

WUHIDET Incubated Kestedemena's -Attempted Coup De-tat

BACKGROUND

Here is a critical analysis of the current Kinijit political crisis. It is based on a very critical cumulative observation of long duration. The sub-topics included in this analysis are:

- 1) Strategy of Kestedemena,
- 2) coup de-tat attempt by Kestedemena,
- 3) concrete indicators of the attempt,
- 4) Berhanu Nega's role inside Kinijit, and
- 5) the solution. So, here we go. Read it with patience and tolerance.

The root cause of this unfortunate political crisis inside Kinijit is the formation of this unneeded WUHIDET. For one thing, it brought together incompatible individuals, a precursor for decomposition through time, and ultimately for political disaster. Secondly, it encouraged collective leadership, on which Kestedemena capitalized effectively and efficiently, to come to the level of the attempted take over of Kinijit. I think, Berhanu Nega had this ultimate take over hidden in the back of his mind. He had consistently projected himself as an ultimate leader whenever he gets the chance. Even though he was the manager of the past election of May 15, 2005, he is the one who is doing the PR to come forward and call press audience, for example, and , or, who goes to meet Meles or visit United States Embassy. Once Meles ordered for Berhanu Nega and Beyene Petros to come and talk to him during the first negotiation attempt immediately after the end of election. I had an article vehemently against that negotiation.

Individuals, particularly the active ones, from Kestedemena, who are at the helm of power-snatching struggle now, were not tested in a practical, that is, hands-on, day-to-day activities, as was Hailu Shawel. Some of these individuals wined and dined, at least, if not with Meles, with the cronies of Meles Zenawi, before they formed Kestedemena and later Kinijit. This deep rooted close relationship, particularly with those at the leadership position does influence the behavior, the commitment, and the political steps to be taken by those who formed Kestedemena. Individuals who have had this type of confidential relationship appeared to play the leading role in Kestedemena. Otherwise, why would Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, one of the founders, perhaps who gave credence to it, to exit Kestedemena? Please note this very telling argument. Kestedemena's political struggle cannot be traced to any practical political activities that lead to the outcome of May 15, 2005 election, which clearly indicates its lack of mass base.

Kestedemena, realizing this lack of mass base in Ethiopia, even in Addis Ababa, it looked for help outside Ethiopia, particularly among the younger generations. The main function of Kinijit International, lead by Andargachew Tsige and Berhanu Mewa, was to systematically and effectively build this needed mass base, particularly in the United States of America. This was done under the cover of Kinijit. How this mass base would be converted in to mass base in the field, in Ethiopia, where the struggle is needed is

beyond me. In my opinion, the concern for kinijit and its activities for the whole body ended when Hailu Shawel and the other concerned leaders went to jail. In my article of May 2007 (Line up behind KIC and Make it Effective), I have discussed this same issue in detail.

STRATEGY OF KESTEDEMENA

I argue that, what encouraged the formation of Kestedemena as a political party was the fundamental disagreement, which I would not go into detail now, between EDP and AEUP on one hand, and the rest of HIBRET on the other, and its unfortunate breaking apart. These smart Kestedemena intellectuals jumped on this opportune situation to fulfil its objectives. It participated in the formation of Kinijit and later pushed for the formation of WUHIDET. Otherwise, without WUHIDET Kestedemena would have been irrelevant. WUHIDET became the instrument for those smart Kestedemena intellectuals to stick itself on an already developed big tree, like a parasite does, and take over Kinijit. In my opinion they took over Kinijit before the imprisonment took place. What took place in the month of September 2007, the attempted coup de-tat, was not a spontaneous act on the part of Berhanu Nega's group. Therefore, what we are witnessing now is the hatching out of what was incubated in the womb of WUHIDET for over two years. It is very important to note that, at the time Kestedemena joined the political activities, the people of Ethiopia were already organized and fully prepared, a) by AEUP from north to south, and, from east to west, and b) by EDP mainly in the north, to participate in the election of May 15, 2005. So, where do you fit this shameless parasite Kestedemena that is trying to topple Hailu Shawel?

