

When the Ethio-Eritrean war ended with the eviction of Shaebia from the Ethiopian territories, a lot of us thought mostly driven by anger and emotions that the war ended prematurely and thought that Shaebia was given a chance to recover, regroup and stand on its feet again. But in hindsight, it was a very smart decision to leave Shaebia in paralysis and disarray, except for the defective Algiers' agreement that followed afterwards. Most of all it has helped the Eritrean people to do a lot of soul-searching for the last 14 to 15 years. The majority of Eritreans inside and abroad have been given time to think and finally figure out that their problem is not in Badme, but in Asmara. This new Eritrean mind-set would never have been possible to come-by if the Ethiopian army marched all the way to Asmara and dismantled Shaebia then. It probably would have been misunderstood by some as an attempt to reverse the referendum as well. The Mesfin Hagos type of pseudo-opposition aside, the new mind-set is indicative of a potential post-Shaebia Eritrean government which could be a solid ally for peace in the horn to say the least. So, again it was a good decision after all, that Shaebia was given enough time to deteriorate and be allowed to rot painfully.

That said, for all the provocations and terror that is being and has been inflicted by Shaebia on our people, there should have been a measured response to reciprocate their actions and should not have gone unpunished. *"For every action there's an equal and opposite reaction"*... This is not Newton's Third Law, it is simple common sense.

Lately, after PM Meles and the Ministry of Foreign affairs made comments regarding a policy change towards the Eritrean government and Eritrea, HGDEF's response aside, we have been hearing inconsistent criticisms from some of the so-called Ethiopian oppositions. Siye Abraha's response on VOA was one of them. The same guy who has been telling us for years that he is anti-Shaebia more than anybody else is now criticizing the PM for his comments regarding a policy change towards Eritrea. He seems to think and hopes that there's a wild fire on its way from North Africa that could engulf Ethiopia as well and said that this recent policy change is to extinguish that fire. He says, if not then, why now? And we say better late than Never!! This clearly implies that he doesn't care about the people of Adyabo or Zelambesa as long as he's not in power. Besides, the government has done a superb job to alienate Shaebia on the diplomatic front and the likelihood of Ethiopia's actions to protect its citizens being misunderstood internationally is lower than ever.

Then there is the Gnbot-7 type of opposition, the Ethiopian delegates of Shaebia, who have been badly disturbed by the latest news from the Ethiopian government regarding a policy change which could possibly result in a regime change in Asmara. These are the same opposition, who pray for an Asteroid to hit Ethiopia. If they see a fire burning anywhere in the world, they wish it was in the middle of Merkato. When they hear about an earthquake in Japan, regardless of the geological formation in the earth's crust, they think and hope the next one is in Ethiopia, with an epicenter in Arat Kilo and hope that it's strong enough to destroy as far as Gilgel Gibe, Tana Beles and Tekeze. Applying the same insane logic, they still hope and pray for the North African wave of public uprising to be en-route from Cairo to Addis. They apparently seem to forget that

the foundation of the Ethiopian government is much deeper than the Menelik Palace. They need to be reminded that it's all the way from Jijiga to Mekelle, but they just don't get it!! They have been accusing the EPRDF of making the country land-locked, but they would be the first ones to line up to protest against Ethiopia along the corridors of DC and Brussels, if the Ethiopian government was to declare war tomorrow to reclaim Assab. The reason for my comment about the opposition was to show how inconsistent and detached from reality they are, otherwise there's no need to waste time talking about them because they are irrelevant in Ethiopian politics today.

What we heard from PM Meles regarding a policy change towards Eritrea is that the government is not going to be on the receiving end of Shaebia's terrorist actions anymore and that the political posture has changed in dealing with Shaebia's dream and attempt to destabilize Ethiopia. The tone is more of self defense rather than what most people are speculating. That I think is good enough for the people of Adyabo and Zelambesa. If, as a result of self defense, Shaebia crumbles and the "monkey" falls off the tree because it doesn't have a firm grip on the branches anymore, then so be it !! It will be good news in the neighborhood.

When the government has all its resources geared towards implementing the five-year Growth and Transformation Plan and the people have high hopes of its success, war is the last thing the Ethiopian people want to see.

Among the prospective projects of the Ethiopian Road Authority that was advertised for bidding is the one that goes along the border from *Semema – Medebay* to *Gerhusrnay*. Implementing such projects without a major security improvement in the border areas is going to be nearly impossible. There are four years left to implement the five year GTP...20% of the time is gone and our people in the border areas deserve peace and security to be part of the development the rest of the country is enjoying.

Thanks to the Ethiopian Intelligence and the eyes and ears of the public, most of Shaebia's terrorist plots in the capital have been foiled so far and Shaebia's dream of turning Addis into Baghdad has just remained being a recurring dream. But Shaebia has managed to create a Baghdad style atmosphere in the border areas; in Adi Daero, in the vicinity of Sheraro, and Zelambesa to mention a few. The people in these areas have the right to demand that the government takes an action to secure peace and security for them to be able to get on with their daily lives like anywhere else and the government has the responsibility of defending its citizens... PERIOD!!! And that I think is not too much to ask.

Best wishes to the Ethiopian People and success to the GTP !!!

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