

SEP 21-10

A New Paradigm for an armed struggle in Ethiopia and Eritrea

Three years ago in 2007 just as the then CUD leaders were released from prison and before the formation of the Ginbot7 party, I wrote an article entitled **Strategy for the Ethiopian Opposition Camp**. In that article I proposed the way forward in terms of the viable option in the armed struggle as the peaceful way of taking power has been proved not possible in the 2005 elections. Currently following the articles by 'Tiikur Chaka', we are again asking how we could conduct an effective armed struggle to topple Woyane without being manipulated by Shabia. I felt some of the points I wrote then is also relevant now with some additional points that take current issues into consideration. What follows is my humble proposal.

As we all know much of the geopolitical situation in our neighboring countries may not be that helpful at the moment as far as conducting an insurgency or armed struggle is concerned. In my view, Kenya and Djibouti are out of the question. The northern part of Sudan which is led by Albeshir in Khartoum is simply out of the question though ways of exploiting the long boarder with Sudan may be one option keeping in mind the threat from the Sudanese government. However **South Sudan** at the moment could be a golden opportunity. I will come to it later. Somalia is a sensitive place at the moment and any attempt to utilize the condition there will easily categorize one in the US nightmare of the so called 'war on terror'. The opposition forces of Ethiopia should not afford to be in conflicting positions with the US as far as this issue of "war on terror" is concerned. The upper autonomous Somalia or Somaliland is not A friendly place also as they have proved to be partisans of the Woyane as the recent drama with the ONLF proves...**So the last option is Eriteria and south Sudan.** Here one needs to be careful. In my opinion there should not be any link between Ethiopian opposition forces and the Eritrean government. Shabia has never planed the good of Ethiopia. We should not forget that the present regime of Ethiopia [Woyane] was once upon a time the handiwork of the Shabia. If Opposition forces manage to operate an organized military campaign against the Zenawi regime within Eritrea without being manipulated by Shabia, that was not a problem. But that does not seem to work. From the nature of Shabia, and from the things we are currently hearing about its treatment of the EPPF patriotic rebel forces that have been operating in Eritera, it is very unlikely that

Shabia would allow a viable Ethiopian nationalistic rebel force to challenge the Zenawi regime from Eritrea .Shabia knows such a genuine Ethiopian movement would ultimately be a challenge to itself. So I do not think there would arise a strong Ethiopian rebel military movement within Eritrea without being pestered upon by Shabia. So my theory to operate within Eritrea is different from what has been tried so far.We need a different approach in how to utilize it without being neutralized by Shabia.

One option is to reach out to Eritrean opposition forces and create a strategic partnership with them .You may think for what purpose? Well my theory goes like this.Instead of facing the politically US backed TPLF/EPRDF government directly at this moment we could broker a strategic partnership with ISRAEL [another superpower] and the anti Shabia Eritrean opposition forces to conduct a military campaign against the regimes in Asmara and Addis Ababa.We could collaborate with ISRAEL to remove Shabia and Woyane with the temporary collaboration of opposition Eritrean forces .Israel wants the Red Sea to be safe as Eritrea is reported to be giving a base for IRAN in the Dahlak islands...So that situation is an opportunity to exploit for our advantage. The Red sea is a vital national interest for Israel. Hence they could be convinced to help Ethiopian and Eritrean opposition forces to remove Shabia and Woyane simultaneously and create a peaceful environment whereby the red sea is safe from the influence of IRAN! That would be a paradigm shift from the way we were conducting our armed struggle.

With Israel backing us with military and political help and by creating a strategic alliance with certain Eritrean opposition forces , why not start a military campaign to defeat the Afwerki regime in Asmara first and then by being armed with fresh equipment and political morale, launch a once and for all campaign against the Zenawi regime.I think it is strategically more feasible to first defeat the weakened regime of Shabia at the moment. This will have a dual victory of removing the two pestering regimes from the region and creating a harmony between the two people. Ironically if such a strategy succeeds, it would be a reversal of history. Because Shabia took power in Asmara by first defeating the Ethiopian government in Addis Ababa with the help of the TPLF.So we can reverse history by first taking Asmara with the help of Eritrean opposition forces and then going to defeat the TPLF regime in Addis Ababa.The strategic alliance with Israel and the Eritrean

