

TPLF Agenda of Greater Tigray and The Obstruction of Susan Rice of the EEBC Ruling and her Contribution to the Complication of the Peace Process between Ethiopia and Eritrea

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Part I

“The Cabinet of Ministers of the Government of Eritrea noted that there have been, and continue to exist, border disputes in certain localities along the common borders between Eritrea and Ethiopia. These problems have been instigated by the unlawful practices of the Ethiopian army, which occasionally made incursions into these Eritrean territories, dismantling the local administrative structures and committing crimes against the inhabitants. But, despite these periodic occurrences, the Cabinet asserted that the Government of Eritrea has been consistently endeavoring to resolve these recurrent problems through bilateral negotiations with the Government of Ethiopia in a calm and patient manner, cautious to not inflate the problem out of proportion and incite animosity between the two fraternal peoples. The Government of Eritrea has opted for this course of action because it believes that the international boundary between Eritrea and Ethiopia is very clear and non-controversial. It knows that the recurrent border incursions that continue to be perpetrated by Ethiopian forces basically emanate from the narrow perspectives of the Administrative Zones.”

The Cabinet of Ministers of the Government of Eritrea - May 14, 1998

“The U.S. led international community cannot decry the plight of Eritrean economic refugees and asylum seekers and the ‘prolonged national service’ in Eritrea, while refusing to address the cause of their discontent - the occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories and the economic and other sanctions placed on them.”

Sophia Tesfamariam, 29 November 2013

“The woman who made matters worse in Congo, who bungled Sierra Leone, who totally misunderstood the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and who was instrumental in losing Osama bin Laden in Sudan – that woman has blood on her hands. Her deflections and distractions on the Sunday talk shows where she lied about Benghazi were the acts of a shameless political puppet. By any reasonable standard Susan Rice is a mediocrity. Her position of influence is secure for now because she is Obama’s loyal hack and because Barack Obama is something of a mediocrity himself.”

Thomas Clough, Copyright 2014 , July 14, 2014

1. Background:

It is appropriate to look into the history of Eritrea. This is because, most Ethiopians believe that Eritrea is part of Ethiopia, albeit Ethiopia was a creation of the nineteenth century as it is now. As a matter of fact, the highland of Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia had historical ties with the Axumite and later with the Abyssinia's kingdoms.

Most Ethiopians do not know the background history of the creation of Eritrea. Even at large, they do not have the knowledge that the Eastern and Western part of Eritrea were administered by the Turks and Egyptians for centuries way before the Italians came as colonist. Most talk of sea-outlet for Ethiopia, for which it had no basis.

Assab was the initial starting point for the Italian colonization of Eritrea. As a matter of fact, between 1869 and 1880 the Italian Rubattino Navigation Company, acquired from the local Sultan of Raheita stretches of coastline near the Bay of Assab. In 1882, these holdings were transferred to the Italian State.

Italian Civil Commissioners of Asseb were Giuseppe Sapeto (commercial agent) (15 Nov 1869 - 9 Jan 1881), and Giovanni Branchi (9 Jan 1881-1885), and **Commandants of Asseb** were Carlo De Amezaga (Dec 1879 - Jul 1880), Giovanni Galeazzo Frigerio (5 Jul 1880 - 1884), and Giulio Pestalozza (1884 - 1890).

1.1 1897-1941: Italian Rule of Eritrea

Then, in 1897, Italy intensified its expansion and the creation of the colony of Eritrea. On 6 Feb 1885, Port of Massawa was taken over by Italy. After taking full control of Massawa, it expanded to the hinterland and then to the eastern part in its endeavor of finalizing its colony creation. In order to fulfill its creation of the colony, it sent tens of thousands of Italian soldiers armed with tanks and better ammunition than the local people. It crushed local uprisings and killed and put to prison many of the Eritrean patriots, who opposed the Italians. It then managed to create Eritrea as its first colony in Africa with the moral support and tacit approval of the English and French governments. On 2 May 1889, Italy and Ethiopia agree on boundaries between Italian colony of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

It later developed road and rail transport, and turned Asmara (the capital from 1900) into a charming city. It settled thousands and thousands of Italians in Eritrea, who established agricultural estates and industrial plants. It administered Eritrea up until it was defeated by the British forces during the end of World War

II. But as was common to all European colonies in Africa, Italy did little to make life better and educate the Eritreans. Eritreans were only given education up-to the level of grade 4 and only served as conscripted Italian soldiers or Ascari. The Ascari comprised only the indigenous male and not women.

The boundaries of the present-day Eritrea nation state were established during the Italian Administration for which different treaties were signed. Among these, Menelik's first response to the Italian presence on the Red Sea coast was making an alliance to his own advantage. In the treaty of Uccialli (Wechalle), signed in 1889, the Emperor accepted Italian right to Eritrea and ceded to them territories in the north of Ethiopia around Keren, Massawa and Asmera. This treaty was made in deceit against Yohannes IV, who died on March 10, 1889, fighting against the invading Sudanese Mahdists. In return Menlik received money and weapons (30,000 Muskets and 28 cannon).

1.2 1941-52: the British Administration of Eritrea as a Protectorate:

The British forces defeated the Italian army in Eritrea in 1941 at the Battle of Keren and placed the colony under British military administration until Allied Forces could determine its fate in 1952. The first thing, the British did was to remove the Eritrean industries of Asmara and Massawa to Kenya, as war compensation. They even dismantled parts of the Eritrean Railway system and the rope way.

1.3 1952-1962: Federation with Ethiopia

In 1952 UN General Assembly Resolution 390 to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia went into effect. The British proposed first that Eritrea be divided along religious lines and parceled off to Sudan and Ethiopia. The Americans preferred to cede Eritrea to the Ethiopians as a reward for their support during World War II and having a base in Asmara. John Foster Dulles, the then Secretary of State of the U.S. was the prominent figure in deciding the annexation of Eritrea with Ethiopia. The Independence Bloc of Eritrean parties consistently requested from the UN General Assembly that a referendum to be held immediately to settle the Eritrean question of sovereignty.

It is necessary to quote what was crucial in the decision of the UN, which was based on the United States strategic interest in the Red Sea.

“From the point of view of justice, the opinions of the Eritrean people must receive consideration. Nevertheless the strategic interest of the United States in the Red Sea basin and the considerations of security and world peace make it necessary that the country has to be linked with our ally Ethiopia.”

John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State of the U.S.

1.4 1962-1991: Annexation of Eritrea:

In 1962, Haile Selassie pressured the Eritrean Assembly to abolish the Federation and join the Imperial Ethiopia, which was much to the dismay of those in Eritrea who favored a more liberal political order and more independent Eritrea. Hence, the annexation of Eritrea to Ethiopia became evident with the claim that “Eritrea opted to be in the fold of its mother Ethiopia”.

The annexation of Eritrea led to armed struggle, which was waged for over 30 years. In 1991, EPLF liberated Eritrea with lots of sacrifice in life and resources and was able to establish with honor its power in Asmara.

1.5 Eritrea-Ethiopia Differences in Perspectives after 1991:

Ethiopia and Eritrea share very many cultural and racial bondages. Especially, the highland part of Eritrea had been historically and politically integrated with the greater Abyssinia or the present day Ethiopia. There were very many Eritreans who fought against the Italians taking side with the Ethiopian patriots. Even the role of Lorenzo Taezaz and Ephrem Teweldemedhin with Emperor Haile Selassie in the League of Nations are evidence of this fact. The head of the military of the Black Lion was an Eritrean Colonel Haileab, who was captured by the Italians and they threw him alive from an aircraft to die.

