

Foreign Aid Based Diplomacy and Alternatives for Self-reliance



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Introduction

In popular diplomatic lexicon there is neither permanent friendship nor sustained animosity. Promotion of national interest and sovereignty is the major principle of diplomatic relations between countries. As there is no country in the world fully endowed with natural resources, countries are obliged to share their resources and engage in trade relations to ascertain mutual benefits thereby ascertain the material wellbeing of their citizens.

However, in the world in which few powerful rich countries dominate the international relations while the majority of the countries are left at the periphery, the above stated diplomatic principle have always been subsequently violated. In the post war international relations in particular, the balance of power between countries has been seriously disrupted. The US led group of powerful countries have hampered the principle of mutual benefits in international relations have been regrettably replaced by unwarranted

interference into the internal affairs and exertion of undesirable pressures on less developed countries.

Thus normal diplomatic relations among nations have now been replaced by lender- recipient relations in which foreign lenders have become richer at the expense of loan recipient countries which continued to remain financially subservient and under developed remaining in a vicious circle of debt burden far more favorable to the interest of international financial magnets. Normal diplomatic relations were therefore converted into the prevalence of unwritten form of donor recipient relations creating a neo-colonial dichotomy between normal diplomatic relations and donor- recipient relations.

Foreign aid had therefore been used as a leverage to manipulate the domestic and foreign relations of less developed countries and exert unprecedented pressures on those countries who refuse to comply to their diktats. They organize coups on those leaders who refuse to bow down to their orders and shutter their governments creating chaos. In this respect Ethiopia is a case on point. They imposed a catalogue of sanctions and diplomatic and economic pressures on this country with ancient history.

Background to a prolonged anti-Ethiopia stance by some western countries and its implications

In his book entitled, *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of the Haile Selassie Years*, John H. Spencer, a personal adviser to the late emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, describes the situation as the country had to sustain in falling into the jaws of the superpowers who wished to chew her up to crash the country in their jaws but failed in vain. Hence, Ethiopia which is a pioneering African country perceived through red eyes by some of the western powers.

Prominent Scholars on Ethiopia attribute this to the anti-colonial stance of the country while others focus on the natural and geo-political position of the country. Speaking to ENA, a career Ethiopian diplomat Ambassador Tiruneh

Zena, noted that as Ethiopia was the only country in Africa that was not colonized in line with the Berlin Conference on the Scramble for Africa by the Ottoman Turks and the Prussian Chancellor Bismarck. This refers to the Battle of Adwa. The historic victory at the Battle of Adwa is not restricted to the victory at the battle which was gained in a matter of four hours. Adwa ushered a new phase in the history of humankind and introduced a new world philosophical outlook. The victory at Adwa culminated in the humiliation of the colonial forces and heralded a new era of freedom and liberty for the oppressed peoples of the world.

The Horn of Africa in which Ethiopia is located is transmissions belt for 60 percent of the world economic transaction through the Red Sea and the Strait of Bab el Mendeb. The geopolitical location of the country has become a casus belli for the proliferation of anti-Ethiopia sentiment.

It is quite obvious that the competition among great powers in securing naval bases in neighboring Djibouti at close proximity with Ethiopia is triggered by their desire to control the strategic areas of the Horn of Africa. The pillage of the natural resources in the Hon of Africa has become a major mission of the colonizers. The big powers designed a policy which falsely envisaged that Ethiopia's position as a driving force in African politics and her growing population will ultimately make here a threat to the irredentist desires of the big powers. Moreover, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 had made Egypt a focal point for the promotion of western interests. That is why some of the big powers have sided with Egypt in conspiring to stop Ethiopia from utilizing the Blue Nile for generating hydro-electric power. In their attempts not to displease Egypt and sabotage the development undertakings of Ethiopia on the issue of the utilization of the waters of the Blue Nile, some western powers have staged a protracted conspiracy on Ethiopia to prevent the country from drinking water from her God given natural gift, the Blue Nile by irrationally takes sides with Egypt that has continued to conspire and interfere into the internal affairs of Ethiopia.

The survival of Ethiopia's independence was therefore under threat for ages. Some western countries have left no stone unturned to dismember and weaken Ethiopia in so many ways and means. Ambassador Tiruneh Zena stated that western pressure on Ethiopia dates back to yesteryears. According to Dr. Wubante Ayalew, a lecturer of Political Science at Debre Brehan University shares similar idea with Ambassador Tiruneh Zena stating that some countries disgruntled with Ethiopia's march towards democracy have continued to exert multiple sets of pressures on the country.

