25 years later: The nation of Eritrea continues to march.

By Michael Seium

An amazing accomplishment has been fulfilled for a nation that is only 25 years old. Despite many obstacles Eritrea has proven that Africans can be self-reliant and that they can dictate their own policy through hard work and dedication if they choose to do so without any interference from outsiders. Meanwhile, critics have attempted every play on the book to make sure that Eritrea would be another African failure. However, after a long battle against all odds this unique nation with a lot of history has been able to defy all the odds. Today Eritrea has worked miracles by making sure the next generation of Eritreans will be able to take the nation to another level through endurance and a commitment to the people who freed the nation in 1991.

What makes a nation great?

First and foremost its people are always its biggest assets. Like the respected and adored 1st ever President of Eritrea his Excellency President Isaias Afewerki repeatedly mentions in his timely interviews and meetings, it is not how much wealth and resources we have but how the Eritrean people’s lives are improved at every level that matters. His famous quotes mentioning how a kid in a small village in Eritrea should be able to get the same type of education as a city and urban dwellers have been put to practice and are showing results today. It also matters how the people are able to endure problems collectively and however long it takes. Because, building a nation is an endurance test. It’s not a short distance run but more like a marathon event. The famous quote “Rome was not built in a day” applies here, So, Eritrea has got to endure and endure the hardships, the lies, and the attacks and remain steadfast as well as remain strong as it has the past 25 years.

As a country that is making great strides it follows quite a unique path of its own.

Its leaders have for the most part worked hard to learn from a variety of developed nations and without rushing too quickly. It is a nation that has taken the best skills from many others and applying it based on its ability within its limited human resources.

Like Presidential advisor Yemane Gebreab has mentioned on many occasions in the past 22 years, Eritrea’s second phase of development would begin in 2014-15 and it has. The nation is seeing its biggest economic boom these days.

The relations that it is building with all those who genuinely want to work in partnership are growing each day. Thanks to a great peaceful and wise approach from the foreign minister his excellency Osman Saleh and his team who by the way are some of the most seasoned diplomats in every corner of the world, including Asia, throughout the African continent, the Middle East, Europe, AU, the UN, and the Americas within our limits seem to be doing an excellent job. My only suggestion is more engagement within the Latin American countries who seem to have a lot of similarities with Eritrea in their fight for the rights of their people.

Meanwhile, The USA, which is divided politically, must be engaged as a partner and we seem to notice a slight improvement based on mutual respect. Its imperative to understand that while as a nation many would appreciate Eritrea’s policies, the elite will always attempt to downplay the achievements of this beautiful, multicultural and hard working nation we know as Eritrea.

On Tuesday May 24th, 2016 Eritrea will mark its silver jubilee anniversary and I can recall vividly when I came to Washington DC and joined the celebrations 25 years ago as a young college graduate from South Carolina. I was given the opportunity to join a community a people and a nation that was created by those who sacrificed their lives so that myself and millions of others can claim our Eritrean heritage. The very same guys who uttered the words to my mother on our first journey through the trenches and war zones of Eritrea, “Go on to your destination and when Eritrea gets its freedom, they can help build the country”, gave up their lives a couple of weeks after. Some still remain and I have been blessed to discuss those memorable moments with them. It gives me great joy and a great satisfaction to see a nation celebrating like never before. Watching, ERI-TV and witnessing the love the people of Eritrea have for their beloved country is a huge gift. To those who were not able to see it, may you rest in peace and your love for Eritrea will forever be in our hearts. As a token of appreciation, we should always burn the torch towards the next century and pass it on to the next generation as we witness ERITREA grow into a fully developed nation.

Awet N’hafash,

Zelalmawi Zikri swatnan, ahwatnan, ahatnan!