When EPLF and TPLF took power in 1991, they pursued divergent agenda on the national question. The EPLF and the TPLF relied, therefore, upon completely different perspectives on nationalism. The Eritrean struggle, which began in 1961, generated a powerful sense of collective identity. It was a nationalism forged in blood and with a clear objective in mind, namely an independent Eritrea, and shaped by its own experience of colonialism. Italian rule had fashioned Eritrea, just as other European colonizers had brought into being Africa's other states, with the exception of Ethiopia. Italian colonialism had also brought with it some of the benefits of European rule, in the shape of modern port facilities, roads, rope and railways. When the Italians were driven out in 1941, they left behind a far more developed state than the feudal Empire that existed in Ethiopia. Little wonder that the Eritreans tended to look down on their cousins across the Mereb River as caught in the grip of a medieval power, despite their long shared cultural and bondage of heritage before the Italian conquest.

The Tigrayans, on the other hand, also had much to be proud of a historic past, the rule of the Tigrayan Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-89), and local Weyane rebellions against Haile Selassie in the early 1940s. But, while Eritrean nationalism was clearly associated with a potential nation-state, Tigrayan nationalism had to play a difficult balancing act - at once emphasizing the aspirations of the Tigrayan

people and coming to terms with the wider Ethiopian State. It was a problem that was to haunt the TPLF and its relations with the EPLF.

The EPLF stood on having, right after 1991, a unitary perspective attempting to balance ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences. The Tigrayans, intended on bolstering their nationalism, by developing a federal structure for the Ethiopian State based on ethnicity. Provincial boundaries were redrawn to reflect ethnic divisions.

Besides the above, after independence of Eritrea, there had also been differences in policies between the two countries. Economically Eritrea and Ethiopia aimed at pursuing very different paths. The Eritrean model themselves like Singapore, with its financial liberalism, export production and distrust of unregulated foreign aid. Unlike Eritrea, the dream of Ethiopia's economists is South Korean: exchange control, widespread investment and as much foreign aid as possible. However, the ruined infrastructures and the majority of their population living in rural areas with most time with threat of famine, affected negatively in realizing the aims as expected.

Having the above-differences in place, there are also other major differences too. First, on the surface, the EPRDF supported the independence of Eritrea. Second, the Amhara people or their proponents did not support the Eritrean independence at all. These differences culminated on major contradictions and led them to be at loggerheads on some major circumstances like the Eritrean new currency of Nakfa, which led to confrontation. The confrontation grew to armed conflict, which has its toll negatively in realizing their expectations in reaping the fruits of their policies. Their manpower and other resources were diverted to war instead of the reconstruction of the war ravaged economy. This has been rubbing salt into the wounds. No healing so far.

1.6 Referendum and the Independence of Eritrea and as a New Member of the UN & OAU

The provisional Government of Eritrea honored the agreement it had reached with the EPRDF and the Oromo Liberation Front in 1991 to postpone the referendum on the question of Eritrean independence for two years. On April 23-25, 1993, the Provisional Government of Eritrea carried out the poll. A turn-out of 98.5 percent voted overwhelmingly for independence.

A 121-member UN observer mission certified that the referendum was free and fair. Within hours, the United States, Egypt, Italy, and Sudan extended diplomatic recognition to the new country. Thereafter, Eritrea joined the UN, the Organization of African Unity, and the Lome Convention.

Ethiopia extended recognition to Eritrea's sovereignty and independence on April 29 1993, just two days after the result of the referendum was announced.

2. Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Skirmishes and Subsequent Border War:

After federation and before independence the line of the border had been of minor importance because it was only a demarcation line between federated provinces and initially the two governments tacitly agreed that the border should remain as it had been immediately before independence. However, on independence the border became an international frontier, and the two governments could not agree on the line that the border should take along Eritrea/Ethiopia in the entire length.

Joint Border Commission was established to resolve the border problems, which were mentioned below. This is because the TPLF officials intensified campaign of harassment and expulsion of Eritreans from border villages. A few examples follow:-

1. On June 7, 1996, 12 villagers of Adi Mahrai (Zibra) were taken into custody,
2. On July 19, six armed TPLF members entered Gheza Sherif, and demanded that 34 farmers leave the village, who had lived there for 15-20 years and the farmers refused, and hence, confrontation ensued and this was stopped by the intervention of the Eritrean administrators of the sub-region,
3. On August 4, 1996, 16 armed TPLF soldiers again entered Gheza Sherif and demanded that all the inhabitants move out and when they refused, three "representatives" including a woman, were taken under custody, and
4. On 17 June, 1996, 24 farmers of Adi Mahrai (Zibra) were ordered not to work fields already plowed and cultivated, rendering 66 hectares of harvest totally out of use.

During the same time, 29 farmers of Denbe Himbrty, were forced to leave their habitat by similar orders of TPLF armed administrators and militiamen. A total of 18 incidents of similar acts of arbitrary expulsion and harassment were reported in the rainy and cultivation season of 1996 alone.

In July 1997, Ethiopian troops occupied the Adi Murug area of Bada, in eastern Eritrea, by dismantling the Eritrean administration there and installed a new Ethiopian administration. A few days later, Ethiopian authorities forcibly evicted Eritrean farmers from villages in the vicinity of Badme in south-western Eritrea, saying that they had claimed the area as Ethiopian territory. Eritrea protested to the Ethiopian Government asking to reverse the infringements carried out by force, but the Ethiopian authorities, who created new facts on the ground, refused to heed to Eritrea's call. These incursions have since continued, resulting in Ethiopian occupation of large tracts of land, particularly in south-western Eritrea.

The unprovoked attack of 6 May 1997 was the latest in a long string of violations by Ethiopia on Eritrean territory and sovereignty as well as of the understanding reached between by both to maintain the status-quo on the borders pending a final agreement. Adjoint Border Commission was established by TPLF and Eritrea. No Ethiopian other than TPLF members were aware and part of the Commission.

Having this situation unresolved and under discussion, TPLF demobilized some of its fighters to Badme area in Eritrea as it did in Humera (Ethiopia). Hence, this incursions made by TPLF (Ethiopia) to Eritrean territories evidenced as a source of the problem. Eritrean efforts to solve the problem amicably and bilaterally failed as the Regional Government of Tigray continued to bring the area under its occupation. In legitimating its incursion to Eritrean territories, TPLF drew a new map, which was completely different from the map of the then Province of Tigre of Ethiopia as shown in the different maps up-to the 1990s.

Eritrean farmers lived in the Badme and its environs for a long, long time. They reported to the Eritrean authorities that they were being penalized by the Tigrayans and their properties confiscated for "illegal entry". On May 6, 1998, Ethiopian troops fired on an Eritrean platoon on routine duty along the border around Badme, who also went their on quest of the Eritrean Farmers. First, the Tigryan militia asked them to surrender their arms and this led to the conflict resulting in a fire fight between the Eritrean soldiers and the Tigryan militia and the security police they encountered. This few Eritrean soldiers, who went to Badme to sort out the problems of the Eritrean residents of the place, who were having problem with the new Tigryan forces entering the area, clashed and were killed in cold blood.

On the morning of May 12, Eritrean armed forces consisting of soldiers, tanks, and artillery attacked the Tigray militia in the town of Badme, crossed through the Badme plain chasing the militia to a higher ground in the East attacking several other areas in Ethiopia's Tahtay Adiabo and the neighboring Laelay Adiabo Weredas. This triggered off a chain of reaction of confrontation on both sides that culminated in the May 13, 1998, declaration of war by the Ethiopian Parliament.

