

Sudan's Rejection of US/UN Sanction on Eritrea and Its Implications Amanuel Biedemariam

On March 5, 2010, President Omar Hassen Al-Beshir of Sudan conducted a quick visit with his Eritrean counterpart President Isaias Afwerki in Asmara, Eritrea. At face value, it could appear easy for those who want to demonize and try to dismiss the significance of the visit. They can try minimizing it as insignificant because of President Omar Hassen Al-Beshir's standing with the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as the sanction measure in place against the people of Sudan. They could portray it as, two lightweights getting together to prop-up each other in a world stage. However, the visit, their meeting and the outright rejection by Sudan of the UN just sanction resolution 1907 is sending a shockwaves for Ethiopia, IGAD and the USA. Here is why:

It Highlighted the Irrelevance of IGAD

The Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a regional organization of East African states namely Eritrea, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Djibouti, Kenya and Somalia created to foster cooperation in the region. However, during the Bush era, IGAD was taken over by Dr. Jendayie Frazer and turned into a tool for the US hegemonic agendas, and is currently serving US interest. Moreover, in Christmas of 2006, after Ethiopia invaded Somalia, breaking IGAD and UN rules at the behest of US with IGAD's acquiescence, Eritrea withdrew her membership from the group in 2007. After that period, the onslaught of decisions against Eritrea by the IGAD continued with impunity and unabated until they pushed the sanction measure against Eritrea.

The deceitful cutthroat approach the organization embarked on behalf of the US will certainly doom its future because it has lost credibility. However, in the short term, the US managed to use it as a tool against Eritrea in an effort to give the sanction an African face so the US State Department can confidently say it is an "African Initiative."

Fast forward to march of 2010: in a last ditch effort to stop President Hassen Al-Beshir from visiting Eritrea and to ask him to join the IGAD meeting in Kenya, IGAD members sent Kenyan foreign minister Moses Wetangula and Ethiopian minister of foreign affairs Seyoum Mesfin to Khartoum. If Sudan were to accept the invitation and come onboard, they thought, it would seal the fate of Eritrea. However, Sudan utterly rejected their attempts because it was against its own national interest. It is also clear to Sudan the manner in which the sanction measure IGAD passed against Eritrea could likely be, applied against Sudan at some point.

The utter rejection showed, Sudan is convinced IGAD is not working for the interest of countries involved and does not trust its members and rendered IGAD worthless. For all practical purposes, Sudan is unofficially out of IGAD, Somalia is unsettled as a nation to matter and Eritrea has officially suspended its membership. Thus, it is safe to say that IGAD is all but dead as organization because Sudan and Eritrea are key actors who are not active members. Therefore, IGAD will not be able to claim it is working for its intended mission with any credibility while a significant portion of its membership is inactive.

Renders US/UN Sanction Decision Worthless

In the past, any US authored international sanctions meant a death sentence to any nation that they imposed it on as witnessed in Iraq and many other places. However, when the UN uses sanctions on nations based on considerations other than international peace; by using fabrications; without evidences and transparent legal process, it loses its intended meanings and effectiveness. In addition, when they apply sanction measures to prop-up US and other Western nations interests, the resistance for it hastens and it loses grip because it no longer serves the greater good or its intended mission. As a result, international cooperation for it wanes.

That is what just happened in Iran with China flatly rejecting US efforts to impose stiffer sanctions on Iran even when US is trying to exempt Chinese companies because it is counter to their interest. That is exactly what just happened with the Sudan and Eritrea. In fact, it is serving the reverse of

what it is intended to achieve by pressuring these countries into working together in a much stronger bond. Furthermore, it alienates the powers who want to alienate the sanctioned nations because of its over-use and abuse.

It is a Rejection to Meles Zenawi,

For the first time, there has been a concerted effort by the West to demonize the TPLF in order to appear as if they are still for democracy and the good side of the Ethiopian people. For the first time, the BBC attacked the TPLF gangs in a way that hastens the hatred the people of Ethiopia have towards the junta. In addition, Meles is getting measured reprimand from his masters in the US (crocodile tears by Senator, Russ Feingold). However, that is nothing compared to the rejection by the Sudan.

