

Independent Eritrea: 'Threat of Good Example'

"...We must establish good neighborly and peaceful relations with our neighbors and the countries of our region, based on mutual interest and mutual cooperation. Problems related to peace and stability cannot be confined to within our borders. In order to preserve the peace and harmony we acquired after a long struggle, it is essential that we strive for peace and stability at both regional and global levels, notwithstanding our limited capabilities. ... Thus, in Eritrea we must choose the road that ensures social justice and real economic development. ... Our economic development strategy must be based on self-reliance and the full participation of our people. We must develop our own human and natural resources and make them the basis of our country's economic development and should primarily depend and rely on them." The National Charter of Eritrea.

It is to be noted that the EPLF established, during the days of liberation struggle, strategic ties with all Ethiopian nationalities and extended support to all groups. The rapport was meant to bring about good neighborliness and a lasting cooperation partnership between the two nations. Relations the EPLF had set up with popular and political forces of the Sudanese, Somali and a number of Middle East countries helped the newly born Eritrea actively participate in the effort to ensure regional peace and stability no sooner than the country joined the international community as a sovereign state.

After virtually half a century long political and military struggle which the U.S. Government imposed on Eritrea and Ethiopia, peace and harmony the peoples of both countries relished upon the realization of independent and sovereign state of Eritrea was short-lived, thereby vividly proving the miscarriage of justice. Irrespective of the historic betrayals and injustice of Ethiopian rulers and the U.S. Government, not only did the Eritrean people play a leading role in constructive engagement for a promising regional state of affairs, but the Government of Eritrea also granted Ethiopia the permit for free port access to the sea. In light of this fact, Eritrea's constructive engagement engendered the formation of high level joint ministerial commission for multifaceted cooperation partnership.

In order for the conflict-ridden Horn of Africa to transform into a region of development and mutual cooperation, the Government of Eritrea played a vital role in opening out IGAD's limited objectives with the intent of restructuring the Intergovernmental Authority so as to remain bound for coordinating integrated regional development. Cognizant of the fact that the turmoil of a given nation would inevitably affect other nations in the neighborhood, the Government of Eritrea, within the parameters of its resources, made every effort through constructive engagement to resolve internal political problems and conflicts in the Horn region.

Accordingly, in the wake of the demise of the Derg regime during which Ethiopia was on the

brink of balkanization due to the TPLF's divisive policy in the early 1990s, the then provisional Eritrean Government managed to prudently settle the looming crisis through deploying special forces of Eritrea and its leadership. This is in line with its firm policy of ensuring a stable and inclusive Ethiopian nation.

Moreover, at a time when Djibouti was engulfed in political and socio-economic rifts that could have exposed the country to fragmentation, the Eritrean government demonstrated an enabling gesture towards peacefully resolving the problem.

The Government of Eritrea also led a fruitful intermediary role with a view to resolving the precarious trend of war that broke out between the two Yemens. In doing so, the Government managed to avert the impending civil strife by reconciling both parties.

On Somalia, too, the Eritrean Government organized a conference in Asmara so as to encourage Somali nationals to reconstitute a united Somalia devoid of obstructionist foreign intervention. The Asmara conference in which virtually all Somali political and civic societies took part served as a platform for enabling Somali nationals consolidate their endeavors towards tackling internal problems on their own.

Having cast light on grave consequences of internationalizing domestic issues, the Government of Eritrea embarked on constructive engagement for settling the political crisis in the Sudan, thereby promoting peace and political stability as well as equitable allocation of resources and harmonious coexistence among the Sudanese people. Contrary to the so-called megaphone diplomacy, the Eritrean Government, in keeping with its stance of ensuring regional peace, made modest contribution in resolving problems in different parts of Sudan: Darfur, South Sudan, East Sudan and so forth.

Needless to say, Eritrea's conviction in resolving conflicts remains crystal-clear; only respective parties should solely deal with their own problems. Stemming from this standpoint, the country strongly opposes foreign interference and internationalization of domestic matters, while at the same time encouraging peoples in the Horn region to deal with their problems on their own. Thanks to the said principled policy, Eritrea has proven to become the epicenter of reconciliation and mediation amid the war-torn Horn region.

On top of the aforementioned constructive engagement at the regional level, the Government of Eritrea managed to foster remarkable political harmony and national unity inside the country through creating a just and participatory political system—a unique quality rarely found elsewhere in the continent. As a result, a reliable internal peace and stability now prevails in Eritrea, which has enabled the nation to win broad acclaim as being the pioneer in the dark African continent. In the economic sphere too, the country, realizing the grave consequences of dependency on relief aid, managed to rehabilitate the war-ravaged economy in the early seven years of independence on the principle of self-reliance. To this end, it not only embarked on wide-ranging national development endeavors through making optimum use of human and natural resources, but also laid the groundwork for accelerated economic takeoff.

However, Eritrea's independent political path that runs counter to external political and

economic pressure as well as interference was at odds with the crisis-mon-gering hostile quarters, especially the Administration in Washing-ton. Hence, such a new and ex-emplary stance of young Eritrea that relieves from dependency was viewed as an alarming trend lest this might set a proven model for other countries. And it took no time for hegemonic forces to resort to concocting acts of con-spiracy aimed at disrupting Eri-trea's internal peace and stabil-ity. The proxy war of aggression launched by the TPLF regime in May 1998 constitutes one of the major flagrant invasions on the part of U.S. Administration. De- spite the aggression was carried out in the guise of border dispute, its prime motive was to thwart Er- itrea's development drive before the country achieves political and economic emancipation that sets a good example for others. De- spite the dominant forces left no stone unturned to obstruct such modeled political outlook, Eri-trea's principled stance continues to remain unwavering!