

Ethiopia: Minority Regime's Fiefdom Syndrome

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In the past, I have written about the regime in Ethiopia, its incurable inferiority complex and crab mentality, its refusal to abide by international and bilateral Agreements it has signed, and from respecting international law, UN Security Council resolutions and most of all, from respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Successive Ethiopian regimes have presented themselves as being more “diplomatic”, “more sophisticated”, “peace loving” etc. etc. than others in the region and beyond. This delusional self assessment has prevented them from seeing themselves as they really are- weak, frightened and myopic.

The minority regime attempts to present itself as a law abiding member of the international community, and it abuses and undermines the very institutions that it hails in public. It does that, not because it has the diplomatic, economic or political prowess to do so, but because it relies on its handlers to cover up its crimes, and has employed and perfected certain ploys that it believes have served it well in the last 21 years. For brevity's sake, I will list the regime's favorite gimmicks used in both its international and domestic affairs. It will help readers understand its mental schema. In business, the term “Fiefdom Syndrome”¹ explains how certain toxic cliques have detrimental effects on a company's health. Let us see the toxic TPLF cliques “Fiefdom Syndrome” and how it affects its handling of domestic and international issues.

1. Seeks Powerful Alliances

Ethiopia is a poor country that relies on donors for 60% of its national budget. Ethiopias handlers have been touting “11% economic growth” in Ethiopia, but sadly, despite the billions funneled into the country from various donors, Ethiopia remains one of the countries that will not be meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, will not achieve food security or make any progress in the standard of living of its people. The recent World Bank Report found corruption ripe in Ethiopia's economic, health, education, telecommunication, land and other sectors. 17 billion dollars have disappeared from the countries coffers. Gold reserves have mysteriously vanished from its bank vaults etc. etc.

Lacking economic and political power, the regime's cadres are seen wheedling “their way into powerful circles”, ingratiating themselves to western powers and using it as a “weapon of choice”. The minority regime in Ethiopia, lacking confidence in its own abilities, lacking legitimacy in its own country, chooses to advance its domestic and international agendas by latching onto powerful nations such as France, the United States and the United Kingdom. From feeding its people, to managing its political affairs, to managing its economy, these nations and their tentacled subsidiaries, “advisors”, “consultants”, run the country and its government. For a nation that prides itself as being the only one not colonized in the past, it is today, practically the most colonized state in Africa.

There are many examples of how Ethiopia reaches out to its handlers in order to effectuate its political agendas. For example, when Ethiopia wanted to break the close and neighborly

relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, it relied on the United States to use its leverage in Djibouti. Let us take a look at a US Embassy cable that best illustrates this. September 2006 cable "ETHIOPIA: DEPUTY MINISTER TEKEDA TALKS SOMALIA, REGIONAL ISSUES WITH DAS YAMAMOTO", details the conversation between the then Deputy Minister Tekeda Alemu and US Ambassador Donald Yamamoto. The cable says:

"...The Government of Djibouti's opposition to IGAD actions in Somalia are the result of its fear of Eritrean President Isaias, Tekeda said, as well as President Guelleh's personal business interests with Eritrea. The Deputy Foreign Minister speculated that the Djiboutian leadership was worried that Eritrea would support Afari separatist movements, as Isaias had done successfully in Sudan, if Djibouti did not follow Eritrea's lead in Somalia. Tekeda also told Yamamoto that Aweys and other CIC leaders had stopped in Djibouti to meet with President Guelleh on their way back from Libya the week before. Tekeda maintained that the GOD was "on the wrong path," and added that Djibouti was not strong enough to take Ethiopia's continued friendship and forbearance for granted..."

But that was not all. Here is the rest of it:

"...Tekeda urged that the USG speak frankly with Djibouti about its role in the region. He said that President Guelleh would pay attention to U.S. concerns given the importance to him of the U.S. military base in Djibouti. "He must be told to choose" whose side he wanted to take..."

I don't know what Donald Yamamoto's response was to Tekeda Alemu's request to break up Djibouti-Eritrea relations, or what the US did, but in less than a year, Djibouti-Eritrea relations had soured and the two countries were on the brink of war. US Ambassadors in the Horn and the US Ambassador at the United Nations were instrumental in getting sanctions regime against the State of Eritrea and the Djibouti-Eritrea issue was orchestrated in order to get "stand alone sanctions" against Eritrea.

