

## **The Systematic Emasculation of Africa's Leadership-Part Two**

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**15 November 2012**

H.E. Osman Saleh, Eritrea's Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke about the emasculation of the UN General Assembly. For today, I would like to focus on the emasculation of Africa's leadership by showcasing the continental and regional organizations, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and how Ethiopia has used these two organizations to advance external interests that are threatening the development, peace, stability and security of Africa, I will endeavor to show how these two organizations have been rendered ineffective and how they are used to give the "African Face" to initiatives that have nothing to do with Africa .

Like the euphoria surrounding the US elections and the hope brought by the win by President Barack Obama, Africans around the world also celebrated another win. Africans were overjoyed with the election of Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as the first ever female Commissioner of the African Union. NewsdzeZimbabwe<sup>i</sup>, an online news media, reported on the statements made by Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the newly elected African Union Commissioner at a Business Unity South Africa banquet in Johannesburg. In its 30 October report it quotes Dlamini-Zuma as having said:

**"... nearly all of the AU's programmes are funded largely by foreign donors...No liberated mind can think their development agenda can be funded by donors... Over 97% of programmes in the AU are funded by donors...We should be more self reliant. Our governments must put more money there (in the AU)... Our forebears liberated us from colonisation. But we must also liberate our minds..."**

What a breath of fresh air! Finally, someone at the African Union was speaking up and getting to the root of the problems that have prevented the continental organization from fulfilling the aspirations of its founders. The report also said that:

**"...Compulsory contributions to the body's annual budget were blithely ignored by many governments. Donors stepped in to pay for peacekeeping, health and educational programmes, as well as staff salaries..."**

As the popular saying goes, he who pays the piper picks the tune. It comes as no surprise then that the Organization worked to advance donor agendas as opposed to

that of its own member states. The organizations agendas were hijacked from the get go...

The Organization of African Unity, the AU's predecessor, set out with the following lofty ideals:

**"...The member states solemnly affirmed and declared their adherence to the principles of the sovereign equality of all member states; non-interference in the internal affairs of states; respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each member state and for its inalienable right to independent existence; peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, or arbitration; unreserved condemnation of political assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighboring states or any other states; absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories which were still dependent; and affirmation of a policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs..."**

So what went wrong?

A little bit of research on the founding of the OAU and its history is enough to shed light on how the organization was emasculated from the very beginning. It was clear from the very start that the OAU was not going to be independent. Once again, we need to take a look at Ethiopia's role in emasculating the OAU.

The manner with which the Ethiopian regime manipulated African leaders to get its way, to have the OAU headquarters in Ethiopia is a sordid story all of its own. Suffice it to mention that it was not the choice of its founders, nor that of the African people. Allow me to share excerpts from an Ethiopian, whose father, Ketema Yifru, he says was instrumental in bringing the OAU to Addis Ababa<sup>ii</sup>. It was the act of one man that changed the course of history:

**"...The political committee started out by electing Benin's Foreign Minister, Emile Zinsou, as its chairman. The Ethiopian Foreign Minister described Mr. Zinsou as being an honest and fair person. As soon as the chairman brought up the matter concerning the headquarters, the Foreign Minister of Senegal, Mr. Doudou Thiam, began by offering his capital, Dakar. The Nigerians and Zaire followed by offering their capital cities for possible sites for the OAU headquarters. Ethiopia, who at this time had struck a deal with the Guinean delegation, had the Guinean delegation in the person of Ishmael Toure, nominate Addis Ababa for the site of the OAU headquarters..."**

So what was “the deal” that the Ethiopians offered that would convince the Guinea delegation to vote against the others in their group (Francophone delegation). This is what Ketema Yifru’s son says in his essay on the creation of the OAU:

**“...The Ethiopian Foreign Minister had approached the Guineans with an offer that they could not refuse. The plan was that if Guinea supported Addis Ababa, then Foreign Minister Ketema Yifru will not only nominate Mr. Diallo Telli, Guinea's Permanent Representative to the UN, for the post of the OAU Secretary General, but he would also fight to get him elected to that post. Later on, Mr. Diallo Telli was elected to head the Organization of African Unity...”**

The corruption bug that bit the OAU at its birth, a virus incubated in Addis Ababa, Africa’s sin city. This corrosive bug has infected every facet of African political life and millions have suffered and died because of it. Political corruption remains today the deadliest bug and one that has led to making the African Union an impotent organization unable to fulfill the dreams and aspirations of Africa’s people.

During the struggle for Eritrea’s independence, Ethiopia used the OAU as an extension of its Foreign Ministry, to suppress the rights of the Eritrean people and essentially keep Eritrea off the OAU agenda for over two decades. Today the African Union has been relegated to being an appendage of the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry, and as we shall see, this emasculated body has been reduced to becoming a tool to advance the foreign policy interests of Ethiopia and its handlers.