Hailu Shawel, with the mass force, since the overwhelming majority of Kinijit is AEUP, should have decisively positioned himself to lead Kinijit with full control, instead of Berhanu Nega. In fact, in the first place, with the mass force he has, he should have not accepted the marriage, WUHIDET, between his organization and Kestedemena literally without base. However, once it happened, the guideline as to how Kinijit ought to be run should have come from him. Why, because, he has a formidable force behind him, to have an upper hand on any political negotiation. If I were him I would have done just that. He made a very poor political calculation. Now he is paying for it. However, it does not mean it is too late. He still has the upper hand that he can fully and forcefully utilize to a successful outcome, an outcome that benefit's the Ethiopian society. This is the chance to decide, now, without taking time, whether he is going to take charge or not.

THE COUP DE-TAT ATTEMPT BY KESTEDEMENA

This is the second coup de-tat. The first one was done by Meles Zenawi. It was successful. He was able to jail all the leadership and all active members of Kinijit. He successfully decimated the struggle down to the level where the revival would take a long time or if possible never. That is what we are witnessing now, today. The second one is being tried now. Its leader is Berhanu Nega, a good old and close friend of Meles Zenawi. Read carefully, Berhanu Nega's testimony in Congress. It was Berhanu Nega's resume. He presented himself as the alternative leader. This conspiracy to snatch power

was not an act initiated at the spur of the moment. It is part and parcel of the design, meticulously charted out by certain individuals that included Berhanu Nega, at the inception of Kestemedena. How else could this intellectual group become leaders and hold the reign in the absence of mass base? It would have been extremely hard for them, first to establish themselves and then build their mass base, except, perhaps in Addis Ababa. So, there only chance was to take over the leadership and the already built mass by doing what they are exactly doing now, that is, to topple Hailu Shawel. Straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Where else can it try to isolate Hailu Shawel, the President of Kinijit, and take over, except in the United States of America, particularly in and around Washington DC., where it has its strong base, thanks to Andargachew Tsige and Berhanu Mewa. These individuals, Berhanu Nega's group, came running to Washington DC, leaving behind Hailu Shawel who had already obtained travel document, for the take off. The take off ceremony, the DC town hall meeting, has to take place in his absence. Notice that, up to now, they are moving separately. That is, Hailu Shawel, the President of Kinijit one way, and the Berhanu Nega group another way. A very calculated move. To attack, as they did in their speeches, if he were there they would have not done it, and isolate him, they have to disassociate themselves from him. Every and each move they have been taking so far attests to this fact.

CONCRETE INDICATORS OF THE ATTEMPT

1. An open conspiracy to get-rid of Hailu Shawel came out openly in the jail, when an appeal to retire was forwarded to reach him. Ato Bedru Adem, who was approached to take the message, is the source of this an extremely insensitive, unethical move made, no doubt by Berhanu Nega and his group. This is when the conspiracy began to be done openly.
2. Ignoring the arrival of Hailu Shawel, the President of Kinijit, who was bearing the burden of liberating the people of Ethiopia with them, who was in jail with them, who was sick and on wheel chair, when he came to the United States of America. Even the coordinating committee, namely, Prof. Alemayehu, Tamagn and Dr. Solomon did not show up to greet him as officials. Is it a coincident? Absolutely not. It was a coordinated disgraceful effort to isolate Hailu Shawel.
3. The appeal made by Birtukan Mideksa on radio from Boston is one of the indicators. This was the most divisive and calculated move made by Berhanu Nega and his group to further isolate Hailu Shawel. The calculation was, that, the group knows that Hailu Shawel will not heed the appeal made, hence to put the ball on Hailu Shawel's court, so to speak, and let the community question and judge his sincerity. A talking point, is Hailu Shawel sincere, was extracted from this bate. A very cheap but very divisive political move.
4. With the full knowledge of Hailu Shawel's coming to Washington, DC, the Berhanu Nega group went ahead to see the Representatives in Congress. It was a deliberately

made move to show the Congress people that, at least in Kestedemena's opinion, Hailu Shwel is no more effective and he is becoming irrelevant. This is another surreptitious move by Berhanu Nega's group to isolate Hailu Shawel

5. In their Washington DC delivered speech, they alluded to Hailu Shawl as a dictator and an extremist. Berhanu Nega, who delivered over an hour's speech, know very well that, that was the best arena to attack Hailu Shawel and isolate him. Hailu Shawel was not there and the conference hall was full. So, it was the best opportunity to announce its take off, for the take over. To leave him behind, and not to receive him in the airport is to clear the road to this opportune forum. A very divisive calculation.