On 13 May 1998 Ethiopia, in what Eritrean radio described as a 'total war' policy, mobilized its forces for a full assault against Eritrea. This blow the war out of proportion.

The Map 1 shown below of Eritrea is consistently the same throughout. This is same as was evidenced during the administration of Italian colonial time, British occupation and Ethiopian administration. It remained unchanged.

Map 1

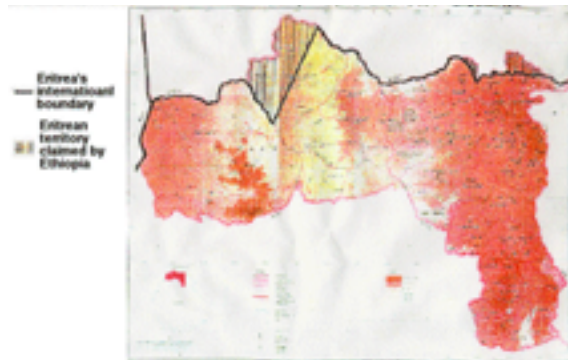


There were, of course, areas other than demarcated with natural borders like Tekeze or Mereb rivers, some that may not be properly demarcated other than natural borders. Colonial era borders in the remote and sparsely populated areas bordering the Tigray Region emerged as a source of tension between the two countries, specifically on which side of the border the town of Badme is located.

Ethiopian territorial claims are based on a recently published new map (Map 2) shown below of the Tigray Administrative Region. This new 1997 map of the Region was posted by the Ethiopian Embassy in Sweden and also, by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia. It can be easily seen that by drawing this new map, Ethiopia is administratively occupying a part of Gash Setit and parts of Akele Guzai, violating the legal borders, established by treaties signed with Italy in 1900, 1902 and 1908. For a person with a right mind, it is not difficult to deduce how it was wrong and illegal to draw such a map. This new Tigray map was a fabrication of the Tigryan Regional government, which was completely a far cry from the reality and a fiasco creation as compared to the political map of Ethiopia used in the schools of Ethiopia and printed on books of geography in the 50s to the 70s. The Tigray administration claimed the Kunama area of Eritrea as part of its territory, which was not only trespassing the border but completely illegal and led to the unnecessary war, which resulted in deaths of thousands and thousands of people on both sides.

Some think the area occupied is of a little barren land. But it is big chunk of land as shown in the Map 2 be low, which takes almost all Kunama inhabited area of Eritrea.

Map 2



Map 3



In retaliation to the Badme confrontation, Ethiopia opened an all-out war first in the Badme front, and then in Zalambessa, Tserona and finally in Bure. The Tserona and Zalambessa front of the war was aiming to reach Asmara at ease and disengage the Eritrean forces and throw the Eritrean Government and occupy the country. The last front of the battle was in Bure aimed at seizing Asseb port. As a matter of fact, if the issue was Badme, why fighting at Tserona and Zalambessa? This would not make sense unless the assumption made above is true.

But Ethiopia thinking that it had an upper-hand in the fighting, which it started, was contented to push Eritrean forces deep into Eritrea to dislodge the Eritrean army and destroy its fighting capacity. They aimed to seize Eritrean territory along the border. However, the Eritrea's army remained intact, and it solidified its army on its border lines. Ethiopian government believing that it could not further escalate the war, it declared on June 1 that the war was finished and on June 18 both countries agreed for a cease-fire. Meles did not care how much the war's causality would be. He said that, "We shall negotiate while we fight and we shall

fight while we negotiate.” This was a strategy pursued by the Vietnam. What it intended was to get the upper hand in the war so that future negotiation that it would make with Eritrea could be in its favor.

Both countries waged the bitter war during 1998-2000 and lost lives in hundred thousand and thier economy destroyed immensely and left at shambles. Roads and in general the infrastructures were destroyed. Looting of businesses were made of Eritrean business ventures by Ethiopia's army.

2.1 The Arbitration and the creation of the Ethio-Eritrean Border Commission (EEBC):

Ethiopia intensified the border skirmish into an all out war. Hence, friends of both countries interfered to solve the problem. With commendable speed, the United States and Rwanda led international efforts to broker a cease-fire and end the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict. In the second half of May 1998, a joint U.S./Rwandan mission, led by Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Susan Rice, who shuttled between Addis Ababa and Asmara to find solution to the border problem. Rwanda added a visibly African element to the effort in which, Paul Kagame, then Rwanda's Vice-President, who was a friend of both parties.

In June 1998, when President Clinton telephoned to the Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the US did achieve a moratorium in the tit-for-tat air war. Initially, results appeared promising, with the crafting of a four-point peace plan calling for:

- (1) agreement by both sides to pursue resolution of any disagreements through pacific means,
- (2) redeployment of Eritrean forces from Badme to positions held before May 6, 1998, and the return of the prior administrative officials to Badme, along with the deployment there of an international observer mission,
- 3) an investigation into the events of May 6,
- (4) agreement to delimitation and demarcation of the border, and
- (5) Demilitarization of the border.

These proposals subsequently formed the basis for the OAU's November 1998 Peace Framework and for the additional modalities and technical arrangements for the implementation of the framework. This was supported by the Security Council. However, Eritrea did not accept this agreement as it favored Ethiopia. Badme belonged to Eritrea and to withdraw from it means tantamount to agreeing that the disputed territory of Badme belong to Ethiopia.

The agreement, however, cannot be seen as a US policy success. Eritrean leaders regarded Susan Rice's efforts in May 1998 as an effort to “bounce” them into

acceptance without discussion or consideration of their reservations about the proposals. Offended by the abrupt manner and, reportedly, the inexperience of the US delegation, the Eritreans were also concerned about its neutrality, given that one member of the delegation, Gayle Smith, was a longstanding associate of the TPLF. As to be remembered, Gayle Smith worked on Ethiopia aiding TPLF during the 1984 famine and she funneled aid money to TPLF, helping them to capture state power.

In February 1999, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki informed the Security Council that Eritrea formally accepted the framework agreement. Since Ethiopia claimed that Eritrea continued to hold portions of its territory (such as Zalambessa), charged that Eritrea did not really accept the framework agreement, and the hostilities continued. Further efforts at diplomacy by various countries, the OAU, the European Union, and the United Nations, including efforts to clarify in greater detail the modalities and arrangements for implementing the framework agreement, failed to bring the parties to a cease-fire.

The priority for the mediators was to stop the violence from escalating. With the help of Italian diplomacy, a truce was declared on air attacks on 15 June. But Ethiopia's leaders, humiliated by their military failures in the few weeks of the war, seem tempted to press on regardless, trying, for instance, to recapture Asseb and Eritrean Dankalia. This might win some of their opponents over to their side, as well as giving them access to the sea, but it would lead to a full-scale war.

Ethiopia's internal political situation is so shaky that the mediators also have to find a solution that does not lead to the downfall of the Ethiopian government.

Eritrea has proposed face-to-face talks between the two leaders as well as to have an international monitoring of the border while the question of original ownership was established. The US initiated a unilateral arms embargo after hostilities broke out in May 1998. It also backed the UN call for restraint on arms supplies in January 1999, and it supported the UN's arms embargo (May 17, 2000). However, none of these initiatives, carried the necessary weight to control the flow of arms. Rather, the US embargo and the subsequent UN measures infuriated Eritrea, which saw itself as the victim of the Ethiopian aggression.

Finally, after all the damages of the war fought between the two countries, they agreed to go for arbitration and signed the Algiers Agreement for a cease-fire and to commence their cases in the established Ethio-Eritrea Border Commission.