On February 9, 2010, Meles Zenawi met with General William Ward, commander of U.S. Africa Command, in Addis Ababa, and on February 17, 2010 Meles sent five [in reality US donated] helicopters to bolster peacekeeping missions in the Sudan. The US is key ally and supporter of the South Sudan. The alliance of South Sudan and the US and US military involvement with Meles is certain to have turned off Sudanese authorities. As usual, Meles is trying to eat with every side of his mouth. However, that lack of principle has finally paid off in turning the Sudan away from Meles altogether.

Time will tell what the ramifications of Sudanese rejection would mean to Ethio-Sudan Relations while the TPLF is in power. The TPLF tries to brag about their "Good relation and economic cooperation" but TPLF's greed and deep political prostitution have certainly turned off Sudan. That means Sudan is working tightly with Eritrea as they pursue mutual security interest and all that it entails as evidenced by President Beshir's recent visit to Asmara.

This is a clear indication that all the games Meles played have reached its culmination point. Meles wanted to play a double agent, by playing US agent in South Sudan as well as Darfur while at the same time trying to maintain excellent relations with Sudan. This turned out to be a conundrum of the highest form because for the first time, Meles must choose to either remain a US agent or pursue a major national interest and work with Beshir. He remained a US agent because he has no choice or say in this matter! In the process however, Meles jeopardized the interests of the people of Ethiopia and particularly people of Tigray with the Sudanese because Sudan is the KEY trading partner and a lifeline.

Eritrea and Sudan mean more to the people of Ethiopia than US interests in the region would mean to Ethiopians. The people of Ethiopia need to live in peace with the people in the region for them to thrive through trade and cooperation. Meles Zenawi is working against the interest of the people of Ethiopia and the region as he pursues US interests. That has certainly alienated him and his clique for good no matter how skillfully he tries to spin things in his favor and; jeopardized the livelihood of the people of Tigray in the process. Sudan and Eritrea (nations with ports) can shut down any products from passing to Tigray thus sanctioning Ethiopia in reverse.

The onslaught of bad news for the TPLF junta is an indication of a certain doom. After all, Meles is not as powerful as their masters would have us believe, just a yes man!

It Bolsters Chinese Position in the Region,

The US has lost all credibility in the Horn of Africa by overwhelming majority of the people in the region for a number of reasons. Firstly, the US pursues its national interests at the expense of the people in the region. They ignore the people in the region and try to run US affairs using dictators that are not accountable to the people, ala Meles. Secondly, the US has incompetent diplomatic core that are belligerent and short sighted. They lack understanding of the political intricacies and fail to understand the consequences of their poor diplomatic manipulations and threatening postures. They pursue ill-calculated policies that work against US interests. For example, Ambassador Susan Rice failed to anticipate what would happen to IGAD after using it to seed the foundation of the sanction

measure she hatched and implemented against Eritrea. In the least, she underestimated how it will affect Ethiopia. She failed to see how Sudan could counter. She and the Administration of which she is part of failed in a major way to see how China could take advantage of the "Blind leading the blind" policy of successive US Administrations regarding the Horn of Africa. Moreover, Susan Rice totally exposed her ignorance, by undermining the political brilliance, wit and willingness of Eritrean people to stand against her ill-conceived agendas.

The US has bet all its eggs on Meles Zenawi. In an effort to make Ethiopia the anchor state in the region, they put all their efforts on Addis Ababa firstly, because it is headquarters of the AU and secondly, because Meles Zenawi will do anything on command.

Furthermore, the people in the Horn of Africa have had it, they are fed up with US antiques. They want peace, development and cooperation, which the US will not entertain. The US, by betting entirely on Meles Zenawi, has lost a great swath of the Horn territories to China without China having to lift a finger. All the Chinese have to do is be the good people and help the countries exploit their resources peacefully and help them build their infrastructures. It is a much better alternative than what the US and the Western powers currently offer that is; the abuse of people, death and destruction in the guise of war on terror and, in the name of freedom and democracy.

The Chinese abstained from voting for sanctions against Eritrea and gave themselves a wiggling room to get out of it as they have with the Sudan. By now, it is clear that the sanction measure the US put in place against Sudan is not having any affects in the Sudan because China is a good ally and a major trading partner of Sudan. Any harm to the regime in Sudan can work against the interests of China. Therefore, US have not been able to penetrate Sudan regardless of the political maneuvers. That means the US is not in Sudan; and by sanctioning Eritrea, the US has just given China a clear path into Eritrea. That means China has no competition in a large swath of African territories that is full of oil and other natural resources. Where is the brilliance of team Obama in this? Instead, they are maintaining the failed Bush policies of propping up a puppet minority regime in Ethiopia; failed to implement legal border decision and by pushing the UNjust sanction measure on fabricated and trumped-up grounds.