2. Camouflage

If there is one gimmick that the regime in Ethiopia has perfected to date is the one of creating distractions, to divert attention away from itself, its domestic crimes against humanity, and its lawlessness. These tactics involve, "emphasizing the inconsequential", "sending someone off on a wild goose chase" or "deliberately triggering someone's anxiety buttons". The Djibouti-Eritrea is a perfect example. While the regime's forces have violated international law, the Algiers Agreements, over two dozen Security Council resolutions on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border and have been occupying sovereign Eritrean territories for the last 12 years, with the help of their handlers, they exaggerated and escalated the non-existent Djibouti Eritrea border issue.

Instead of taking responsibility for the security of its citizens and others in its territories, the minority regime blames Eritrea for everything that happens in Ethiopia and beyond. Presenting

itself as a peace loving regime, its cadres have scaped the globe tarnishing Eritrea's image and that of its leadership, whilst committing untold crimes against its own people, committing genocides in the Gambela, Ogaden and Oromia regions of Ethiopia, advancing its ethnic cleansing policies against the Amhara under the cover of the "villagization" program etc. Its crimes and human rights violations are hidden from the world because it has "friends" in high places.

3. Invisible Walls

Actively instigating actions or creating counterproductive perceptions so that an argued directive will be, if not impossible, extremely difficult to implement. The minority regime in Ethiopia has come up with several gimmicks to advance its anti-Eritrea agendas and has no problem creating new ones when others fail. The call for dialogue with Eritrea while refusing to vacate from sovereign Eritrean territories, the acceptance "in principle" the final and binding decisions of the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission, the off again, on again 5 Point Peace Plan etc. are just a few examples of the "mazes and false pathways" that it has established in order to frustrate the peace process.

4. Strategic Noncompliance:

This tactic is the minority regime's favorite. It agrees upfront to take action while having no intention of taking that action, or cooperating in order to buy time to find a way of avoiding taking action. For example, Seyoum Mesfin, the most frightened member of the Tigrayan clique ruling Ethiopia today came out swinging in the wee hours of 13 April 2002. He called a Press Conference and announced to the world that the decision of the Boundary Commission was fair and that it was final and binding. He also said that "Badme and its environs" had been awarded to Ethiopia and that the international community should urge Eritrea to accept the ruling and allow for the speedy demarcation of the Eritrea Ethiopia border.

A few days later, when the ignominious cadre and his team read the documents and found out that Badme, the casus bellie for the Eritrea- Ethiopia border conflict had been awarded to Eritrea. In this case, since it cannot easily refuse to accept the decision, in order to have the moral high ground, it ran to accept the decision before Eritrea, only to turn around and delay compliance. The regime has done everything to get out of its treaty obligations and has collaborated with internal and external forces to undermine the EEBC decision. That began the 11 year long attempts to amend, revisit and even reverse the EEBC's final and binding delimitation decision began.

It employed the support of Eritrean mercenaries to undermine the EEBC's decisions, and to confuse the matter. These self serving emasculated individuals came up with stuff like "Transitional Justice", "making Badme a no-man's zone", "making Badme a park to be enjoyed by both sides" etc. etc. Instead of standing up for the people of Eritrea and the sovereignty of Eritrea, these quislings worked with Meles Zenawi to weaken Eritrea's legal position for a few stipends-they failed miserably.

The regime “sought powerful alliances” in its ongoing pressure on Eritrea. In order to force Eritrean into relinquishing rights to Badme, the minority also turned to its friends at the UN and at the US State Department. Meles Zenawi sought the help of Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General, to create an “alternative mechanism”, because he wanted to get rid of the EEBC. Kofi Annan obliged by creating all types of obstacles and preventing the EEBC from carrying out its sole mandate of demarcating the Eritrea Ethiopia border. John Bolton, the then US Ambassador to the United Nations said that Jendayi Frazer, the incompetent former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, told him that she wanted to “reopen the 2002 decision” which “she had concluded was wrong” and wanted it to “award a major piece of disputed territory to Ethiopia”. Bolton said that he “was at a loss how to explain that to the Security Council”, so he didn't.

Frazer wanted to adjust the line and she brought General George Fulford, who she figured could serve as a “technical facilitator” to the EEBC. He was one of the people who had accompanied her on her ill-advised and illegal trip to Badme, an occupied sovereign Eritrean territory. Frazer and Fulford introduced the “satellite technology” map at an EEBC meeting in the spring of 2006. General Fulford also “rather unwisely, wrote to Eritrea’s Legal Counsel that he was seeking operational latitude to shift the boundary by about 1Km”.

