBlbFyp9T9-xtFXIw>

<http://www.google.com/url?url=http://www.genocidewatch.org/ethiopia.html&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ei=bH6cU6SZL8iqsQSngoG4BA&ved=0CCYQFjAD&sig2=wbW0VmzcsKORfOUrVsMZ1A&usg=AFQjCNGxhS4z-wQ1ZvhZkCA90aI6qhjF3w>

<http://www.google.com/url?url=http://hornofafrica.de/high-level-eritrean-delegation-headed-by-foreign-minister-osman-saleh-conducting-visit-in-crimea/&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ei=4X6cU_WCI6LNsQTqwYDgBg&ved=0CDEQFjAF&sig2=40C2c4gXnL36ylgruaxz3g&usg=AFQjCNHg-Eaxos05ZSCke3wdUaa4GB5Ueg>

<http://rt.com/business/160124-vtb-bank-china-currencies/>

<http://rt.com/business/164752-russiia-de-dollarize-yuan-china/>

<http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001XsYXH5tf34_Zq4v5WMW1K_ESKELPw474K7psKR4UdeAxrAGtwaVVeOmCSI8OPpszifBYKIalDIB8Rd8arIB1r3zmAIw5F_vOAle9lW9QX8QeAvZ5AClgEYOB1VHKHNAdCtbdi7QJ2Hhb7Dp-5-5_m8bZVzQC2NnWa2C2QoTp5QooaUYX_fwRmeWneWY-KTaRm5XRPBZZ3uJvznz8S7PVQYQuixFAJO7_-QX6MwPyicIlXZDdC9MUZ4Kq9kdT5jPnIIkH1bSFQHs=&c=qAKSQYCuaJenqVslT49rvxVUICEpHXXJssDg4Ozn3I2y2vu8LkFVcw==&ch=3xRQqxB7_tvp2iJMrQb0rERJzP3PJKf6TW8QTurTJbfN-kG-frNxHA==>