**Eritrea: Illusive United Resilience**

**Amanuel Biedemariam**

Over the last 11 years, the Economist magazine portrayed Eritrea in the least flattering and in a way that could have discouraged investors from looking at Eritrea as a potential business prospect. In October 1 2009, The Economist released a report based on Ibrahim’s Index with the heading “Who is doing well in Africa?” and placed Eritrea as THE worst performing nation and concluded Eritrea is “failing.” In September of 2010 The Economist reported an article that headlined, Eritrea “A Siege State” and echoed everything the ICG reported, to mention some. The irony is, the economist over the last two months have changed its tune and declared, “Eritrea will be THE fastest growing economy in the world.”  The question is how did that happen? What changed?

The Economist is still getting it wrong. The paper is suggesting that Eritrea’s growth will be based on mining and specifically gold. Obviously, Eritreans are happy to hear that their economy will improve. However, the report is still misleading because it fails to give the international community some accurate picture of what Eritrea is all about. Eritrea’s future prosperity will not be based on the extraction of minerals alone; it will be a result of the wit, dedication and hard work of the Eritrean people. It is happening because of the most brave, experienced, brilliant visionary leaders the world has ever witnessed. Above all, it is based on the “Illusive United Resilience” and GOLDEN heart of the people of Eritrea!

The Economist is not alone however. The doomsday of Eritrea was a dream many envisioned, hoped and worked-for day in and out. It was a concerted effort by many who thought; with-ease, they can undo Eritrea’s independence and remold-it in accordance with their interests. These efforts were led by the US and implemented by their mercenary leaders of Africa, USAID, NGOs, The Human Right Watch and the like. It placed the mercenary regime in Ethiopia on the forefront with Eritrean Lost Souls that our. Sophia Tesfamariam loves to call, “EQL” for Eritrean Quisling League.

Their main target is his Excellency President Isaias Afwerki and the leadership of Eritrea. They waged successive military campaigns and failed. They placed undeclared economic, military and other sanctions to isolate and shake loose the core. They waged major defamation and demonizing campaigns with clear intent to penalize and to justify their actions. They tried to sabotage everything Eritrean however possible. They distorted, spun, made up stories and propagated. They made every effort under the sun to frustrate the youth into giving up and disperse all over. They conducted major psychological warfare on the people of Eritrea to dislodge the people from the government. They failed, failed and failed miserably to their embarrassment at every corner!

These shameless enemies of Eritrea have some commonalities. They over estimated their powers. They overplayed their diplomatic hands; overestimated the capacity of the regional organizations such as IGAD and; heavily over-invested on the defunct Ethiopian regime that worked against their interests at every turn. Moreover, they overestimated the ability of the Eritrean criminal elements that-they paraded as opposition. The enemies falsely assumed they can form a government in exile in Ethiopia, the US or other places. They also counted on their media’s reach to do all the demonizing to the point that it could impact the Eritrean societies and their international audience.

Above all, they made three major mistakes. That is: firstly, they underestimated the resilient nature of the Eritrean people. Secondly, they ignored Eritrean unity and third and most importantly, they gambled on the “Failure” and supposed weaknesses of Eritrea. The above mentioned reasons intertwine. But what makes the last three stand out is that they gambled on the failures of the Eritrean people. That means, every time Eritreans succeed by overcoming the hurdles the enemies placed; it discredited them and in reverse emboldened Eritrea’s resolve and; readied Eritreans for more challenges. To illustrate this example:

In 2003, Awate, Asmarino and co… demonstrated in front of the State Department in DC demanding the US stop giving humanitarian assistance to Eritrea. They waged sustained efforts to tell the world and Eritrea how poor and desperate Eritrea was and preached it will crumble any time. They lobbied the EU to stop from giving funding for development. Mind you, these are people that claim to care about the people of Eritrea. In October 2007, The New York Times released an article “Resentment and Rations as Eritrea Nears a Crisis” with a picture of average Eritreans lined to “purchase” bread. At the same time Eritrea was refused aid after a crippling drought and a prolonged “No War No Peace” situation with Ethiopia. This shows the cross connection between the US, international media, Ethiopia, and the Eritrean EQL’s at work.

This deliberate attempt to strangulate Eritrea was designed to create an impression that Eritrea is failing; while, at the same time hoping to ignite unrest in Eritrea. These are regular campaigns that Eritreans grew accustomed to. However, while the enemies are working hard to create havoc or at least create the impression of it; the Government and people of Eritrea were working hard to change their future for good. The people and the government worked extremely hard readying the land for farming, creating dams to preserve water; terracing land and planted vegetation to prevent erosion. They followed on all the collective and mechanized farming programs that the government put in motion. In one occasion during the Eritrean independence celebrations, the Eritrean Government paraded tractors through the middle of the stadium getting a sustained applause of support. Eritreans never looked back since. The hard work and a good rainy season have assured food security to the point that President Isaias declared that food security was just a stage. Eritrea is looking forward to the next stage - exporting food.