6. The press release of Meskerem 11, 2005, that included some resolutions was the other indicator. The resolutions itemized by Berhanu Nega's group, that excluded the President of Kinijit, explained the new development of organizational structure and guidelines for support groups. Taking charge, in the absence of the President of the organization while he is still here, is a very calculated move to separate him from the community. Implying the irrelevancy of Hailu Shawel in the opinion of this group.

7. Birtukan Mideksa's unexpected visit of Hailu Shawel is another indicator of the attempt. After the meeting, between Berhanu Nega's group and Hailu Shawel was agreed upon to be on Friday, not Thursday, Birtukan Mideksa unexpectedly dropped by Hailu Shawel on Thursday. To make the long-story-short, this unexpected visit indicates two things. The first one was for propaganda purposes. That is, wherever they go to present their hidden agenda, they would tell the audience that they have visited Hailu Shawel. It is a deliberate calculation to ward off questions such as why they did not come with Hailu Shawel. The second one was, let us face it; they do not want to talk issues with Hailu Shawel. If they did their coup de-tat would fail. Folks, if Berhanu Nega's group wanted to talk with Hailu Shawel and settle the confusion that is suffocating the Ethiopian community outside Ethiopia, they could have done it long time ago. Their intentions would be contradicted with this kind of move. Therefore they have to avoid it as much as possible. Berhanu Nega's group calculation was, if Hailu Shawel is isolated, in the manner as shown from 1 to 7, his removal or forcing him to retire and remove himself, as they tried while they were in jail, would be validated. If he were removed who is in line to succeed him? Of course Berhanu Nega. The right or the left hand man of Meles Zenawi.

BERHANU NEGA'S ROLE INSIDE KINIJIT

In my opinion, Berhanu Nega is a valuable instrument of Meles Zenawi. Their friendly relationship goes back a long time. I suspect, one of the factors that impacted the release of those in jail is the presence of Berhanu Nega amongst them. Meles did not want to hurt his instrument. In fact, he will be of great help from out side, than in inside jail. One of his assignments can be easily imagined to be to get rid Hailu Shawel, the nationalist, the independent, the aggressive, the non submissive individual who does not fear Meles Zenawi. He was and is the contender of Meles Zenawi. Here is the crux of the matter. If Berhanu Nega succeeds in the coup de-tat, obviously he is going to be the leader, Kinijit

would turn into a paper tiger that would not take any aggressive action against the political and economic interest of Meles Zenawi. Secondly, Kinijit will be, Berhanu Nega at its helm, a reliable implementer of Meles's constitution, particularly Article 39.

Did you notice the map on his book cover? It is Meles's map of Ethiopia. It is not the map handed down to the existing generations by our for-fathers. No one, in the opposition forces have ever used the map Berhanu Nega used, by extension Kestedemena. Flip a couple of pages into his book, you will find a recognition made for the 80 year old gentleman accused of aiding his own son as a member of OLF. Here, it is not, on the part of Berhanu Nega, to be of concern for principle. No. it is to relay a pretensions message for OLF. The mother of all opportunism. Go figure, who this guy is. Please consider the following indicators with regard to protecting Meles Zenawi's interest by Berhanu Nega.

1. The very fact that this guy laid-back and enjoyed the mess he initiated, the chaos and the confusion he created among result thirsty Ethiopian community around the world, with absolutely no input on his part to try to remedy the mess created, is, a concrete evidence in pursuing his long established mission, that is, the service of Meles Zenawi.