Even after the glorious feat at the Battle of Adwa, these expansionist forces continued to conduct war on Ethiopia. In the advent of the invasion of Fascist Italy on Ethiopia, some western powers were indifferent to the situation taking Ethiopia as a lamb of sacrifice for the invaders. The US, France and Britain betrayed Ethiopia and allied with the Italian invaders to appease them not to ally with Nazi Germany. History discloses that when Fascist forces were engaged in bombing Ethiopian American and British companies were providing Benito Mussolini with weapons of mass destruction including mustard gas to bombard Ethiopian villages and towns. Even if Italy was capable of manufacturing its own weapons she did not utilize weapons that it has produced on her own. Although there was a nominal embargo imposed on her, the embargo never prevented her to conduct massive attacks on Ethiopia as she was freely provided with weapons it needed for invading Ethiopia. To the contrary Ethiopia was subjected to sanctions which prevented her to import weapons that she had purchased from abroad. These countries have stabbed Ethiopia from the back by indirectly ignoring the invasion that Italy has conducted on Ethiopia. They even conspired to balkanize the country into numerous principalities. Ethiopia became a pawn under treacherous some western conspiracies.

The US which started diplomatic relations with Ethiopia in 1903 during the reign of Emperor Menelik II retained better relations with the country gradually joined other countries in conspiring on Ethiopia. Today, the same atmosphere is prevailing. The US betrayed Ethiopia during the 5 years of Italian occupation of

the country. Some historians claim that the US with the organizers of the palace coup that took place in Ethiopia in 1961 against the late Emperor Haile Selassie. During the expansionist was in which the Siyad Barre army from Somalia invaded Ethiopia in 1977 on two fronts, Ethiopia requested the US but was denied even to secure the transfer of armaments for which payment of about 20 million USD was prepaid. Nonetheless, the US was spying on Ethiopia by sending secret agents under the disguise of diplomatic mission to the royal palace. Moreover, the US has been recruiting agents from among students who traveled abroad to study to serve as CIA agents.

During the Derge regime, the US organized anti-Ethiopia opposition forces as part of its program to destabilize the country and overthrow the military regime. The US played a major role in supporting the TPLF to assume political power in Ethiopia. Today, the US is employing every strategy at its disposal to reinstate terrorist TPLF to political power. Nonetheless, the US continued to impose sanctions on legitimate government including Ethiopia. The US was mobilizing some EU countries to impose further sanctions on Ethiopia as part of its strategy to reinstate terrorist TPLF on power. The US deliberately imposed sanctions at a period in which a democratically elected government was being instituted in Ethiopia. The US was not the only country that supported the sanctions but countries like the U.K also consulting with the US to impose additional sanction on the country.

Possible Alternatives and strategies to avoid aid oriented diplomacy

Despite the conspiracies and pressures the country had to sustain for ages, Ethiopia was not short of a leeway to skew away from aid based diplomacy. Today some western powers have employed every means except for direct military intervention to weaken and decapitate Ethiopia. However, Ethiopia had her own friendly countries to which she is indebted. Even if the US has delisted Ethiopia from the privileges it has enjoyed for 20 years on AGOA, the PRC has prepared a program to import agricultural commodities from African countries by offering duty free imports to African countries. The US continued to exert

pressures on its citizens residing in Ethiopia to depart from the country as soon as possible. In contrast, China sent her foreign minister to Ethiopia which held discussions on bilateral relations and also assured her citizens to stay and work in Ethiopia as Addis Ababa is calm and safe.

Dr. Wubante notes that the US uses the AGOA strategy as a means of dictating her own political interests on less developed countries but China provided an alternative political and economic means to enable less developed countries in Africa to benefit from duty free imports of agricultural commodities to the PRC. Ambassador Teruneh agrees with the views forwarded by Dr. Wubante. The pressure that some western countries have imposed on Ethiopia has triggered a new trend in trade relations with the eastern world as a viable alternative to those of the west. The wrong US foreign policy objectives and strategies have paved the way for new economic relations with eastern countries and with China in the context of South-South relations. This would in turn further promote Chinese strategic mutual relations with the developing countries and markedly reduce the multiple sets of pressures imposed on these countries by some western powers.

In addition to the PRC, Russia which had no colonial ambitions in Africa and which has not exploited African countries through any level of aid diplomacy has repeatedly condemned the interference of some western power into the internal affairs of Ethiopia. Russia was never engaged in dismembering any country. Ambassador Tiruneh remarked that Russia was always supporting the anti-colonial struggle of less developed countries and has deployed The Russian Red Cross Society during the Battle of Adwa in which Ethiopia registered a historic victory. The Russian government provided full military support to Ethiopia during the aggression perpetrated on Ethiopia by Somali invading forces. In Addition to Russia, Cuba and Yemen came to the assistance of Ethiopia in repulsing the aggressor armed to teeth.