In the Algiers Agreement, the two governments signed the agreement in 2000 to affirm the principle of respect for the borders existing at independence and that the borders were to be determined on the basis of colonial treaties and applicable

international law. The Ethio-Eritrea Border Commission (EEBC) was created to look into the case and pass its ruling. UN, AU, EU, Algeria and the United States witnessed and guaranteed the two-parties' agreement for cessation of hostility and for being abide by the EEBC's ruling. The UN Cartographer also assigned to serve as a Secretary.

In 18 June 2000 agreement, a 25-kilometer-wide Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) was to be established within Eritrea, patrolled by United Nations peacekeeping forces, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). On 12 December 2000 a peace agreement was signed by the two governments.

The claims made by Ethiopia were shown in Map 3 above as green and that of Eritrea in blue. The claim of Ethiopia was to support its assertion of the map shown in Map 2 above, for the Regional State of Tigray, which extended deep into Eritrean territory. That of Eritrea's claim is similar to the map shown in Map 1 and this was what was shown in all international maps of the world.

On 13 April 2002, the EEBC established under the Algiers Agreement, in collaboration with the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague agreed upon a "final and binding" verdict. The ruling awarded some territory to each side, but Badme (the flash point of the conflict) was awarded to Eritrea. Both countries vowed to accept the decision wholeheartedly the day after the ruling was made official. A few months later Ethiopia requested clarifications, then stated it was deeply dissatisfied with the ruling. In September 2003, Eritrea refused to agree to a new commission, and asked the international community to put pressure on Ethiopia to accept the ruling.

On November 25, 2004, 957 days after the EEBC's (Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission) ruling, Ethiopia's parliament voted to accept in principle the ruling of the independent boundary Commission that ceded territory along the 600 mile border to Eritrea. In the same decision it reached, it proposed to technically agree but presented a five point for discussion to reach the border delimitation.

The Court noticed that Ethiopia failed to abide by its ruling, which was final and binding decision in the implementation of the border demarcation. It decided to virtually demarcate the border and gave copies of its decisions to the UN, AU and the other arbitrators with the necessary map locations.

On 10 December 2005, Ethiopia announced it withdrew some of its forces from the Eritrean border "in the interests of peace". Then, on 15 December the United Nations withdrew Peacekeepers from Eritrea.

Part II

2.2 Susan Rice's Obliterating Role in Eritrea/Ethiopia Border Problem

Ms. Rice's big career opportunity came in May of 1998 when Bill Clinton sent her to Africa to mediate peace between the warring Ethiopia and Eritrea. Ms. Rice would later publicly announce the terms of the plan agreed to by Ms. Rice and Ethiopia, but not yet agreed by Eritrea. She coerced that Eritrea would just have to accept it. President Isaias Afwerki angrily rejected Susan's plan and made her the target of his indignant scorn.

It was then that Susan Rice completely misread the situation by assuming that the land mass of Ethiopia is greater than that of Eritrea, and therefore, Ethiopia must also be the more powerful. Despite its large size, Ethiopia's military was not as robust as Eritrea's army which was battle-hardened from its long and bitter war for independence. Susan Rice wrongly assumed that Eritrea was the weaker party and therefore she took a stand to appease the weaker Ethiopia. Hence, her clueless meddling provoked a conflict that swept away the lives of thousands and displaced millions. The Ethiopia/Eritrea border clash went to a full-scale war, which affected the entire region. The event was damaging and disastrous that happened among very few in the horn of Africa. It has its negative chapter in the history of the two countries. Ethiopia deported over 70 thousand Ethiopia-born Eritreans and Eritreans.

Ms Rice's lack of success might have to do with her alleged inexperience. Rice played a role in the Eritrea-Ethiopia peace process as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, a process which could have averted a decade-long stalemate that has followed. But unfortunately, she and Jendayi Frazer failed to deliver fair judgement for millions of people who are still held "hostage" as some officials call the militarized circumstance on the ground, due to a 'no war no peace' situation between the two countries. To be clear, Rice and others were not obligated to make the two sides come to an agreement, but they should have used their significant influence over Ethiopia to make the country go along with the "final and binding" decision of the boundary commission.

Susan Rice's destabilizing influence continued for years as she displayed a pronounced favoritism toward Ethiopia and spearheaded sanctions against Eritrea based on nothing more than the accusations by her friend Meles Zenawi. In the wake of Susan's clumsy "diplomacy," Ethiopia bombed the capital of Eritrea, for which Eritrea responded.

Susan was summoned back to Washington in early June after the total collapse of negotiations. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was furious with Susan, who

was promptly placed on “probation” and kept safely local in Washington where the secretary could keep an eye on her.

Susan Rice has moved on and continued to partner with her friends in the region despite their human right abuse records. The government of Preseident Isaias Afwerki (PIA) accused her for complicating the border conflict and for taking side with Ethiopia. In fact PIA publicly dismissed her as “a 35-year old immature, inexperienced intern diplomat.” Certainly, Rice would not have any sympathy for PIA and she was vindictive in her subsequent role she played against Eritrea.

Ambassador Susan Rice introduced a resolution in the UN Security Council to impose harsh economic sanctions on Eritrea. The Security Council passed watered down economic sanctions on Eritrea for allegedly transferring arms and fund to Al-Qaida affiliated Al-Shabaab.

The UN Security Council imposed tougher sanctions against Eritrea after Ethiopia accused it of continuing to provide support to Somalia's Islamist militants of Al-Shabaab-whom Ethiopian troops presumed to be fighting. This weakened Eritrea, and Susan moved on to play a leading role in securing the votes needed to impose sanctions on Eritrea's alleged violations of international weapons embargo and supporting terror in Somalia. But implementing sanctions on Eritrea was not an easy task for the Ambassador. After the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group appointed by the UN released an over 417 page report in 2011 alleging that the Government of Eritrea was abetting Al-Qaida linked groups in Somalia. However, the sanctions in 2009 and 2011 were a far cry from the days when the U.S. Department of Defense hailed Eritrea for having “considerably more experience than we do over a sustained period of time” in battling terrorism. Former secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld uttered these words after he met with PIA. The title of the U.S. Department of Defense press release read “Eritrea Could Teach U.S. Much to Combat Terror.”

Unfortunately, it is hard to vouch for the innocence of an Eritrean government which lacks transparency and regularly flaunts international norms and imprisons dissenters. But even with incriminating evidence plastered all over the security report, footnotes tell an interesting story. The evidence used to implicate Eritrea came from statements taken from soldiers, who were under Ethiopian captivity. Mention of names was made in this connection such as Colonel Gemmechu Ayana (Clearly not Eritrean name), who was allegedly training the OLF in Eritrea and many other statements from highly suspicious sources. Bias when collecting intelligence to identify actual wrongdoing has been a pattern for the monitoring group, which has given conflicting reports from time to time.

A Wikileaks document further shows how decision-making in the mediation process solely considered one side. Deadlocked by refusal both from Ethiopia's

Meles Zenawi to move forward with peaceful existing solutions, both Susan Rice and Meles looked at a different way to approach the issue. Ambassador Rice asked Meles on his views on a potential UNSC resolution creating a stand-alone Eritrea sanctions regime, separate from the existing Somalia sanctions regime (UNSCR 1844) under which Eritreans can be designated for threatening the peace and stability in Somalia, and violating Djibouti's border, among other things, as sanctionable actions. Meles strongly backed this approach.