2. The people of Ethiopia came out and literally voted out Meles Zenawi and his regime in the election of May 15, 2005. Meles Zenawi, knowing that the opposition forces that contested in the election have no gut to challenge him, by the way that was exactly what happened, he promptly and categorically denied that his party has not lost the election, but won. Wherever and whenever kinijit addressed the issue to any of its member-gatherings, the response, or better to call it the demand Kinijit got from its members was never to surrender what it won, and never to submit to Meles's claim. The society was on its toes, determined to get back its rights. Here is the role played by Berhanu Nega, in this regard. When Berhanu Nega addressed the public meetings, he deliberately squashed the determined and the combative spirit, and the high moral of those listening to him by painting a grim picture, that is, what people will face, if people arose to challenge Meles Zenawi. He used struggle emasculating terms such as, there is going to be killings, torturing and imprisonment. This is a very subtle way of protecting the interest of Meles Zenawi. Speaking of the regime as anti-democracy, above the law, a dictator, bla, bla, are empty cover-ups. Don't be fooled when he utters these terms.

3. When Hailu Shawel declared that Kinijit will not join the parliament, he called the press and told them that, what Hailu Shawel stated does not represent Kinijit. The infamous, as far as I am concerned, 8 point preconditions to enter parliament came to the picture latter. Berhanu Nega, with no official status to do so, he was simply an election manager, came out and did two revealing things. One, he openly contradicted the President of the organization, Hailu Shawel, which is absolutely against any organizational discipline, or, against organizational common sense, and two, he openly fulfilled the service of his master Meles Zenawi.

4. When a couple of the delegates in his group came out and openly rejected the most fought for Bill, HR 2003, Berhanu Nega did not refute the statement of these two

individuals. Not only that, when he was presenting his prepared statement in front of Rep. Donald Payne (D) and Rep. Christopher Smith (R) he did not mention HR2003, nor did he thank these two dedicated human beings, who are still fighting, to the hilt, for the success of this Bill. To what end. To the success of Ethiopian people. What does that tell you. Berhanu Nega very well knows, that the intensity of Meles Zenawi's fight and still fighting, to suppress this Bill. Hailu Shawel supported the Bill. In fact, I have heard that his involvement did impact its positive outcome.

5. During his presentation in Congress, he never brought out the economic misery of the people of Ethiopia. But he declared himself, in front of the Committee, that he is an economist, and, in fact, the chairman of an economic association. He should have included in his presentation, the unreachable prices of grain (sorghum, corn, barley, teff, etc.), beef, dairy products, poultry and poultry products, and other essential food commodities such as salt, pepper, cooking oil, kerosene, etc. He should have mentioned the situation of house rent, electricity, telephone, water, etc. He should have also mentioned the abject situation of the inflation and unemployment. One expects from an economist, particularly who claims to be in the opposition camp against Meles Zenawi, to talk about these concrete realities in Ethiopia, well quantified. He did not dare mention these never-ending miseries because he would be exposing Meles Zenawi. The fact of the matter is he did not feel it, because he was not affected.

6. When Birtukan Medeksa lied in Congress during questioning he did not try or wanted to correct her. When she was asked about the size of political prisoners in Ethiopia, her answer was 100. The very fact of openly stating that there are only 100 political prisoners in Ethiopia indicates that, a) she is never, before she became the judge, or, during her judgeship, or, after joining Kestedemena, in sink with the political and economic misery of Ethiopian people. No wonder she was elected to be a judge of Meles's court. b) The credibility and sincerity of whatever she uttered in front of the Sub Committee, would be questioned by those well informed Honorable listeners of her witness. c) In my opinion, Birtukan Medeksa is turning, if not already, an instrument of Meles Zenawi. If not independently through Berhanu Nega. It appears she is behaving like a wound up robot.

7. Berhanu Nega suggested in his presentation to the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, to put pressure on Meles Zenawi to negotiate with the opposition political forces. Hailu Shawel unequivocally have said there will not be negotiation. These two individuals cannot make a viable team together. How would one, in good conscious, negotiate with the dedicated enemy of Ethiopia and Ethiopian people, who:

- 1) denied the election result and put the Government Elect to jail,
- 2) who massacred innocent students for peacefully protesting the election out come,
- 3) while his own political allies still suffering in jail, which is a sellout, and, above all,
- 4) who divided Ethiopia along ethnic and language regions, to destabilize the unity of Ethiopian people. What is needed is his removal by any means and at any cost, not negotiation. These seven points, if not more, would clearly show that Berhanu Nega,

hence Kestedemena, is the instrument of Meles Zenawi inside Kinijit. Let us not fool ourselves..

