## Is War a Necessary Evil?

## Eritrea vs. the Regime in Ethiopia

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Considering evils of wars, nations continued to engage in war that is devastating to both sides. The destruction caused to human lives and properties is immeasurable no matter how big or small the war is. Wars fought in the past had two sides of the spectrum believing the war they pursued against one another was “a necessary evil”. **Flirting with the idea of going to war with Eritrea again behind the principle of “war is a necessary evil”, the regime in Ethiopia has been and continued to pound the war drum. The sixty-four thousand dollars question is: does the principle equally apply to Eritrea? Given the fact that the regime in Ethiopia is still occupying Eritrea’s sovereign land, one can reasonably argue that future potential war to be waged between these two countries in respective of which country fires the first bullet, Eritrea has a legitimate right to declare war to regaining its sovereign land. On the other hand, the regime in Ethiopia claims to have a potential national security threat coming from its neighbor, Eritrea. Taking the war to Eritrea seems to be the practical alternative the regime in Ethiopia is contemplating. One can also reasonably argue that this irrational thinking is a fear-driven vendetta as the threat is a self-induced one.**

Wars fought previously have taught us one side of the partaker had certainly fought a war of aggression. To mention a few, the 1812 war (between Napoleon’s France and Russia), WWII (Germany and the Allied countries) and the war between United States of America and Iraq are wars that may fall in the category. Without divulging too much as to how the wars started in these three instances, the aftermaths of these three wars gave us a perception that one of the participants was forced to engage the war involuntarily.

The 1812 war Napoleon imposed on Russia was purely a war of aggression that was mainly initiated out of greed or perhaps fears as his appetite continued to get bigger and his desire to keep Russia out of Europeans’ affairs. On the other hand, Russia’s stand was to simply defending its territory. As losing the war he was fighting against Russia was becoming a reality, Napoleon made the following statement: **“I have come once and for all to finish off these barbarians of the North. The sword is now drawn. They must be pushed back into their ice, so that for the next 25 years they no longer come to busy themselves with the affairs of civilized Europe”**

It is a universally accepted fact that World War II was the most devastating war in modern history. However, tolerating the aggression that was instigated by Hitler was not something that the world was willing to bear and live with. The question is: would the leaders of the world have handled it differently had they known in advance what the price was to be paid to defend Hitler’s belligerence? In his attempt to reason with Hitler, United Kingdom’s Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was willing to surrender a portion of Czechoslovakia. One can say that Chamberlain had no problem being generous in his attempt to appease Hitler at the expense of Czechoslovakia. His goal was to bring peace. After all, an averted war could be a beginning of future potential war. Unfortunately, Chamberlain’s gesture wasn’t good enough for what Hitler had in mind. Knowing Hitler’s desire to control Europe and perhaps the rest of the world, Prime Minister Winston Churchill was not willing to appease Hitler for the sake of peace as his predecessor opted to do so. The calculated risk Churchill took paid off; nevertheless, the price paid was a hefty one. Long story short, with United Kingdom leading the Allied force coupled with the United States pulled into the war in the eleventh hour, the devastated war had finally come to a conclusion. Many believe the world we are living in today is the byproduct of World War II. At the same time, many equally believe that had the Allied lost the war, the world we live in would have been totally different.

In the last twenty-five years, the world had witnessed quite a few devastating but short-lived wars, including the war fought between the United States of America and the state of Iraq. (Sometimes the balance of power between the two warring countries could be so far apart, instant victory led us to believe the winner is on the side of a legitimate war). Though the outcome of that war was evident, the jury is still out on whether the war against Iraq was a justified one. Ironically, with one of the key players in the decision making process questioning the legitimacy of the attack against the enemy, after the fact, it would be hard to not assume the war that was hastily declared and waged against Iraq was a wrong one. In nutshell, it is truly not aligned to the concept of “war was a necessary evil” as most of us led to believe in the beginning. Some experts said the war was motivated by either greed or vendetta. When war loses its purpose and a lack of objectivity to be defined, the outcome leaves us with blurred vision. What left for us to speculate is that what would be the ramification of the reckless war for the next generation of both nations involved and for that matter to the rest of the world? Apparently, history also taught us wars had been fought for religion, economic and for the obvious reason, VENDETTA!

The current and the previous prime ministers of the regime in Ethiopia seem to have a little of Napoleon Bonaparte, Adolf Hitler and “we are the super power” mentality in them. Those traits were clearly demonstrated in the 1998-2000 war with Eritrea. What was not clearly established was a motive that distinctly defined to warrant the war that claimed so many precious lives on both sides. On the upcoming war that is imminent, the regime in Ethiopia seems to be prepared to navigate itself into another potentially devastating war. A war motivated by fear driven vendetta.

**An averted war is a beginning of another**

The 1998-2000 war between the minority- led Ethiopia and Eritrea was a war that had no clarity when it comes to justification for pursuing such a destructive war. The minority regime and enemies of Eritrea believed it was time to advance their war agenda against Eritrea. Unfortunately, there was no clear validated motive to start the war until they finally stumbled on Badme. Though Badme became the focal point, the hidden agenda was access to the sea. The goal was to forcing the government of Eritrea to re-negotiate and/or overthrow the government and replace it with a puppet government. The war ended with Eritrea successfully defending its territory and the enemy’s military force dilapidated to the point of no recovery. The regime’s supporters and advisors saw the potential danger facing Ethiopia and advised the regime to accept the Alger’s Agreement and successfully managed to avert the war in the name of peace agreement. One has to wonder why the institutions and countries chosen to be the guarantors of the Alger’s Peace Agreement failed to enforce the final and binding agreement by forcing the regime in Ethiopia to accept the final decision and surrender Badme to its rightful owner. Apparently, the agreement was used to simply avert the danger the regime in Ethiopia was facing at the time. The no war no peace attitude displayed by the regime and encouraged by the key allies of the regime is to frustrate Eritrea and its people into submission. What Eritrea and the people of Eritrea are facing today is the byproduct of the averted war.

**Is there a legitimate fear that is pushing the regime to ponder war against Eritrea?**

One needs to keep in mind that the current Eritrean government had played a key role to assist the current regime in Ethiopia in grabbing power. As a coordinator of the war against the military junta (DERG) and owner of the war blueprint, the Eritrean government (EPLF at the time) played a major role in creating the group known as EPRDF that seized power in Ethiopia. The regime in Ethiopia had the Eritrean Liberation Front behind it to topple the Mingistu’s regime. In the meantime, the entire nation was against the military Junta which helped the EPRDF to successfully seize power.

The current regime in Ethiopia had the people of Ethiopia and the West supporting it in its war of aggression against Eritrea in 1998-2000 but failed. Today, there are formidable enemies that are willing to wage war against the regime. The enemies of the regime in Ethiopia believe force is the only way to remove it from power; therefore “war is a necessary evil” as far has the enemies of the regime are concerned. The regime in Ethiopia has no blueprint for war or peace. Most importantly, the war blueprint that delivered power to the regime in Ethiopia in 1991 had always been possessed by the other side…the blueprint for peace is hijacked by its allies. The regime will find itself fighting a war against the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea soon. The regime is fighting to defend a land that belongs to others. The regime will find itself fighting its key allies’ war. The regime is certainly will not be fighting a war of peace as peace has been hijacked. Unfortunately, the regime has no blue print for peace, no blueprint for war and certainly no blueprint of land to genuinely die for!

History will repeat itself.