USUN Ambassador Susan Rice and African Affairs Assistant Secretary (A/S) Johnnie Carson met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on September 21. In an amicable discussion, Meles offered his thoughts on how Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) can move forward and opined that the Government of Kenya's (GOK) efforts to support a takeover of the port city of Kismayo of southern Somalia from the Al-Shabab, which was a U.S. designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). While noting Ethiopia's relationship with Obama's Administration and would like to continue its dialogue with Washington, Meles did not fully agree with the priorities laid-out by Ambassador Rice and A/S Carson concerning Ethiopia's free and fair national elections, political space for the opposition, and an open economy. Instead, Meles brought a completely shift in policy from Al-Shabab to its country's domestic political condition and then to Eritrea. He doubted that Ethiopia's border dispute with neighboring Eritrea would not be resolved so long as Eritrean President Isaias remains in power, and supported the idea of a new UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) sanctioning Eritrea for its illegal activities in Somalia and Djibouti.

In another cable, Ms. Rice tried to persuade the French ambassador to impose sanctions on Eritrea. But Rice did not stop there. She went further instigating for additional sanctions and pushed for a strategy to include Djibouti for a sanction on Eritrea by taking into account the border problem both countries have. She believed that this to help her endeavor to secure a resolution of sanction, against Eritrea. So, she lobbied that Djibouti to be included in her case presented for sanction. She noted that the international community to have never effectively confronted Eritrea for invading neighboring countries on five occasions (Yemen, Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia.) She mentioned that in January, the UNSC gave Eritrea a deadline of six weeks to leave Djibouti or face sanctions."

According to the Eritrean government, these are trumped-up charges presented for sanctioning Eritrea. Ambassador Herman Cohen more or less corroborated Eritrea's position, in the same article, when he wrote, "those of us who know Eritrea well understand that the Eritrean leadership fears Islamic militancy as much as any other country in the Horn of Africa region."

Mr. Anthony Lake was a special envoy of President Clinton for the Ethio-Eritrea conflict. During the two years of the conflict from 1998 to 2000, Anthony Lake

has carried out a countless shuttle diplomacy between Addis Ababa-Asmara-Washington. He was the top diplomat dominating the diplomatic mission to solve the conflict. In fact, Anthony Lake, like Susan Rice, was dismissed by the Eritrean government for complicating the border conflict and the peace process. Anthony Lake was not only accused of complicating the border conflict, but after the 2001 crisis in PFDJ, he was also accused for using his shuttle diplomacy for conspiring against the Eritrean government. His effort didn't produce any fruit, nor does it left a good memory of him.

Talking about Asseb, the Ethiopian Government has repeatedly stated that Ethiopia has no wish whatsoever for forcefully occupying Eritrean territories. The question of forcefully occupying Asseb is against international law. It is also against the principle and belief of the Ethiopian Government. The issue of Asseb port has an important bearing in the minds of many Eritreans and Ethiopians. Eritreans in general feel the loss of Asseb would be tantamount to dismemberment of the state of Eritrea and abrogation of their hard won independence, and they believe that this is Ethiopia's main agenda.

2.3 Rice and Africa

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at her confirmation hearing on September 2, 1997, Rice said: "in concert with concerned members of Congress, we have also recast our policy towards Sudan to apply additional pressure aimed at isolating the Khartoum regime in order to contain the threat it poses to U.S. interests and to compel it to halt its support for terrorism and its grave human rights abuses". Rice lied about Sudan being engaged in state-sponsored terrorism that threatened the United States, but admitted that the U.S. sent arms to be used against Sudan, including arming the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of Southern Sudan. Despite Rice's repeated lie that Sudan is the only state in sub-Saharan Africa that poses a direct threat to U.S. national security interests, no evidence has ever been made public, even to this day, to corroborate that allegation. In fact, the U.S. intelligence community has admitted that it has no such evidence, and has collaborated with its counterparts in Sudan in fighting terrorism.

For years, there was more than speculation that a rogue operation in the U.S. government was supporting the 1996 invasion of the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.) by rebel movements sponsored by Rwanda and Uganda. This was while Rice was serving as Special Assistant to the President, and Senior Director for African Affairs at the NSC. Howard French, writing in the New York Review of Books (Sept. 24, 2009), confirms Rice's involvement in violating the D.R.C. sovereignty, quoting her, saying that, "Museveni of Uganda and Kagame of Rwanda agreed that the basic problem in the Great Lakes to be the danger of a

resurgence of genocide, referring to the Hutus who fled to the D.R.C. after Kagame took over Rwanda, and they know how to deal with that. The only thing we have to do is look the other way." Rice's "looking the other way" was followed by a decade of killing in the D.R.C., and the looting of its natural resources by Rwanda and Uganda.

After the second invasion of the D.R.C. by Uganda and Rwanda, which began August 2, 1998, Rice played a critical role in imposing a settlement (the Lusaka Accord), which did not recognize the legitimacy of the D.R.C. as a sovereign nation, or Laurent Kabila as its President. The agreement pushed by Rice and Richard Holbrooke, then U.S. Ambassador to the UN, called for step-by-step withdrawal of foreign troops within 180 days (which was never adhered to), instead of immediately, as the Organization of African Unity and Southern Africa Development Community had called for.

In 1998, Rice was instrumental in orchestrating the bombing of the al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Omdurman, Sudan, just outside of Khartoum, allegedly for producing chemical weapons that could be used in terrorist attacks on the United States. Not a shred of evidence was ever found to justify the al-Shifa attack, and the U.S. subsequently apologized and offered compensation.

On Jan. 26, 2009, at her first press conference as U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Rice blatantly lied when she wept crocodile tears about "ongoing genocide" in Darfur. This year, two UN officials responsible for military and civilian deployments in Darfur refuted the "ongoing genocide" lie, but Rice succeeded in bludgeoning General Gration to publicly repeat this falsehood, in order to remain in control of the negotiations with Sudan.

On March 6, 2009, in an interview on National Public Radio, Rice called for keeping the option of a military no-fly zone over Sudan on the table. In April 2009, Rice upbraided the civilian head of the UN-African Union peacekeeping forces, after he described the conflict in Darfur as a low-intensity conflict, not a war, and certainly not "ongoing genocide." Rice's action led to his resignation.

Rice has consistently supported the illegitimate International Criminal Court's (ICC) arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir, issued in March 2009.

Rice has used the clout associated with her post to ram through a policy of proxy war against Sudan by the United States through Uganda and Eritrea. She was reportedly a strong advocate of the August 20 U.S. air attack on the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, on the grounds that it was housing a chemical weapons capability--charges for which the administration has not been able to present sound evidence.

In general, Rice came into the office with a policy of attaching the United States to the "new breed" of African leaders first heralded in the January 14, 1997, London Times. This breed revolves around Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, and included Eritrean Isaias Afwerki, Ethiopian Meles Zenawi, Congolese Laurent Kabila, and Rwandan Paul Kagame. One of this coalition's major aims was to bring down the Sudan government. However, the coalition has fallen to pieces, as war broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and between Kabila's Congo on one side and Ugandan and Rwanda on the other. Rice's "peace efforts" have come to naught in both cases.

Rice's animosity toward Sudan is unyielding. In her post, and before that, at the NSC Africa desk, she refused to meet with Sudanese Ambassador to the United States Mahdi Ibrahim Mohamed, despite the ongoing diplomatic relations between the two countries.

She has been nearly as extreme in her targeting of Nigeria. In a speech at the Brookings Institution on March 12, Rice enunciated her policy toward Nigeria: "Let me state clearly and unequivocally to you today that an electoral victory by any military candidate in the forthcoming Presidential elections would be unacceptable"--the first time that such a policy had been so stated by Washington. Her father, Mr. Emmett Rice, was a former adviser to the Central Bank of Nigeria.

To the extent that she has any expertise, it is in peacekeeping and military operations, and Rice has been involved in the details in formulating the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), which calls for the formation of regional armies that would deploy at the behest of supranational organizations, such as the UN Security Council, or the Organization of African Unity.