To that end, all the necessary social and physical infrastructures are being put in place in aggressive speed and unrivaled efficiency. Eritrean efficiency is putting to shame Western aid/alms providers/enablers that sustained failed leaderships of Africa for decades.  Eritrean maturity, painfully acquired experiences, eagerness to learn and willingness to work as hard to change their lives is making a visible difference in every sector. Their toil is providing year around supply of produce, animal feed and abundant meat. It is changing once destroyed landscape into a lash agricultural farm land. In the outskirts of the city of Mendefera one such effort enabled a farmer to meet the milk needs of the city and is providing services in Asmara.

Countless bridges were built connecting villages that were separated for ions facilitating businesses. It is keeping people and animals from drowning in flooded rivers during rainy seasons; enabling smooth flow of traffic and, importantly, it is providing easy medical access for women and children, who are normally the ones that take the brunt of backwardness. New highways and roads are being built connecting remote areas and opening up incredible landscapes for tourism. Eritrea poses some of the most breathtaking terrains and mountains that are difficult to access. Yet the local residents are joining in with the local construction companies that are constructing the roads making it a communal effort. These incredible achievements are being accomplished with indigenous engineering and muscle. Eritrea is building her own schools, medical facilities and other structures to sustain the societal needs. Eritrea is developing her own teachers in all fields of studies such as agriculture, business, engineering and medicine. In 2009 the first batch of doctors graduated from Orota School of Medicine giving Eritrea her first locally developed doctors. The College of Marine Science Technology in Massawa graduated 127 students in 2008. The Eritrea Institute of Technology is the biggest boarding educational institute that caters to the needs of over 10,000 students. With all the challenges that Eritrea faced after independence, the people and government focused on these key issues and are tackling them strategically with minimal resources.

Eritrea’s answer to the brain drain is the ability to develop local capacities and create mechanisms that sustains it. It feels like a miracle that Eritrea survived let alone get to where it is today. Over 70% of Eritrea has access to potable water enabling a core drilling company to focus on mineral drilling instead. And that will be another landmark that Eritrea can check-off soon. Here is one thing to ponder. According to USA Today Afghanistan is projected to cost $117 billion in 2011. However, one can hardly notice a difference in the lives of the Afghanis. In Eritrea all these accomplished are achieved under a hostile environment, with little or no assistance, with prudence and unrivaled efficiency.

The Economist also ignored what motivates Eritreans. Eritreans hold dear their obligations to those who paid with dear life, limbs and untold suffering to bring the nation. What is clear is that the West is deliberately oblivious to how Eritrea came about and the uniqueness of the people. They ignore the brilliance, patience, the can do attitude; will to meet the challenges the West hurls at them every second. They undermine Eritrea’s brilliance and capacity. They chided Eritrea’s desire to self reliance. And they are still pursuing their criminal colonial aspirations day in and out.

Eritrea’s gold is the heart of the people of Eritrea. Eritreans know more than gold or any of the resources; they have each other through thick and thin. Everything Eritreans do is different. When we dance our dances are communal. Young, old, man or woman from all region of Eritrea dance together. We eat together. Our holidays are collectively celebrated. We are the epitome of harmony and collective-joy anchored in Eritrea.

Therefore, by all standards, Eritrean standards that is, where we are today are a million percent better than what they expected. It is also a defeat for them because after forcibly allowing our colonization, after major infusion of military, monetary and other assistance by all the powers to subjugate; that “Illusive United Resilience” is at work frustrating them as always. It takes different forms because Eritreans can adopt easily as we are with the Mekete campaign that Eritreans are conducting worldwide to fight the Unjust and Illegal Sanction that they placed on Eritrea in order to undermine her independence. That is a clear indicator that their mischievous plans are continuous.

So why are the Economist, the IMF and others saying Eritrea is the fastest growing country on earth? Why the hoopla? Could it be that they are trying to set the Eritrean people’s expectations? Where were they when Eritrea was setting the templates for the future, working hard day and night, hungry and thirsty? Where were they when genuine appeals were being made? Why can’t they give the people of Eritrea their respect and dues by telling the truth? Why can’t they at least, reevaluate their sinister approaches in light of the Wikileaks revelation that is exposing the fraudulent nature of Western journalism?

Conclusion

Eritreans were able to do this because they are smart people and believe if you don’t know how a bird “Kokah” flies then you are not a bird hunter. They know from experience that their best ally is their ability to set their own course and destiny and, their unity. They have learned that safeguarding Eritrea is a 24 hour job. It is their love, their mission and a way of life. And every day, they are enjoying the sweetness of freedom more and more because that is the best resource Eritrea unearthed with dear life and it will only get better!

Awetnayu@hotmail.com