It is disappointing to see successive US administrations trying to convince the American people that they are actually working for the hearts and minds of the people in a given region after they have cultivated hatred against the US by pursuing ill-conceived policies for decades.

To make matters worse for US position in the region, the fall of the minority clique in Ethiopia is imminent and would not be a peaceful transition contrary to newfound concern (crocodile tears) by Carter Center and Senator Russ Feingold for "free and fair election." No election in Ethiopia can bring the kind of change Ethiopians can-believe-in while the minority clique is in power. Moreover, when that change comes, the Ethiopian people will not forget US alliance with Meles. Moreover, if Ethiopia falls into the hands of leaders that do not favor US position in the region, the US will be out of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan. This could certainly have a spiraling affect southward. That is all possible because incompetent US politicians have played zero sum games for decades by betting against the people in the region. That is very dangerous and impossible for the US to control once it is on the offing. In other words, US need to change its approach quickly in order to regain credibility and footing if there is a taker.

It Nullifies the Sanction Measure

No matter how tight, without total support of the sanction measure by all countries neighboring Eritrea and while the Chinese are in full support of Sudan; the UNjust sanction 1907 is null-and-void, irrelevant, ineffective and just propaganda exercises. The rejection by Sudan is a slap to the architects of the sanction, US, Ethiopia and IGAD. It is actually a blessing in disguise for Sudan and Eritrea because it strengthens their bilateral ties, enhances their cross border trade and strengthens people-to-people bonds. A good example of this is the fact that Sudanese are flocking to honeymoon and to tour Eritrea. It will also enhance the security cooperation and all that it entails. In addition, it

clarifies the nature of alliances in the region for friends and foe.

Concluding Remarks

The US went the distance to give the sanction measure an African face as if the majority of African States had an interest on Eritrean sanction. The reality however, all African States know Ethiopia openly invaded Somalia. They know the US openly conducted and continues to operate militarily in Somalia illegally. Africans also know fully, the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia - the demarcation that followed based on colonial treaties, is sacrosanct to African boundaries. Africans know that Ethiopia continues to, openly reject international law. This is unconscionable, un-American and UNjust.

Yet, the Obama Administration contrary to campaign promises to engage is choosing deception. The American Ambassador at the UN, Susan Rice, after giving the Eritrean people the gift of Sanction on Christmas Eve turned around and said, "This is an African initiative." Really? While that claim aimed to appease the international community from asking what in the hell is going on, it exposed the mediocrity of this half-baked politician.

Susan Rice forgot her race, forgot President Obama's African American heritage and the history of African Americans. Because for sure, if it is up-to the White majority, Black Americans would still be slaves. Therefore, Susan Rice needs to stop deceiving herself because this is American initiative hatched, campaigned-for and implemented by Ambassador Susan Rice and Susan Rice alone. This is a continuation of the Bush Administration policies led by Dr. Jendayie Frazer another black educator! Dr Frazer pursued the placing of Eritrea into a list of Nations that Sponsor Terror and US congress rebuffed it because it was a farce. However, President Obama was able to subvert the process by making the UN Ambassador a cabinet position and making it a foreign policy matter under control of the president thus giving Rice full authority.

Susan Rice achieved what she wanted and set-off a dangerous political process that Africans need to reject: ugly sausage-making in a continent fraught by corrupted stooges of foreign powers.

At the same time, the incompetence of Ambassador Susan Rice has exposed the integrity of US as judicious arbiter of international matters. It brought to question the integrity of the UNSC and the UN. More importantly, it tarnished the UN emblem and defiled the UN brand. Eritreans in the process of fighting repeated injustices have effectively re-branded the blue with green wreath UN-designed flag into a sign of bloodiness and injustices.

The Obama Administration needs to reevaluate its position of African matters and make a carefully planned policy adjustment. They need to stop listening to people who are interested on power only by riding on the backs of the US by truly looking at the interest of the people and, at least, try to bring "Change We Can Believe in". First, repeal the UNjust sanction because it will not serve the interest of the US in fact it will do the opposite.

Join our World-Wide E-SMART Movement
Eritrean Sanctions Must be Annulled and Repealed Today!

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