Rice's poor knowledge of Africa itself has shocked the African diplomatic corps in Washington. Further, is the common complaint, she doesn't want to learn. "Many of my colleagues on Africa have a degree of understanding and expertise that I can't pretend to have," she told the Washington Post. She is known for not entertaining any views contradictory to the policy that has been set for her to carry out, and for blocking the flow of information that might show that policy's weakness or failure.

2.4 Why the Betrayal of Eritrea?

A commission, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), was duly established in accordance with the Algiers' Agreement. It was composed of five neutral, prominent jurists (legal experts) with impeccable credentials. The

Commission rendered its decision on April 13, 2002. The Commission's decision was fair and sound, based on legal proceeding:

- (a) The Commission stayed within its mandate, delimiting the border based on colonial treaties as required by the Algiers' Agreement;
- (b) It provided the two parties the opportunity to present their cases in an adversarial proceeding;
- (c) It weighed all the evidence presented to it by the parties, that is, Eritrea and Ethiopia; and
- (d) It followed pertinent rules of international law in its adjudication proceedings.

Eritrea immediately accepted the Commission's decision and expressed its readiness to implement it. Ethiopia, on the other hand, after initially making misleading statements of acceptance, refused to abide by the decision in violation of international law and defiance of global opinion, and continues to occupy Eritrea's territory. In a letter to the UN Security Council, Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi stated: "demarcation meant implicit recognition that the 1998-2000 war, which the Ethiopian army effectively won, was fought on a faulty premise". In Addis' eyes, it also meant accepting the Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki's view of his tiny, strident nation as a significant regional player.

When war erupted in 1998 between Eritrea and Ethiopia primarily over a border dispute, initial attempts by the U.S. and the state of Rwanda, to play the role of a mediator failed. Instead of playing the role of an impartial mediator, the US was primarily interested in preserving the nascent Tigray-dominated EPRDF, reasoning that the situation in Ethiopia was so fragile that Eritrea needed to make unreasonable concessions in the attempts to peacefully resolve the dispute. The war, nevertheless, expanded and intensified resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of lives on both sides before the parties could agree to a peaceful settlement.

John Bolton's revelation could not come at a more sensitive time. The EEBC, which once planned to mark the line with cement pillars, says it considers its mission fulfilled at the end of the month. Exhausted by five years of Ethiopian foot-dragging, it intends to disband on November 30, and the border will then be considered officially designated.

The U.N. report, obtained by the Associated Press last month before its official release, says the Islamist insurgents in Somalia have enough surface-to-air missiles, suicide vests and explosives to sustain their war against the internationally backed Somali government, largely due to secret shipments from Eritrea. It says Eritrea has shipped a "huge quantity of arms" to the insurgents, known as the Al-Shabab. The shipments continued despite U.N. efforts to bring

peace to Somalia and the deployment of African Union peacekeepers and navy ships of most powerful countries present in the Indian Ocean bordering Somalia . The amazing thing is how people believe the created story that Eritrea supplied the ammunition. This is tantamount to believe that Eritrea has the ability to evade mysteriously all the forces that had surveillance in the Indian ocean and Red Sea to combat pirates.

The below questions and answers are laying bare the true fact behind the accomplice of Susan Rice and her surrogate Frazer.

QUESTION: Can I just ask one more very briefly on the Boundary Commission thing?

Former Ambassador Bolton has written in his book that you in February of 2006 told him that Rice wanted to reopen the Boundary Commission's 2002 decision and to give the area or parts of the area around (inaudible), to award that which had been already granted to Eritrea to Ethiopia. Is that correct?

ANSWER: ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: No. Thank you for asking the question. I actually haven't read the book, so I am surprised that I even feature in it. But I can assure you unequivocally that I've never advocated for reopening the boundary decision, the EEBC decision on the-you know, the land, the delimitation line. In fact, we've been very clear that we accept the delimitation the border line. The issue was how do you move from delimitation to demarcation. And I've always advocated that that has to involve dialogue between the countries because, clearly, territory that was Eritrea's has been given to Ethiopia, territory that's Ethiopian has been given to Eritrea. That's what drawing straight lines typically does. And so not to reopen the decision, but rather to have a dialogue about the demarcation, including options of open borders so that the people on the borders can move back and forth. And that really is, I think, just a matter of how do you implement the decision, not reopening or questioning decisions. So I could say without -- unequivocally that I've never advocated for changing the delimitation decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission.

2.5 Sanction on Eritrea

All evidence shows the sanctions were designed to weaken and punish independent-minded Eritrea and bolster and reward Ethiopia, hoping the latter will continue to serve U.S. interests in the Horn of Africa. They were imposed with the possibility of inflaming the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and of assisting Ethiopia to gain the upper hand in the balance of forces.

It is TPLF-led Ethiopian government messed up Somalia by providing arms to war-lords and make them fight each other and contributed immensely to the

disintegration of Somalia. In its ploy, it gave recognition to Somaliland of Hargessa. Now, we have Puntland in the creation. Albeit, recognition was not given by the international community, Ethiopia has made trade and security agreements with Somaliland. Also, to get the support as a valuable partner in fighting terrorism, it frequented going to Somalia pretending to fight Al-Shabab. But who knows what the underlying cause or the truth deep down in this problem creation.

It is interesting to quote the of twit of Jacob Juma of Kenya: jacob juma @kabetes 12:53 PM - 5 Apr 2015, "Uhuru needs to ask African Union & UN to investigate Ethiopia on its secret supply of arms and support to Al-Shabaab. Ethiopia is a suspect."

US Considering 'Terror Sponsor' Label For Eritrea as asserted by Ms. Jendayi Frazer, the then Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs that the information so far that she said to have collected to be fairly convincing about the Eritrean activities in terms of 'state sponsor' in Somalia." "It will be evaluated through an interagency process and then decisions will be taken," she said, without providing a timeline. She said Eritrea had been informed of the possible action "through private channels".

By a memo written from an official with the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2006 detailed a meeting with Jendayi Frazer, the Bush Administration's Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs. It is interesting in that it undercut Bush administration officials' later assertions that they did not encourage Ethiopia to invade Somalia in 2006. It also revealed the bias on the part of Frazer in favor of Ethiopia and against Eritrea that many including former US Ambassador to the UN John Bolton believed that it will set back difficult negotiations on the border dispute between the two countries. The document has not been released until now. It will be of interest to people who follow US policy in the Horn of Africa. The culmination of the harsh vendetta against Eritrea came in 2009, when UN Ambassador Susan Rice succeeded in steamrolling the Security Council into sanctions against Eritrea under the flimsiest of pretexts, accusing Eritrea of supporting terrorists in Somalia.

Eritrean officials have repeatedly denied providing any assistance to the Al-Shabab, the militant wing of an Islamic group that ruled much of southern Somalia until Eritrea's arch-foe Ethiopia invaded and ousted them. The United Nations Security Council has decided to continue sanctions against Eritrea for another year. This decision had no basis in fact. It was taken because certain persons in the highest levels of the United States Government have mean spirited grievances against Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki. All accusations against Eritrea regarding alleged assistance to the Islamist terrorist group Al-Shebab in

Somalia had never been substantiated. All experts on Somalia now agree that, there have not even been rumors about such assistance. This is pure bullying. The blames are on Susan Rice, who was in the highest levels of the United States Government, who had mean spirited grievances against Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki.