Clearly, US officials have used the regional and continental organizations to advance US interests in Africa. This 20 November 2009 cable<sup>iii</sup> details a meeting held by US officials serving in East Africa- it is also very clear about IGAD’s role in advancing Western interests in the region. This is what the cable stated:

**“...IGAD has done some good work, particularly the Sudan peace deal. IGAD allows the international community to put an "African face" on efforts to confront issues in the East Africa region. Working under the IGAD banner offers regional legitimacy to international programs. However, IGAD must be partnered or contracted with other legitimate organizations in order to assure that the work is properly done...”**

On 23 December 2009, the US engineered sanctions against the State of Eritrea and its people was adopted by the Security Council. Susan E. Rice presented the resolution as an “African Initiative”-that has long been exposed by the release of the Wikileaks documents which show the illicit and contemptuous manner with which she and Meles

Zenawi used the African Union and IGAD to advance the “stand alone” sanctions against Eritrea. At no other time has the world and Africans witnessed the total and embarrassing emasculation of Africa’s leadership as on 5 December 2011 when leaders from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda were summoned by Susan E. Rice to testify in front of the UN Security Council via satellite link from Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital.

It should be recalled that Susan E. Rice refused to allow H.E. President Isaias Afwerki to address the Security Council, yet had the audacity to parade these African leaders to support her case against the State of Eritrea and its people. Under the direction of Meles Zenawi, her personal friend and confidante, the summoned leaders presented statements against the State of Eritrea as instructed. Susan E. Rice orchestrated shameful spectacle, showcasing the emasculated leaders who were brought in to give the needed “African face” to the US-Ethiopia engineered sanctions against the State of Eritrea.

Susan E. Rice, when she was asked why the US was opposed to President Isaias addressing the Security Council told Innerscity Press the following on 3 November 2011<sup>iv</sup>:

**"We had the foreign ministers come in July. That was sufficient drama for my taste. I think if one comes, they'll call come. I'm not sure what we'll hear that's much different. I think any time you bring together leaders at that level with the degree of tension that exists between them. It's not going to promote improved relations or greater peace and stability. So I think we have to be very cautious about it and thoughtful about it."**

Did she say drama? These “leaders” of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) were assembled by Susan E. Rice, the US Ambassador to the United Nations to bolster her calls for sanctions against the State of Eritrea and its people-inside the country and those in the Diaspora.

But sober voices prevailed that day and she did not get everything that she wanted.

South Africa's Permanent Representative Baso Sangqu stopped and told Inner City Press "I don't there anything wrong with hearing from the President" of Eritrea. China said it supports Afwerki's request to address the Council. Inner City Press asked November's Council president Portuguese Ambassador Cabral for his view. Passing the media pen outside the Council he said that if a country which is on the Security Council's agenda

asks to be heard, it should be. You can discuss the format, he said, but the country should be heard.

In the days and weeks since that fateful day, a lot of words crossed my mind, but none fit exactly what I saw happening that day. What I was witnessing at that moment was not a “diplomatic” engagement; it was in fact a sad display of the total and unadulterated emasculation of African leaders. It was not a show of force for me, but rather a show of how morally weak these leaders really were, so weak that they were so easily manipulated by Meles Zenawi and his handlers to come and bow down in front of the Security Council in order to advance Ethiopia’s agendas against Eritrea. I cannot think of a single instance where European leaders would ever do what these leaders did to one of their own. Never in a million years will we see European and American leaders huddling together to call for the destruction of another state in their union.

If it was IGAD that was calling for sanctions against Eritrea and her people, why didn’t these “leaders” meet at the IGAD headquarters in Djibouti? How ironic that they were brought to the UN site, the Economic Commission for Africa to call for economic sanctions against Eritrea when the ECA’s stated goals is to promote Africa’s development. The shame and disgrace brought on the people of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan as they watched the sideshow, the total emasculation of their leadership in front of the whole world, will be recorded as the saddest day in their collective memories. As for Ms. Susie, she not only enjoyed the orchestrated sideshow, for her, emasculating Africa is in the interest of the United States and its people.

Today, much is being made about Susan E. Rice and her Sunday morning TV tours and the Benghazi incident. For those of us who have followed her temper tantrums and antics for the last 12 years, it came as no surprise. American’s have been embarrassed by her un-diplomatic behaviors at the UN. We have watched as she stormed out of Security Council chambers leaving her counterparts astounded and bemused. From her crass arrogance and refusal to admit mistakes, it is no wonder US foreign policy has become a mockery of justice and truth. US reputation and integrity in the world, especially in Africa, is at an all time low and the credit can go to Rice and her surrogates.

James Swan, the US Ambassador in Djibouti, was only happy to report of the “effusive” gratitude the Djiboutian leaders showed for US Government help in getting sanctions against the State of Eritrea. The US Ambassador reported the following in the cable<sup>v</sup>:

**“...The GODJ is pleased with UNSCR 1907 and takes pride in its diplomatic success in securing sanctions against Eritrea...”**

How does servitude translate into diplomatic success? How does whining and crying foul in order to appease Meles Zenawi and his thugs become diplomatic success? Obviously, Swan holds Africans to a lower standard as he would not have called it “diplomacy” if any European had done what these lawless regimes did to one of their own. He would have rightly called it treachery, as that is what it was, from the beginning to the end. So much for diplomacy!

