Eritrea’s Victory in the Battle of Diplomacy

The Horn of Africa, one of the world’s most unstable regions, has experienced great shifts in recent times. Peace and stability were long out of sight and mind, while threats and dangers were persistent clouds that rained fresh misery. In recent years, thousands have migrated from the region, while hungry and angry Ethiopians have maintained massive anti-government demonstrations that laid bare the shortcomings of the EPRDF. Somalia, a failed state, continues to be a laughing stock of the so called “peacekeeping force,” Al Shebab, and the Ethiopian invading army. Djibouti continues to be the resting place for the militaries of the great powers, while the youngest nation, South Sudan, has become a scene of butchery and a playing field of dirty politics. Meanwhile, Sudan is beleaguered by internal dissidence while Yemen is in the midst of crisis.

In contrast, we find a different image - that of Eritrea. Eritrea has long been branded as a “spoiler,” the “North Korea of Africa,” a “giant slave camp,” “Africa’s fastest emptying country,” the “cursed land,” “Africa’s most secretive and repressive state,” and the “hermit kingdom” by mainstream media and other entities. However, despite the numerous inaccurate and exaggerated “titles,” Eritrea preserves peace and has shown surprising developments both domestically and internationally. The astonishing developments that have occurred in Eritrea reflect how much the country is determined to manage the timely problems and to throw off the isolationist label for positive and constructive engagement. Bronwyn Bruton, deputy director of the Africa Center, in her article “Eritrea: Coming In from the Cold” (2016: 5) has suggested that “the United States cannot afford to continue its policy of isolating Eritrea.

Despite the continued approach of smearing Eritrea with derogative labels and defamations, the country’s pragmatic domestic policy and positive diplomatic engagements have enabled it to become a potentially effective partner in many fields of cooperation. Eritrea was forced to deal with many economic, political, diplomatic and military issues in ways few other countries have had to. These conspiring barriers and webs are designed to put Eritrea in custody and finally suffocate it. The multi-faceted hurdles established to trap Eritrea were intolerable and unjust by any standard; however, Eritrea has slowly cast off the chains.

There is a saying that “diplomacy is a continuation of war by other means.” Likewise, when the military adventure undertaken by Ethiopia against Eritrea failed to bring about regime change in the latter, the historical enemies of the people of Eritrea were forced to adopt a new tactic of subjugation – isolation of Eritrea. The policy of isolating and disconnecting Eritrea diplomatically was frist experimented shortly after the war was concluded by the Algiers Peace Agreement. Ethiopia, Sudan and Yemen made a trilateral pact to encircle and strangulate Eritrea while Ethiopia and the US used the African Union, based in Addis Ababa, to campaign against and further alienate Eritrea. The objective was clear and simple: to bring about economic suffocation.
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and ultimately end Eritrean resistance. Many regional organizations were used to condemn Eritrea to legitimate the demonization and isolation of the young, low-income, developing, but self-reliant, country.

The historical enemies of the people of Eritrea have turned to an array of means in order to smother Eritrea. They worked hard to include Eritrea in a list of countries sponsoring and training terrorism. They desperately sought to restrict the 2% rehabilitation and reconstruction tax that Eritreans in the Diaspora willingly and voluntarily pay to their country.

Unable to comprehend the secret of sustenance of Eritrea they were in frenzy and found themselves in desperation.

In 2009, at Washington’s order, Eritrea was punished wrongly by the unjust rod of the UNSC. In this case, history was repeating itself. The UNSC imposed unjust, unfair sanctions based on fabrications. Eritrea was accused of supporting Al Shebab and the United Nations Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (UNSEMG) was established to investigate and “validate the deceitful accusation.” However, years of examination and scrutiny by the UNSEMG have yielded no evidence and found no trace of any kind Eritrean support for Al Shebab.

Campaigns to frighten Eritrea and make it kneel down did not stop there. The desperation of those working against Eritrea increases with the perseverance of the people of Eritrea. As a reflection of their nervousness, additional campaigns continued in escalating mode. Again under pressure from the US, in 2011, the UN passed Resolution 2023. Historically, the US has always punished Eritrea, imposing “Federation” with Ethiopia in 1950 and keeping silent when the federal agreement was unilaterally abrogated by Ethiopia to annex Eritrea in 1962. US hostility to Eritrea did not alter even in the context of the Cold War. Sadly this ugly historical track record of the US was reinvigorated both during and after the so called “border conflict” with Ethiopia. The US helped Ethiopia during the war and employed different methods of diplomatic games to block the implementation of the “final and binding” EEBC verdict. The US was the principal architect, guarantor and patron of the Algiers Peace Agreement.

The diplomatic ventures of Eritrea, crossing the high tide of hostilities, reach wherever Eritrea’s national interest resides. Despite the repeated betrayals by the international community, Eritrea has consistently adhered to the rule of law and called for justice. The unity, determination, strength and perseverance of the people of Eritrea and the pursuit of meticulous diplomacy have dissipated the diabolic agenda of those working against the country. The issue of human rights and the shedding of crocodile tears were also carefully employed to legitimate an assault against Eritrea…but to no avail.
Eritrea’s diplomatic achievements are the fruit of the people’s dedication, hard-work and perseverance. Few countries on earth, living inside and outside of Eritrea, have the number of ambassadors that Eritrea have on foreign lands (i.e. citizen ambassadors). The government’s diplomacy is reinforced by its people. Eritreans in the Diaspora have engaged proactively to advance the diplomatic moves undertaken by the government.

Last month, with the exception of the US, all permanent and non permanent members of the UNSC, including Russia and China, openly objected to the unjust sanctions imposed on Eritrea. In terms of investment, Eritrea continues to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in mining, fishing, construction, tourism, and other rewarding sectors. Eritrea has also developed bilateral and multilateral economic agreements with the European Union, UN, China, Middle East countries, Egypt and many other African countries, Russia, India, Japan, and others. Now, Eritrea is positioned in a better place upon the international stage. The diplomatic course of Eritrea, guided by principle and known for its peaceful and cooperative approach, has cleared the path through which the country can gallop to reach its destination. So Eritrea is out of the cold by its active diplomacy and the perseverance and dedication of its gallant people. President Isaias Afwerki once said that “Black color is black and white will remain white. It’s impossible to change these colors in the name of politics and diplomacy (interview with Eritrea Center for Strategic Studies 2011)”. Likewise, there is no force on Earth that can disrupt the true nature and picture of Eritrea. Eritrea’s idea of diplomacy is showing honorable strength, on the one hand, and negotiable skill on the other. In combination, these work to maintain the national interest and dignity of Eritrea.

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