THE SOLUTION

1. Background

At the time, the failure on the part of the major political organizations, namely, EDP and AEUP, was, not to look very critically, into what WUHIDET can do, and Hibret cannot do. Here, Hibret is referring to Kinijit as an umbrella organization. That is, member parties with an absolute independence. The May 15, 2005 election has unquestionably shown what a determined and strategically organized Hibret can do. WUHIDET did not play any significant role in the process up to election and its ultimate result. But, unfortunately, as we can see it very clearly now, it is playing a very destructive role. It is undeniable fact that the result of May 15, 2005, was the effort of independent activities of EDP and AEUP. For example, the labels EDP/CUD and AEUP/CUD attests to this concrete fact on the ground. Can one see Kestedemena anywhere in the process that lead to May 15, 2005 election? Absolutely not. Here are at least, three major points why WUHIDET should be dismantled, or abandoned. a) WUHIDET is being used as an instrument of Meles. The Ethiopian people did not benefit from it from the very beginning. So, why keep it? b) WUHIDET established, in a very subtle manner, collective leadership. This collective leadership was systematically exploited by Berhanu Nega and his likes to undermine the overall interests and aspirations of the people of Ethiopia. So, why keep it? c) WUHIDET, unquestionably, emasculated Hailu Shawel and his organization, AEUP. It is very important for Meles Zenawi that his contender, Hailu Shawel, the President of Kinijit, if possible to be removed, or weakened. That was why an appeal for his retirement was conspired inside the jail. It is absolutely unbelievable. These people would have danced, had they had the chance to see his dead body being taken away from the jail for burial. So, why keep it?

2. Specific Solution

The best solution is to remove Kestedemena from Kinijit, hence Berhanu Nega. Period. With what we have concretely witnessed now, to let Kestedemena stay in Kinijit is directly or indirectly sabotaging ones own struggle. So get rid of Kestedemena from the alliance. Of course it requires gutsy and bold decision. Hailu Shawel can and should do it single handedly. There is nothing to lose on his part, if he did so. Sentimentalism has no place in political struggle. In my opinion, it is sentimentalism that is killing the opposition forces. The other alternative is to let each organization go its own way. Use Kinijit, provided Kinijit would be reinstated and legalized, as an umbrella organization. Construct a constitution with detailed and specific guidelines for specialized activities. Make it sabotage proof, as much as possible. Develop an organizational structure, a) where the chairmanship is handled in rotation, b) where there is a permanent secretary, possibly with an assistant secretary, c) with permanent treasurer, with a built in frequent auditing mechanism. Develop memorandum of understanding where each member of the

umbrella organization contributes money in the form of dues based on the membership size.

The main functions of this umbrella organization are: a) to organize demonstrations and civil disobediences, b) coordinate elections, exactly as it was done in May of 2005 election, and c) coordinate resistance in support of mistreatment of any form of, or attacked, member organizations by the regime. This aspect of the function is an extremely important matter to be noted. Folks, in my humble opinion, if we wanted for the struggle to revive and be effective, it would be very critical for each political organization to move on separately, but, come together when it is needed, as I humbly suggested above. After what we have objectively witnessed the very deep rooted disagreement, coated with concealed hatred, it is really foolishness to dream of unity in the manner we wish to exist. That is, relatively smooth, functional and effective. I always had very hard time to swallow that a party cannot win in Ethiopia. The mere fact that we absolutely believe in this kind of crippling rationalization, which is unnatural, we have lead the opposition parties not to believe in themselves any more. They always talk about unity or Hibret, and yet every time the unity is formed it comes out ineffective and useless. Independent political organization to win power was very well demonstrated by EDP and AEUP. Please note what I suggested above. Unity has lost its grace and being abused, in the hands of the Ethiopian opposition forces. Unity, instead of strength provider, has become a cover for weakness. In the kind of unity that we have, the society would be in a position where it cannot specifically pinpoint accountability. So, please stop pushing for this mystified unity. Because, in my opinion, it is stifling independent actions. And, add to this sentimentalism, one can imagine where it goes. Mankelklot

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