On 23 December 2009 the United Nations Security Council, concerned about findings that Eritrea had provided support to armed groups undermining peace and reconciliation in Somalia and that it had not withdrawn its forces following clashes with Djibouti in June 2008, adopted UNSCR 1907 (2009) which imposed an arms embargo on Eritrea, in addition to travel restrictions on and a freeze on the assets of the political and military leaders of Eritrea.

Soon after the imposition of the sanction resolution on December 23, 2009, the US ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, took pains to point out that, His "this was an 'African initiative.' It was the consequence of a decision taken by the African Union." This was also repeated in a statement put out by the US Department of State and the US Embassy in Eritrea. To make sure that this point was fully understood and to dispel suspicions that this was in fact hatched by Washington, the US ambassador to the UN added this in her statement: "From the United States point of view, let me say that we have for many, many months sought a constructive dialogue with the government of Eritrea."

The primary charge that triggered the sanctions stemmed from allegations that Eritrea supplied weapons to Somali insurgents. However, after using it to hype the charges during the months leading up to Resolution 1907 (2009), this critical part of the charges was eventually dropped because the facts on the ground did not support it.

Washington sought to impose on Eritrea right from the start. As a result, the UNSC went ahead to impose the following: an arms embargo and travel ban and asset freeze of some individuals upon designation by the Sanctions Committee. The imposition of an arms embargo on Eritrea is to make Eritrea could not import arms and not designed to stop the flow of arms into Somalia from Eritrea but to strength Ethiopia's hand by tying Eritrea's hands behind its back so that the former would come stronger in its conflict with the latter.

Resolution 2023 (2011) Adopted by the Security Council at its 6674th meeting, on 5 December 2011 under Chapter VII of the Charter, by a vote of 13 in favour to none against, with 2 abstentions (China, Russian Federation), the Council demanded that Eritrea cease all direct or indirect efforts to destabilize States, and



decided that States shall “undertake appropriate measures to promote the exercise of vigilance” in business dealings with Eritrea’s mining sector. To that end, it requested its Sanctions Committee concerning Somalia and Eritrea to draft, with the assistance of the Somalia/Eritrea Monitoring Group, due diligence guidelines for States’ optional use.

Regardless, the UN Eritrea and Somalia Monitoring Group continues to report that Eritrea has not supplied any assistance to terrorists in Somalia. Still, the sanctions on Eritrea remained in place. Only the United States, during the Obama administration, supported maintaining the sanctions.

Former Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Herman Cohen not long ago urged that Eritrea be brought in from the cold, starting a much-needed debate and discussion. The Atlantic Council has called for the same. The policy of isolating Eritrea has been a disaster. Sanctions were unjustified and should be lifted and instead a serious strategic dialogue to begin with Eritrea.

Apology to Eritrea - Associated Press by CDE for its fabricated news it posted. On 29 Oct 2016, a reporter’s credential is revoked after he falsely reported that two Eritrean pilots defected to Ethiopia with their military jet. The article in question, from 27 October, was by an Ethiopian freelance journalist, Elias Meseret Taye, working for AP. In an email to Eritrean Embassy in Washington, his employers wrote, “we cherish the trust our readers place in us to provide an accurate and vivid account of the world. On this case, the article was false and created subsequent ill-informed and damaging coverage in other media outlets and across social media.”

3. The Way Forward

The Voice of America whenever dispatches news relating to the Regional State of Tigray, uses the below map, which was dubious and illegal. This is a complete divergence from the reality and international standing of the maps and borders of the two countries, and thus obscuring the obvious facts on the ground.

However, going to the right map shown here above is logical and legal. Hence, the panacea is to abide by the EEBC ruling and strictly apply the actual and historical boundaries without fail. This brings long-lasting peace between the two brotherly countries.

The hypocrisy of the United States and others, raising the issues like “prolonged military service,” “right to leave their country,” “excessive militarization,” is adding salt to injury. It encouraged Ethiopia to occupy Eritrean legal territory and not allowing it live peacefully.

Eritrea accepted the EEBC’s decision while Ethiopia accepted it in principle. Ethiopia asked for a dialogue in that villages will be divided. Of course, they will be divided as they were before. You see many countries and their borders only divided by an asphalt road leave alone natural barriers like a river or a mountain. It is to be remembered the advertisement in the U.S. saying that, “I am now in Virginia and I am now in Kentucky” as the borders are roads.

There was much ado about nothing when it comes to Asseb. Asseb as was discussed above, was where the Eritrean colony started. The coming of Italians to Eritrea started in 1869 when Italy bought land in Asseb under the pretext of land needed for a trading company from the governors of the region, Sultan Ibrahim and Sultan Hassen. After 13 years, Italy declared Asseb as its official colony. Asseb had never been part of Ethiopia. At the time of purchase, it should be noted, that Asseb was little more than a fishing village, it was not of any use until the 1880s. Developed by the imperial government in the late 1950s, Asseb, together with Djibouti, principally served Ethiopia's central and southern areas.

The other point of clarification is how the Afar people are administered and organized in the three countries. The Afar societies in the region have been organized into independent territories, each ruled by its own Sultanate, sheikdoms and Clan system. The Afar nations have been self-governing themselves autonomously and in accordance with their indigenous customary laws and legal

systems (called Madaa) and without interference from the Ethiopian highlands. When conflict arose between Afar and neighboring tribes and nations over territories and resources, Madaa was enacted to resolve conflicts and peace treaties signed.

The Southeastern region of Afar triangle lies in what is now Eritrea. This is the traditional homeland of Eritrean Afar people (also known as Dankalia). Dankalia lies along the strategic and resource rich coastline of the Red Sea. The Eritrean Afar people have successfully shielded themselves and protected their homeland from foreign colonization and internal occupations by controlling and governing Dankalia for centuries. After fierce battles against Mussolini forces, the young Sultan Yassin Haysma, at the age of 39 was killed in a village of Bidu in 1931.

The Prime Minister recanted the request of UN envoy, Ms, Catherine Bertini, head of the World Food Program to use ports of Eritrea for food aid, by saying that his country could meet its needs by using the port in the neighboring state of Djibouti, supplemented by the quayside at Berbera in Somalia.

As to be recalled, it was that Meles who sent instructions to Ethiopian banks to not use ports of Asseb and Massawa for import/export business in 1998. National Bank of Ethiopia, in this connection, sent the instruction to the banks to make amendments for Letter of Credits opened to be destined to Asseb and Massawa to be shipped instead to Djibouti. Eritrea did not stop Ethiopia from using its ports. Tigray used Massawa to transport all machineries for the factories it established through Massawa up until 1998 without any problem.

Some Ethiopians claim that Mr. Herman Cohen statement on port of Asseb to favor Ethiopia. What he actually said was in his statement as quoted here: Mr. Cohen said, "there are some people in Ethiopia who said that during the London Conference of 1991, I recommended that the Port of Asseb belonged to Ethiopia. This is not correct. What I recommended was Ethiopia and Eritrea maintain a common economic union after Eritrea's independence and, in that way, Ethiopia could use the Port of Asseb," he said.

Among the proponents of the Asseb saga, Dr. Yacob Hailemariam is one. In his book, "Who owns Asseb, the question of the sea outlet of Ethiopia ," argued that Ethiopia with large population and not to be landlocked. He also emphasized that Ethiopia's economic and physical survival depends on Asseb, which is Afar and Ethiopian. This is dubious in its point of argument as Afar people live in Eritrea and Djibouti other than Ethiopia. There is no country with the same people living in the same country. Take Switzerland where you find German speaking in Zurich, French in Geneva and Italian in Lugano. The same is also true to the Netherlands and Belgium. Belgium's German speaking share borders with

Germany and their Flemish speaking with Flemish of the south of Netherlands. Also, it is evident in most African countries where same ethnic group live in different countries.

