

## The Necessity of Aseb Port to Ethiopia

*[Ethiopia was powerful only when it had full access to and control over the Red sea.]*

I am writing this article with heart breaking news that the Eritrean government has leased our Aseb Port out to our strategic enemies who never want Ethiopia to survive as a nation. I want to share you my sincere feeling that we have a national and moral responsibility to pressure the government in power to bring the port back and unlock our country from political and economic insecurity. Aseb Port must be one of the most important strategic national interests of our country alike the politics of Nile water. Ethiopia is now not only paying millions of dollars to import the massive goods and services to support the ongoing development endeavor and feed its nearly hundred million population, but also lives under external threat. Ethiopia had no information when the Eritrean regime leases the port out. It was only after the Eritrean regime had leased the port out to the united Emirates and its allies that the Ethiopian prime minister mocked over Eretria. I thus call up on all political and social forces of our country to equally quest for and exert their maximum pressure on the government in power to bring our natural let back to our country. They must air it in all political (or electoral) debates, social movements and public demonstrations whenever possible.

Port is one of the most important factors of socio-economic development, political security and stability for any country. If we trace human civilization back, it spearheaded from river banks and oceans signifying the importance of water bodies to national development and political security. Majority of the world goods and services transportation held through water bodies. Marine port is also the cheapest modality of all transportation systems. It is also evident that nations which have access to and control over marine port are more secured than

landlocked countries. Therefore, access to and control over marine ports is the last resort to survive. If we all agreed up on the imperative necessity of a marine port for socio-economic development and security of our country alike for other countries, we must look for all opportunities to return our traditional ports and unlock our country. Ethiopian economy is expected to steadily boom in the next decades. The economy of the country will be beyond the capacity of one port and unthinkable to import and export it through rented ports. It is, therefore, imperative to look for the way we can return our traditional ports.

We all well know that Eritrea was part and parcel of Ethiopia since human history until 1990s. There has not been an Eritrean identity or history prior 1990s. Indeed, the Eritrean people do have the same psychological makeup, language, history and cultural values and norms with Ethiopian people. No people in the world resemble Ethiopians as Eritrean people do. On the other hand, the consecutive feudal and autocratic Ethiopian regimes oppressed the people alike all Ethiopians though there was no special oppression and mistreatment targeted to the people of Eritrea. Anyways, unable to withstand the oppressive and exploitation of the people by the local and central feudal and the military regime, the Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF) stood against to and instigated an armed struggle on the regimes in which uncountable lives have lost from both sides. However, the quest for and struggle of EPLF was not to secede Eritrea from Ethiopia; the struggle was rather aimed at bringing about ethno-linguistic equality among nations and nationalities, democracy and justice. In the meantime, however, the dominance of EPLF ethno-centrists accompanied by the secret mission of the Arab-league nations and the strategic need of the west to void Ethiopia from its control over the Red Sea and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front support to and coordination with EPLF to overthrow the military junta Mengistu`s regime

changed the motto and slogan of Eritrean freedom fighters (ethno-linguistic equality among nations and nationalities, democracy and justice) to referendum fighters.

Ethiopia has a historical right over the Aseb Port. Persuasively, the port is our natural outlet. No historical and legitimate reason that extradites the ownership of the port to Eritrea. The referendum process of Eritrean from Ethiopia per se was illegal. There was no legitimate government that represents all Ethiopians during the referendum. The Ethiopian people were also not consulted over the referendum process which left them landlocked in history. The referendum was an ignorant and systematic division of twins into two antagonistic forces which should not have done. One can equate it with a systemic division of the same people (like dividing the people of Oromo, Amhara or Tigray) into two. Yet, if the referendum was in the best interest of Eritreans, let it be but the port is our natural gate. Any one (or family) wherever his home is located has a legal right to get access to main road let alone a populous nation which has historical, legal and moral right to gate. Have you ever think a complex house without a single outlet while small huts do have many gates. Have you ever think the struggle of our ancestors with the west and Arab colonial powers to control the Red Sea in history. Have you ever read the writings of Yohannes IV to Great Britain requesting for assistance to protect the strategic sea from the invasion of the colonial powers; what about the victory of Minilik in Adwa and the powerful history of Axumite kingdom, and many more. Whether one takes the historical ownership, natural and international law, Ethiopia deserves the port. When Yohannes IV lost control over the strategic Red Sea, in one of his letter to King Victoria to request for assistance, said that the coming committed Ethiopian generations will bring our inherited territory (rist just to say the Red Sea) back to Ethiopia and the country will once control the Red Sea (see

Dr. Yakob book). Of course, the current antagonistic Ethiopian political powers and social forces focus on and interest to seize government power might not enable the people to think and struggle over the overwhelmingly ultimate interest of the country. At the time all political parties and social forces have similar stance about our country`s national interest, it will be easy to bring the port back.

Ethiopia and Ethiopians will never sleep for a while without bringing the port of Aseb back to our possession. Listen the traditional songs about Nile, review the bulk of literatures Ethiopians have written about Nile, look the diplomatic efforts made to ensure Ethiopia`s right to use the Nile water. Nobody has thought Ethiopia could construct such huge power plant in the Nile basin at this time. But because hydropower plant development in the basin is the national interest of the country, Ethiopians changed the long lasted commendable effort of all Ethiopians to materialize their dream to reality. After many generations struggle over Nile, Ethiopia has managed to construct the greatest dam in Africa in the basin. This is the result of the cumulative effort of many generations. In the same way, there is no doubt that the greatest country which might have the second most beautiful history in the world next to Great Britain will never remain landlocked country. Ethiopia is the land of heroes who never compromised their national interest in history.

The issue of the port of Aseb is not a dead end. It is the greatest assignment undone set aside to the current generation to bring it back once and forever. The importance of the Port of Aseb to Ethiopia is as much greater as the importance of the Great Renaissance Dam construction in the Nile basin. Like what we have been doing in Nile, nearly hundred million Ethiopians will soon sing the same song. Indeed, the government in power has the national and moral responsibility to change its position about the Port of Aseb and facilitate bringing it back to

Ethiopia without the port our future is uncertain. The unity and unreserved effort of all artists and academia to song and write about the port is equally important. Ethiopia must use all possible strategic instruments like international diplomacy and law, local treaties and lastly but not least a military force whenever necessary to back the port in order to unlock the country from unsecured political instance and slash poverty through free importation of the heavy goods and commodities that support nearly hundred million mouths. Let`s unite for our national interest!!!

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