After waiting for over five years to demarcate the Eritrea-Ethiopia border in accordance with the EEBC’s final and binding decisions, the Boundary Commission decided to demarcate the border using coordinates on maps, “virtual demarcation”, closed its offices and left the area. Ethiopia continues to flout international law, the UN and African Union Charters and the EEBC’s delimitation and demarcation decisions. It has refused to accept the demarcation and continues to occupy sovereign Eritrean territories, including Badme.

5. Information Manipulation.

This is another favorite ploy used by the regime in its domestic and foreign policies. It has perfected the art of withholding, putting a spin on information, and covering up or giving false information. When the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission delivered its final and binding delimitation decision on 13 April 2002, the ignominies Seyoum Mesfin, then Foreign Minister of Ethiopia told Ethiopians that Badme and its environs had been awarded to Ethiopia. It was bold lie.

When the regime could not get the EEBC to change the decision, it sought to undermine the Commission and Meles Zenawi claimed, through a letter to Kofi Annan that the Commission’s work was in “terminal crisis”. The EEBC responded to that the letter was “misconceived and misleading”. In its 7 October 2003 letter to Kofi Annan, the Commission wrote the following:

“...there is no “crisis”, terminal or otherwise, which cannot be cured by Ethiopia’s compliance with its obligations under the Algiers Agreement, in particular its obligations to treat the Commission’s delimitation determination as “final and binding” (article 4.15) and “to

cooperate with the Commission, its experts and other staff in all respects during the process of ... demarcation” (article 4.14)...

Needless to say, Ethiopia continued with its belligerence and the US led international community looked the other way.

Having the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital as well as the UN’s many tentacle organizations at its disposal, successive Ethiopian regimes, and most especially the current minority regime, have emasculated these organizations and prevented them from calling a spade a spade. The wiki leak cables are replete with the lies and deceptions of the regime and its cadres, too many to mention in one sitting. For example, the regime keeps telling the world that the “root causes” for the Eritrea Ethiopia border conflict must be addressed in order for Ethiopia to comply with its treaty obligations and the Algiers Agreements. Yet, it has prevented the African Union and the United Nations from establishing the Commission in accordance with the Algiers Agreements. Article 3 of the Algiers Agreements says:

“...In order to determine the origins of the conflict, an investigation will be carried out on the incidents of 6 May 1998 and on any other incident prior to that date which could have contributed to a misunderstanding between the parties regarding their common border, including the incidents of July and August 1997...The investigation will be carried out by an independent, impartial body appointed by the Secretary General of the OAU, in consultation with the Secretary General of the United Nations and the two parties...The independent body will endeavor to submit its report to the Secretary General of the OAU in a timely fashion...The parties shall cooperate fully with the independent body...The Secretary General of the OAU will communicate a copy of the report to each of the two parties, which shall consider it in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Framework Agreement and the Modalities...”

The Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission delivered its final and binding delimitation and demarcation decisions on 13 April 2002 and 30 November 2007 respectively. 13 years since the signing of the Algiers Agreements and the Commission that is supposed to determine the origins of the conflict” has yet to be established. Why?

According to a 1 December 2005 Wikileaks cable from Ethiopia which details a 25 November 2005 meeting between US’ Donald Yamamoto and African Union officials. The African Union seems to have made a unilateral decision to delay the formation of the Commission. The cable said:

“...Peace and Security Commissioner Djinnit said that the AU favors prioritization of Algiers Accord requirements and indicated that the AU does not believe the time is right for a study on the causes of war between the two countries, as provided for under Article 3...”

Judging from Ethiopia's interference with the work of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union to get the latest US-Ethiopia engineered sanctions resolutions against the State of Eritrea and its people, there is no doubt that the AU was acting at the behest of the US and Ethiopia. Furthermore, there is nothing in the Algiers Agreement that allows the AU or the two parties to cherry pick parts to implement or delay. In addition, as one of the witnesses and guarantors of the Algiers Agreements, the African Union is morally and legally required to fulfill its obligations under the Agreements.

6. Discrediting opponents.

From its domestic opponents to all others, the regime in Ethiopia has used "personal attacks or irrelevant criticisms to create doubt about another person's competence or credibility". The frightened regime believes it can drain away the power of others by discrediting them. It seeks to find "dark secrets" and even create them with seductive traps, then expose them - it's called 'entrapment'. The regime has labeled opposition members, journalists and Ethiopian activists as being "terrorists" and has accused Eritrea of committing "terrorist acts".