The unreserved support by these countries in helping to ascertain the well being of the country has indeed helped the country to chart out a strategy and foil the

conspiracy of some western countries through which the country could rid itself of aid based diplomatic relations. Ambassador Tiruneh and Dr. Wubalem noted that the fact that Russia and China have used their veto power to stop any negative resolution on Ethiopia at the UNSC has helped to ensure the sovereignty of Ethiopia. The positions held by some western countries on Ethiopia not only defy the sovereignty of the country but is also against the provisions of international law. American has recently been busy in forming various organizations of traitors and liquidationists who claim to establish a transition government while there is a democratically elected government is on political power. The conspiracy that was being hatched by former western diplomats most of whom are on pension is an attempt to disqualify a legitimate government which is ruling the country. Prior to half a century the world was dominated by bi-polar forces that shaped the political atmosphere across the world but today the prevalence of multi-polar political forces is introducing change in international political situation. Incidentally, promoting viable political and diplomatic relations with these countries could help to ease the political pressure exerted on them by few western countries, Ambassador Tiruneh added.

Partnership between colored peoples of the world is a strategy not yet exploited

Color based segregation and differentiation and oppression has surpassed the previous colonial era. Even today, there are numerous incidents of color based discriminations and segregation that has spilled over from the colonial era to the present age. Colored people are still feeling the practice of color based biases and discriminations. The bias and hatred against people of color has proliferated from region to region and across countries in the world. Colored people have waged unprecedented struggle against the lawlessness of those who trample with their rights at every corner of the world. This has been pronounced in Africa which the colonialists called the black continent. They have succeeded to gain more achievements in their struggle. Even then, structural oppression and subjugation on colored people is still prevailing across the globe. Neo-

colonialism is assuming the lead role in determining relations between countries around the world. Western countries are still creating havoc between countries and are working on the unity among the colored peoples of the world. However, Ethiopia has continued to pioneer in the struggle against all forms of racism and continues to advocate for unity among the colored people of the world.

Ambassador Tiruneh mentioned that Ethiopia has set an example among the colored peoples of the world in fighting for their rights. The victory of Adwa was a source of inspiration for all peoples oppressed under the colonial bondage. Today institutions in Africa and the US name after Ethiopia and the different versions of the Ethiopian tri-color used by many African countries is a vivid testimony for Ethiopia's leading role in the battle against all forms of oppression across the world. Africans have long resolved that Addis Ababa is to be the seat of the former OAU now AU depicting the significant role Ethiopia has played and is playing for self determination in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Ethiopia was a refuge for freedom fighters. Suffice it to mention the late Nelson Mandela and Jomo Kenyata. In 1935 when Italy invaded Ethiopia, black people across the world have opposed the aggression and stood with Ethiopia by condemning the atrocities conducted on Ethiopia by fascist Italy. According to Jeff Peirce, black people across the world have voiced their support for Ethiopia and even raised funds for the war efforts. Although they were denied exit visas a number of individuals have volunteered to come to Ethiopia and fight along the Ethiopian patriots. Colonel John Robinson was among many of them. Under the leadership and coordination of Dr. Melaku Bayan, many Afro-Americans have staged a number of movements in support of the resistance stated by the Ethiopian patriots against Fascist Italy.

According to a number of scholars familiar with the history of Ethiopia, the country plays a prominent leadership and exemplary role among African countries. Ethiopia is a country that has never been colonized and holds a unique history and cultural heritage including her own alphabets. Although Ethiopia has a history of more than 3000 years, the country has not adequately

utilized such heritages for promoting her diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. Ambassador Teruneh added that Ethiopia needs to effectively utilize its position and rootedness in Africa in cooperating with the other African countries in the struggle against neo-colonial conspiracies on the continent. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed has recently joined hands with African leaders in practically advocating for Africa with a population of 1.4 billion to be represented as a permanent member of the UNSC. Ethiopia's stance in coordinating such a continental demand is of crucial importance both for Ethiopia and the rest of Africa.

In just the same manner as it has happened 80 years back, millions of Ethiopians and foreign nationals of Ethiopia at birth and the entire Africans and colored people in Europe and the US have now joined the #NoMore Movement which is rapidly spreading across Africa and the rest of the world. Ethiopian missions and legations across the world are duty bound to further promote this movement. This movement is geared towards the global misinformation campaign against Ethiopia and is deeply contributing to the promotion of Pan Africanism. Millions of people across the world have taken to this social media campaign in fighting against all forms of neo-colonial machinations perpetrated by some western countries and the US.

In conclusion

Ethiopia has maintained a long history of anti-fascistic and anti-colonial struggle and will certainly overcome the current challenges the country is facing. Although a number of western countries and the US are out to tarnish the history of this glorious country, African sisterly countries, friendly countries are uplifting and honoring Ethiopia to the highest level. Despite the proliferation of her enemies Ethiopia will victoriously march into the years of her prosperity through the efforts of her gallant sons and daughters.