The cables show an ugly pattern of lies, deceptions, backstabbing, bootlicking, brown nosing and a total emasculation of Africa’s leadership. It seems some African regimes, such as the minority regime in Ethiopia, feel they can get ahead only by undermining their fellow Africans. There are also some African leaders who believe they can insult the intelligence of their own people and commit crimes against their own people in order to curry favor with donor states. They have forsaken the oath of allegiance to their people in exchange for cheap photo opportunities with western leaders.

Let us take a look at a couple of examples.

A 5 June 2007 Wikileak cable from Addis Ababa, “ETHIOPIA-SOMALILAND: PRESIDENT KAHIN KEEPS HIS PROMISE” details a conversation with US officials and Somaliland leaders on improving US-Somaliland relations. It serves as a perfect example of what some leaders are willing to do, even if it means violating the rights of their own people. The leaders of Somaliland sound eager and willing to commit crimes against their own people in order to “better relations with the US”. Let us take a look at what is documented in that cable<sup>vi</sup>:

**“...Somaliland President Dahir Rayale Kahin said he kept his promise by releasing a detained Somalilander of interest to the USG. The release was kept quiet with most of his own cabinet kept in the dark. President Kahin and Foreign Minister Abdillahi M. Duale stressed their hope that this prisoner release would enable Somaliland to move forward in forging a close economic, political, and information-sharing relationship with the United States. This would include a visit to the U.S. for President Kahin, as discussed with Washington over the years, as well as discussion of development assistance, coastal and border security training, loan assistance from the World Bank/IMF...”**

The cable goes on:

**“...The release was opposed by most of the cabinet and especially the courts, police, and security, because this detainee had been clearly implicated in a plot against the President and the Somaliland Government. To minimize attention to this particular person, the President reduced the sentences of the other 19 detainees also charged with crimes against the state...”**

The Somaliland President did his part and the US kept its promise and invited Dahir Rayale Kahin to Washington.

According to the statement from the State Department’s Sean McCormack:

**“...A high-level delegation from Somaliland, led by President Dahir Kahin Rayale, departed Washington January 19 after an eight-day visit. While here, the delegation met with senior officials of the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Defense, and National Security Council staff, among others. This cordial and constructive visit demonstrated U.S. engagement with Somaliland in furtherance of our common interests in the areas of regional peace and security, economic development, and democratic reform...”**

Betraying his people for a photo opportunity at the White House!

There is another story that is equally shameful. This time it is from Yemen where US drone attacks and the extra judicial executions of suspected terrorists the acceptable norm in Washington’s war on Islamic fundamentalism.

On 17 December 2009 US missiles carrying cluster bombs slammed into a rural community in southwestern Yemen, in the al-Majalah region of Abyan province, killing a reported 41 people, including at least 21 children. The attack resulted in the highest human death toll of any US strike in Yemen. The Yemeni government initially claimed that it had carried out the strike, but leaked US government cables later revealed that Yemen had covered up the United States’ responsibility for the strike.

A 4 January 2010 Wikileaks cable shows Yemeni officials pandering to a visiting US official and covering up for the Americans who were responsible for the bombing raid. According to the cable, the former Yemeni President Ali Abdela Saleh held a meeting with the visiting American General David Petraeus:

**“...Saleh praised the December 17 and 24 strikes against AQAP [Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula] but said that "mistakes were made" in the killing of civilians in**

**Abyan. The General responded that the only civilians killed were the wife and two children of an AQAP operative at the site..."**

General Petraus was telling us that the wife and two children of the AQAP operative are considered acceptable collateral damage. He is an American General and why should he care what happens to Yemeni citizens if their own government doesn't?

Knowing full well that the bombings were conducted by the Americans, the former President of Yemen tells General David Petraeus' the following:

**"...We'll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours," Saleh said, prompting Deputy Prime Minister Alimi to joke that he had just "lied" by telling Parliament that the bombs in Arhab, Abyan, and Shebwa were American-made but deployed by the ROYG [Republic of Yemen Government]..."**

For his service to the United States, he was provided a safe haven and an exit when his people protested and called for his removal. The last I heard, he granted asylum in Ethiopia.

In Part 3, the author will take a look at how African leaders shamelessly undermined their own people, their comrades in arms and their peers...

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.newsdezimbabwe.co.uk/2012/10/97-of-au-programmes-funded-by-west.html> 22 October 2012

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.oau-creation.com/Part%20Four.htm> accessed 22 October 2012

<sup>iii</sup> <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09NAIROBI2383.html> accessed 22 October 2012

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.innerecitypress.com/sc2afwerki110311.html> accessed 21 May 2012

<sup>v</sup> <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/01/10DJIBOUTI7.html> accessed 21 May 2012

<sup>vi</sup> <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/06/07ADDISABABA1744.html> accessed 22 October 2012