In its quest to dismember and weaken Somalia, the regime invaded and occupied Somalia in 2006. While it publicly accused Eritrea of not supporting the Transitional National Government (TNG) in Somalia, it undermined all the TNG leaders, used them in its agenda to sever Somalia and then dumped them. Here are some examples of Ethiopian consistent undermining of all of Somalia's leadership:

- **"...Meles said that Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Gedi has "outlived his purpose" and is not the right person for the primary job now of ensuring an inclusive political process. The removal of Gedi would best be an outcome of the National Reconciliation Congress. Meles, Belliard said, agreed that there needs to be more Hawiye in the government, including in the security services..."-(Meles Zenawi 2007)**
- **"...Tekeda said that Ethiopia's objective for the upcoming October 27-29 IGAD Summit in Nairobi was "to soften Yusuf up...and put him in a cage." He said that "either Yusuf will come out of the summit as a ceremonial president or he will be jettisoned." Tekeda hoped that the summit would convince Yusuf that he cannot continue conducting business as usual with Yusuf only serving his Majerteen clan interests. Tekeda stated that there was now absolute consensus within the Ethiopian government that President Yusuf can no longer continue to be an obstacle to political progress in Somalia...Tekeda said that Yusuf was "an old man with no capacity," and that he was a liability. The only question that remains is what can be done to limit the damage he can do. Tekeda said Yusuf could continue as President if he agreed to become a figure head, but if Yusuf does not listen, then he must leave... Tekeda revealed that in the previous weeks he had met secretly with ARS/Djibouti head Sheikh Sharif to discuss the integration of the ARS into the TFG"-(Tekeda Alemu on Abdulahi Yusuf -2008)**

- **“...Tekeda suggested that the presidency was too high for ARS/Djibouti head Sheikh Sharif, but that Sharif as prime minister was possible. He added that Sharif should have some role in the government because he had some level of acceptance and credibility among Somalis. Tekeda noted that he had just gotten off the phone with Sharif, and that their discussions over the formation of a unity government were continuing. He also said that Sharif and the opposition would go to Nairobi to participate in the summit. Tekeda declined to name possible replacements for Yusuf...”- (Tekeda Alemu on Sheikh Sharif 2008)**
- **“...Asked by Special Envoy for Somalia John Yates if Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein "Nur Adde" was capable of governing, Meles said only "no." Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Abdisalan Aden had the right clan credentials (Habr Gedr/Ayer) but no power base of his own. Meles acknowledged, however, that "you can talk to him" and "he's very useful." Meles agreed with A/S Frazer that ARS Chairman Sheikh Sharif might be a Trojan horse for more radical Islamists...”- (Meles Zenawi on Sheikh Sharif 2008)**
- **“...Questioned about CIC leaders, Meles observed that with its defeat, the CIC had now lost its "aura of continued victory." Whereas the Ayr sub-clan had been the CIC's primary backer, CIC Executive Committee Chairman Sheikh Sharif Ahmed was Abgaal and now wielded little influence...”- (Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia-2007)**

With Ethiopian officials serving as US advisors in the region, it is no wonder then that US policy for the Horn of Africa remains bloody, callous and incoherent.

The minority regime and its handlers have spent millions in targeted vilification and defamation campaigns against the State of Eritrea, its leadership and its people-especially the tight knit Diaspora population. The distortions and lies propagated by some Eritrean quislings in its employ have only strengthened the unity and resolve of the people. Today, members fo the Eritrean Quislings League and their sponsors are found resorting to criminal activities. For example, one of the regime’s mercenaries was caught vandalizing and destroying the Eritrean Community Center in Oakland, CA. Three Eritrean Community Centers in Stockholm, Sweden were burnt to the ground in February 2013. Its mercenaries have “occupied” and “vandalized” Eritrean Embassies and several individuals are now facing criminal charges. These acts of desperation continue and unless the United States and European governments conduct serious investigations into the regime’s activities, these crimes will escalate.

