

Ethiopia's Ambassador Tekeda Alemu is worried about Eritrea's Gold rush

Ever since Prime Minister Meles Zenawi interview with Eritrean opposition radio, and the subsequent press conference by representatives of Ethiopian ruling government EPRDF, the issue of Eritrea and Ethiopia has been debated online and on many media outlets. In one of his interviews, even though PM Zenawi did not officially declared war on Eritrea, and his messages were confusing, anyone who read between the lines understands that he is saber rattling for war.

From my online chats and listening to many people's view, I believe there are many proponents of war from Ethiopian diaspora, especially from Tigray and EPRDF support groups, and the Eritrean opposition groups – those who have declared that the Eritrean government should be nipped from the bud by any means necessary. There are also opponents of the war, those who fear that the human and material destruction that war would entail would be unimaginable this time; and also those who oppose the government of Ethiopia and accuse it for why waging a war at this time. For them it is simply “wag the dog”.

The big question is why is the Ethiopian government drumming for war now? It is in its first quarter of its Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), and declared to the world that Ethiopia's economy is growing by 10 to 12%, and the no-war no-peace policy is to our advantage, and will keep it as such. Yet, Ethiopia's corruption has become rampant, unemployment has skyrocketed, famine and war on the Ogaden region still looming, unprecedented ethnic and religious confrontation, the list goes on and on.

In his interview with a Tigrayan paltalk room, Ambassador Tekeda Alemu spent three hours to answer and discuss about the recent regime change policy of the Ethiopian government. Most of the people who got the opportunity to ask questions seemed actually begging the soft spoken ambassador to assure them that the government will go for war. In his opinion, regime change is a huge task that requires a lot of preparation and could be difficult. He cited that even the super power, US of America did not manage to topple Cuba's Castro. Regarding the Eritrea-Ethiopia Algiers agreement, the Ambassador thinks that Badme was given to Eritrea by the Hague Commission not from a legal stand point, but from a politically motivated wrong decision. The ambassador seems to accuse his own lawyers for political conspiracy.

Ethiopia managed to convince the UN, AU, EU, and the US that it is through Ethiopia alone that they could safeguard their vested interest in the Horn of Africa, and that the Eritrean regime is a spoiler that needs to be punished both politically, diplomatically and economically. Despite Ethiopia's flagrant violation of international law (the refusal to accept the Hague Border Commission's Arbitration), the abuse of its citizen's human rights (the massacre in Addis Ababa,

the Gambela and Ogaden regions, etc...), the West and African diplomats gave it a carte blanche. They even rewarded Ethiopia what it wants – the UN sanction on Eritrea.

After hundreds of thousands of Eritreans in Diaspora protested the unjust sanction on Eritrea, the UN sanction seemed to have no effect so far in regards to strangling the Eritrean economy. In Wikileaks world, most people have come to know who was working behind the scene to discourage investors, to arm twist the stooges, and to create a climate of fear and despair in Eritrea. Instead, due to the hard work of Eritrean citizens and the rush of Gold, Copper, Silver, and other minerals, the GDP is expected to grow above 12% this year – according to the Economist.

The Ethiopian government websites kept writing a weekly report, sometimes word for word from Eritrean opposition sites, on Eritrea's alleged support for terrorism – which these days has become a way to garner foreign aid and support from the West and AU. As the Eritrean saying goes “the dog barks, but the camel keeps going”. The detractors of peace in the horn – as if the blood of innocent Eritreans and Ethiopians is destined to flow along the dry beds – are pushing the envelope for yet another distraction and mayhem in the horn of Africa.

To come back to the previous question of why to the war with Eritrean frenzy now. Well, from the discussion of Ambassador Tekeda Alemu, Ethiopia has been and continues to isolate Eritrea diplomatically, politically and economically, and that he worries about the booming of mining companies in that country. In my opinion, the Ethiopian government feels that the UN sanction is of no effect to the Eritrean economy, that its internal low-level armed rebels are still alive and kicking; that rampant corruption, nepotism, unemployment, inflation, and intra ethnic and religious killings are beyond description; that the recent revolution in North Africa and Middle East is a threat to the regime in Addis Ababa. So the war drums are a good tool to divert attention and to create coalition of willing gullible. The Ethiopian government will continue to bring sensational false accusations against Eritrea, no matter what type, where it occurred in order to get sympathy from its budget handlers, and foreign aid donors. One thing is for sure that the UN and the West will be held accountable for complacency, and the terrible disaster that will ensue to the human life, if the Ethiopian regime continues with its adventurous war policy in the Horn of Africa.

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