Such claim on Asseb, however, is contradictory to the 1964 OAU Summit in Cairo:

" the parties reaffirm the principle of respect for the borders existing at independence as stated in resolution AHG/Res. 16(1) adopted by the OAU summit in Cairo in 1964, and, in this regard, that they shall be determined on the basis of pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international laws"

Thus, the Ethiopian argument would undermine virtually every border on the African continent, including Ethiopia's own borders where Somalis, Oromos, Gambella and others live in neighboring countries (Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti and Sudan).

Abebe Teklehaimanot, aka Jobe, who was the Major General of Air Force and its commander until 2002, was also commander of the Northern Central Command of the Ethiopian defense force during the Ethio-Eritrea war of 1998-2001. He was among the top leaders of the military that waged a war against Eritrea without any success. This same person wrote a thesis on Ethiopia's sovereign right of access to the sea under international law of acquiring Asseb despite the Algiers Agreement and the subsequent final and binding decision by the EEBC on 13 April 2002. Which international law he is referring is not clear except his personal whim. Access to the Asseb and Massawa is still possible except that Ethiopia is the one that stopped it.

General Tsadkan Gebretensae, who was the then Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian armed forces, said that Ethiopia should assert its geopolitical interests in the Red Sea region by harping a new war to remove the Eritrean government.

The amazing thing is that these above mentioned guys are in the forefront in forging war against Eritrea to get hold of Asseb and recently came with overture that peace has to be initiated. They made some meetings with Eritrean opposition members alluding 'people to people peace dialogue'. You cannot trust these people of "Lebi Tigray. There are roads twisting around in a cliffy mountain of Eritrea called Lebi Tigray. This connotes that the Tigrayans are not to be believed as they say one thing and turn to do the opposite. That was what TPLF did to PFDJ and to the other Ethiopian opposition parties. Who to trust to TPLF anymore? Confidence building on both sides is difficult at this time and may take long time to repair the damage they did on Eritrea.

4. Concluding Remarks:

As a conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the Ethiopians claim that it is their right to build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) over the Nile River and stop the flow of water to down-stream countries like Egypt, which depended for water from time immemorial. When it comes, to Asseb claiming it is as theirs is not a transgression or trespassing, but a right. More also, there has been much cry on the land of Wolkait and Nortebern Wollo taken by Tigray as its territory. But most Ethiopians failed to talk about Eritrean land occupied by Tigray Region.

What low level of thinking and the capacity of logically analyzing objective conditions is lay bare on the Ethiopian side of argument when compared to the divorce in Chechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, even Sudan. Serbia, the heart and power of Yugoslavia and where the capital was, is now landlocked and it goes amicably with the other new countries created with the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation and forming different nations. Their people live peacefully and visit each other without any problem.

However, the case is different in the mind of TPLF from those of the other Ethiopians arguing on the cessation of Eritrea or to that of Asseb port. This goes back to the Tigray Manifesto of 1976, which declared as follows on the 'Republic of Greater Tigray.

“A Tigrayan is defined as anybody that speaks the language of Tigrinya including those who live outside Tigray, the Kunamas, the Sahos, the Afar and the Taltal, the Agew, and the Welkait. The geographic boundaries of Tigray extend to the borders of the Sudan including the lands of Humera and Welkait from the region of Begemidir in Ethiopia, the land defined by Alewuha which extends down to the regions of Wollo and including Alamata, Ashengie, and Kobo, and finally the lands of Eritrean Kunama which includes Badme, the Saho (close to the conflicting area of Zalambessa) and Afar lands including Asseb”. The Amharic version is below. However, it does not state its Eastern border.

የትግራይ ሕዝብ ማለት በትግራይ ውስጥ የሚኖሩትና በተለያዩ ምክንያት ከትግራይ መሬት ውጭ የሚኖሩት ሕዝቦች በሙሉ ያጠቃላላ ነው። [ትግሮኛ ተናጋሪዎች፣ ኣፋር (ጠልጣል)፣ አገው፣ ሳሆ፣ ኩናማ፣ ወ.ዘ.ተ.] የትግራይ መሬት በደቡብ ኣለውና፣ በሰሜን መረብ ሲያካልሉት በምዕራብ በኩል ደግሞ ወልቃይትና ፀለምትን ያጠቃልላል።

The final goal of the TPLF is to secede from Ethiopia as an independent 'Republic of Greater Tigray' by liberating the lands and peoples of Tigray. Proud of the fact that the founding Ethiopian empire, Aksum, was centered in Tigray, and wary of the historic dominance of the Amhara, many Tigrayans today continue to assert their ethnic separateness. The TPLF manifesto is of the same tenor as the German manifest on 'das Gross Deutsche Reich' just before World War. It likewise bases territorial claims on the assumption that border corrections are justified to incorporate 'its' people into a newly defined territory.



But this does not hold water as the case was settled by international court and not in the thinking of most Ethiopians. The Greater Tigray theory has to be shelved and has to go down to dustbin of history.

The late Ambassador Girma Asmerom, in his statement on 26-29 May 2014 held in Algiers said at the XVII meeting of the non-aligned movement, that:

“the map determining the exact boundary lines with clear coordinates is given by the EEBC to both countries. It is also deposited in the United Nations. Therefore, today there is no border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. What we have is Ethiopia's occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory, including the town of Badme. Once again, the disputed territory is unanimously awarded by the EEBC to Eritrea. Hence, there is no need of dialogue between Eritrea and Ethiopia on this matter. It must be underlined that the Algiers Agreement is product of Dialogue and Mediation process that culminated with a Judicial settlement. Final and Binding means; Final and Binding”. Also, he affirmed that “once Ethiopia vacates sovereign Eritrean territory including Badme, the Government of Eritrea is ready and willing to normalize its relation with Ethiopia and to engage the Government of Ethiopia in constructive dialogue on issues that are relevant and beneficial to the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia as well as the stability of our region”.

“Using modern techniques of image processing and terrain modeling in conjunction with the use of high resolution aerial photographs by identifying boundary points both grid and geographical coordinates, the Commission virtually demarcated the Eritrean-Ethiopia border in 2007. It wrote a letter to the two parties and the Secretary General of the UN stating that : “the Commission hereby determines that the boundary will automatically stand as demarcated by the boundary pillars points listed in the Annex hereto and that the mandate of the Commission can then be regarded as fulfilled.”

Dr. Rice. said that “there is a need to not only end the conflict as quickly as possible but also ultimately to repair, over the long term, the strained relations in the Horn”. But in reality she is totally far away from it.

The patriotic leaders and people of Eritrea thrived despite the sanction and ‘no-war no-peace’ standoff and stalemate. It is the Northern part of Ethiopia,

especially Tigray that pays more the price during the last 20 years. Ethiopia's such policy missed its target and went awry.

The Resilient Eritrea will Triumph!!! The Truth Prevails!!

Note on ARDUF:

Mohamouda Ahmed Gaas founded the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Union (ARDUU) in 1991. ARDUU later became a part of the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF). Mohamouda Gaas was elected as the Secretary General of ARDUF in 1995, but refused the post, leaving it to his deputy Muhyadin Mafatah. In 1995, Gaas defected from the ARDUF and joined the ruling party in Addis Ababa. Possibly as a reward, he was given a post in the Government, and in 2006 was promoted to the position of a vice or state minister reporting to the Ethiopian Minister of Culture and Tourism. Gaas is a Muslim and hails from the Harrar region of Ethiopia. He is married with 3 children and speaks 4 different languages. He was latter dismissed over poor performance in a cabinet reshuffle.

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