7. Occupation.

The regime wrongly believes that by marking territory and maintaining a physical presence, it can force its opponents to “dialogue” and “negotiations”. By occupying Somalia and imposing its will on the leaders, it seeks to project its rule on the people of Somalia. For over a decade

now it has occupied sovereign Eritrean territories and has employed various gimmicks, including the 5-Point Plan (as advised by its friends in the UK) and “agreeing in principle” to accept the Boundary Commission’s decisions, to buy time and find ways to reverse the final and binding decision. There can be no dialogue with a regime that has occupied sovereign Eritrean territories, including Badme, in violation of international law, the African Union and United Nation’s Charters. Ethiopia’s occupation must end.

So far the international community has not taken any punitive actions against you and that has emboldened you to act irrationally and erratically, making you more dangerous to peace in the region. The Security Council has an obligation to enforce the Algiers Agreement and the EEBC’s final and binding decision and so far it has failed to do so. Under international law, the UN Security Council does not have the option of non-action; it cannot shirk off its responsibilities to UN member states like Eritrea forever. Sooner or later they will have to act. I say they should act now to avert another humanitarian disaster.

The international community in general, and the witnesses and guarantors in particular, do not have the option to just wash their hands off like a bunch of Pontius Pilates, they too have legal obligations to fulfill. Moreover, their inaction will undermine the integrity and efficacy of the UN System, not to mention the effect their inaction will have on the confidence of member states in its ability to resolve conflicts and ensure international peace in the future, which today is very low.

Furthermore, they cannot expect Eritreans to do nothing; remain perpetually patient and magnanimous while Eritrea’s security is at risk and Eritrea’s sovereignty and territorial integrity is being violated by Ethiopia. Article 51 of the UN Charter recognizes Eritrea’s inherent right of self-defense. Article 51 of the UN Charter clearly states the following:

“...Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security...”

Eritrea’s inherent right to self defense is justified under international law and the UN Charter:

1. **There is an armed attack/occupation.** Ethiopia’s army is occupying sovereign Eritrean territories, including Badme for the last 13 years since the EEBC delivered its final and binding delimitation decision.
2. **There is no practicable alternative or it is demonstrably unavailable.** The authority, the UN Security Council, which has the legal powers to stop or prevent the infringement, has so far refused to take any deterrent actions against your regime. The UNSC has

instead chosen to appease the minority regime by allowing its open defiance of international law and over two-dozen Security Council resolutions on the Eritrea Ethiopia border.

3. **There is urgent necessity.** There are Eritreans who have been forced to live outside their villages. The Eritrea Ethiopia border has been delimited and demarcated and today, the only issue is the Ethiopian occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories, which cannot go on forever.

For the 3 reasons mentioned above and more, Eritrea has the right to liberate her sovereign territories and will not seek permission or approval from those who did not fulfill their legal obligations.

8. **Shunning.**

This is a tactic used by the regime to isolate Eritrea diplomatically and politically. By labeling Eritrea as the “spoiler” and refusing to allow Eritrea’s participation in international forums, by throwing tantrums at the UN and at the US State Department, the frightened regime has sought various ways to isolate Eritrea and muffle her voice. For some reason, despite its repeated calls for dialogue with Eritrea, the regime refuses to allow Eritrea’s participation at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)...go figure!

There are other ugly traits of the TPLF regime in Ethiopia that could have been mentioned, but these will suffice for today. For those who are wondering why the regime chooses to employ gimmicks and tactics, the answer is quite simple. The minority regime in Ethiopia is illegitimate and lacks the support of its own people. It is “propped up” by western governments who have decided that it fulfills their agendas in the region. The mercenary regime does not have the financial or other resources to play the appointed Viceroy in the region, so it relies completely on its western sponsors to maintain its brutal grip on the Ethiopian people- and now the Somali people too. It is a regime driven by anger, fear and frustration. Its inferiority complex adds to its inability to achieve its domestic and international goals on its own-always at the mercy of its handlers.

There are three tactics in dealing with those suffering from the “Fiefdom Syndrome”:

- **Refuse to play the game:** It takes two to tango, and if you (and others) won't play they may have to give up.
- **Name the game:** Exposure, so everyone knows the game, is a great way of neutralizing tricksters.
- **Change the game:** Taking control yourself allows you to reframe and redirect the energy of the situation

Know thy enemy...

Ethiopia must withdraw and the occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories must end now!

The rule of law must reign over the law of the jungle!

¹ Phrase coined by Robert J. Herbold, COO of Microsoft, senior executive who has held several positions during a 26-year career at Proctor & Gamble. He is now president of the Herbold Group LLC.