

A Diplomatic Military to be Proud of

The Defence force that maintained soft power



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Currently the Ethiopian Defence force is marking its third national defence day, Every year, we have been examining how far the Ethiopian military has advanced not only in terms of Hard power (Military Capacity) but also in terms of Soft power (peace keeping and development activities) and demonstrated the breathtaking achievements of our military in both cases.

To begin with, Ethiopia is the only African country that defeated the colonizing European power and remained un-colonized. Its people paid great sacrifices to defend their territorial integrity and national independence. The victory of Adwa over Italy in 1896 became a slogan of freedom and a cause of pride for the colonized nations of Africa and other oppressed people of the world.

Subsequently, Ethiopia's commitment towards the decolonization of other African countries led many Africans to see Ethiopia as their second home. It also inspired several African countries to use variants of the tri-colours (Green, Yellow and Red) of Ethiopian flag in their own flags after independence.

Ethiopia is one of the few African countries which were the founding members of the United Nations. Since then, its concern for the prevalence of global peace has steadily grown and become more practical. The country has also played a

pivotal role in establishing the former Organization of African Unity (OAU) subsequently transformed to the African Union (AU), and the peace and Security Council of the Union.

The Foreign Policy of FDRE has clearly underlined Ethiopia's commitment to safeguard national peace and security in today's globalized world.

Thus the need to coordinate with others for common interest is emphasized in the Foreign Policy's Document.

'Working to have our interest and security protected in the world of globalization does not mean that we work alone. For instance, negotiations to improve condition demand common action by developing countries. We need to coordinate with others to derive maximum benefit from globalization.' page 22

Within the framework of globalization, Ethiopia is working for sustainable development by defending its national interest, pride and prestige. The need for coordination, peace and stability is the central point in any such policy.

Africa has been the scene of many conflicts requiring the mediation of third parties through negotiation and dialogue or through dispatching peace keeping forces. Obviously, Ethiopia has been participating in peacekeeping missions since early 1950s not only within region but also beyond African boundaries.

In 1951, following an appeal by South Korea, for military assistance, to the UN, Ethiopia, as a founding member, which had ratified the collective security agreement, accepted the request of the UN for sending peacekeeping force composed of officers and soldiers trained in modern warfare.



Kagnew Battalion in South Korea

The force, known as 'Kagnev Battalion', discharged its duties gallantly and efficiently from April 12, 1951 up to 1955. At this occasion Ethiopia was the only non-NATO state to contribute to the contingent of UN forces in South Korea - An African Pride!!



Ethiopian soldiers in the Korean War, 1951

Mission in Africa - Ethiopia's second military contribution to the UN came with its support for the peacekeeping mission and humanitarian operations in Congo (1960-64). This mission also assisted in political transition, fostered the prevalence of rule of law and disarming the militias in the country. The deployment of this peacekeeping mission was very successful in achieving its intended objectives in restoring peace and security in Congo.

The Rwandan genocide was one of the most terrible examples of civil war and conflict in the history of modern Africa. As a third assignment, Ethiopia was very quick to respond to the UN call for contributing troops for the peacekeeping and humanitarian operation in Rwanda following the genocide. After the French Army completed its mission, as its third mission for peace, Ethiopia deployed two battalions called, the 'Wegagen and Guna' Battalions to the United Nation's Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR).

Fourth Mission for peace - When the Conflict Prevention and Management Body of the UN, and later on the AU Summit, resolved to deploy an African peacekeeping force to Burundi, Ethiopia was again the first to accept the call in

February 2003. To help stabilize the political and socio-economic situation in Burundi, and deployed one infantry battalion of 850 personnel.

Similarly Ethiopia was among the first countries to respond to the UN call to provide an intervention force to help end the civil war in Liberia, a war which had led to massive civilian deaths and displacement. Ethiopia was one of the few countries to give immediate response. On arrival at Monrovia Airport, for its fifth mission, the Ethiopian troops were met with cordial welcome of the city's residents, with crowds chanting and dancing along the main roads, accompanying the Ethiopian forces.

That is, in fact, the kind of acceptance Ethiopian peacekeeping forces have had every where they went underlining the consent of Africans for such good-will missions, and that is practically a diplomatic representation of its mother land. Thus the troops deployed to Liberia actively engaged in disarming faction groups and participated in development and humanitarian activities .Indeed, the army played a key role in the process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation.

The six mission was in Darfur, the operation of the Ethiopian troops since January 2009 was a paramount exposure in the history of Ethiopian military.



Ethiopian Peace keeping Mission in Abiye

The conflict in Abyei was the concern of the international community. The need for peacekeeping mission in this case has also got a positive response from Ethiopia. The exceptional in the case of Abyei was, Ethiopia was the only

country that has got the consent of both The North and South Sudan and deployed its peace keeping force in August in 2011. It is because of apparent Diplomatic nature of its previous activities in creating a win-win approach, neutrality to safeguarding civilians and assisting humanitarian operations between the conflicting parties.

The seventh Mission, sympathy for Somali- In November 2013, the UN Security Council Resolution 2124 approved the expansion of the authorized AMISOM force limit by a further 4000 troops bringing the number of AMISOM peacekeepers in Somalia to over 22, 126. In response to the expansion, Ethiopia included in AMISOM on 22 January 2014. Wearing African Union helmet and armbands, the troops formally joined AMISOM on Monday 17th February in a fascinating ceremony held at the Ethiopian base camp at Belet Weyne.



Ethiopian Defence force in Somalia

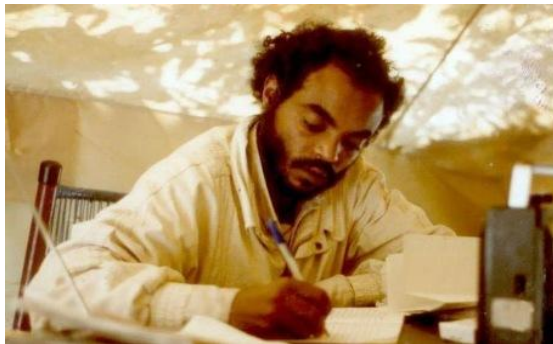
The day has marked a double joy for the farmers of Baidoa to accomplish their ploughing as soon as possible after the anticipated rain fall they had. More than its successful mission of peace building in Somalia, as usual, the Ethiopian forces volunteered to help them with the tedious work of cultivating maize, sorghum and sesame seeds.

In all these operations, the Ethiopian forces have demonstrated impressive discipline and capacity to carry out its missions even under the harshest

conditions. The Ethiopian defence force has always been successful in its peacekeeping missions because of its training which always bases the fundamental principles of the country's foreign policy.

Therefore; the track record of our Ethiopian defence force military in peace keeping should be appreciated and valued as African Pride. The country should continue to work for the well being of the sub-region, and work to create a peaceful Africa to facilitate the realization of African integration and Unity in maintaining its unflinching commitment to global peace.

Moreover, as I have mention in the very binging of this article, the modern and developmental nature of the military is pretty unique, and It is amazing to see its support for the Grand National Projects of the Growth and Transformation Plan of the nation. The Military is rebuilt from the scratch by EPDRF, and it obvious that the late PM Meles Zenawi is the father of the Ethiopian Modern Military Doctrine.



The Late PM Meles Zenawi



Ethiopian Defence force

Many Thanks to him-not only to Ethiopia; he was a committed spokes person of Mother Africa as a whole.

Currently the Ethiopian Defence Force is celebrating its National day Such celebration of national day should be encouraged, appreciated and should be a platform to share its vital experience to the rest of Africans. **Happy Defence Force Day!!**