forces should ensure that once Asmara is taken the Ethiopian rebel military forces would be in equal power status in Asmara until the campaign in Addis Ababa is finished. This would ensure that the Ethiopian rebels can use the port of Assab for military supplies and also ensure that it would not be manipulated by the new leaders in Asmara. Also the future status of the Assab port and the future of the Ethio/Eritrea relations should be negotiated. Such a transition of power from Shabia/Woyane to the new Ethio/Eritrea opposition forces in the region will ensure the welfare of the Red Sea from Islamists like Iran hence the motivation for Israel to join us. That will change the picture completely. Ethiopian and Eritrean opposition forces can reach a common strategic interest with the Israelis on the future of the Red Sea. Working with the Israelis also has the added advantage of diverting the US support from Woyane as the US could not be in conflicting interests with Israel as far as security from IRAN is concerned. A safe Red Sea will also benefit the US in its so called "war on terror" anyway.

In tandem with the above strategy ,we could also base our insurgency in **south Sudan**. As south Sudan could potentially be heading for secession ,we should follow the events carefully there and capitalize in the situation that may unfold .The SPLA and the late John Garang historically have been a partner of the central Ethiopian government in the time of Col Mengistu while the Khartoum government of north Sudan has historically helped Woyane and Shabia.Hence in addition to our Northern Eritrean front to dismantle Shabia and Woyane we could also concentrate from South Sudan to challenge Woyane from the west. Such a Model will be effective as it exploits the regional geopolitics as well as involving a superpower in the plan.

The above daring strategy may not be simple as it sounds but it is worth to research upon. The big resource in achieving the strategy is the possibility of introducing a superpower in the political picture of the region. Recent history has shown us that a back up by a superpower is very vital for any rebel movement to succeed. While some of us continue to work hard to break the US-Zenawi bond in the international diplomatic circle, the model I described could give the rest who have taken arms to have the upper hand on the military side.

Israel has a long history of wanting a secure Red Sea because of its Arab foes in the region .It is a strategic interest for the Israelis. With the additional prospect of an IRAN base in the Red Sea it is definitely a top

priority for them .Hence bringing the Israelis to the picture in my view is very vital to the military equation . It may sound far fetched. But it may not be impossible. But of course It may require a high caliber diplomatic ability from the Ethiopian and Eritrean opposition camps. The other big task is to divert the Eritrean forces from being manipulated by Woyane and also find those that are not orbiting Woyane so that we could wage a unified campaign inside Eritrea .

So in simple terms my strategy could be summarized like this.

1. Create a clearly defined strategic alliance with Eritrean opposition forces in order to first challenge the Asmara regime on Eritrean soil, then after the initial victory go on in challenging the regime in Addis Ababa.

2. Approach the Israelis and broker a common strategic interest with them on the future status of the Red Sea resulting in a massive military help from them in the joint Ethiopian / Eritrean military campaign against Afwerki/Zenawi

3. The Ethiopian and Eritrean opposition alliance should ensure that the Ethiopian rebel forces would remain equally intact and powerful in Asmara and Eritrea after defeating Afwerki until their agenda of liberating Addis Ababa is completed. It should also ensure the use of the Red Sea ports for military armament. The final status of the port of Assab and also the future relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea should also be negotiated.

4. Create a broad based transitional governments in Addis Ababa and Asmara once the Zenawi and Afwerki governments are defeated.

We need a big 'thinking through' and a high level research on a variety of geopolitical implications, military strategy issues and the future fate of the Ethiopia –Eritrea relationships. It may need a variety of consultants and experts ranging from military to international politics and diplomacy. Lastly but not least it needs all the support it gets from fellow Ethiopians and Eritreans especially in the Diaspora. This could be in volunteering for the campaign as well as contributing financially. Of course this assumes an Eritrean opposition forces that are not being supported by the TPLF .Ethiopian opposition politicians should convince the current Eritrean opposition forces that are being supported by the TPLF to work with them instead. The others which are not under

Woyane influence should also be approached. On the part of the Ethiopian opposition forces the need to mobilize under a unified front is critically important .The strategy I have outlined is a new one and it may need a lot of research and modification for its implementation. But at least it can be used as a starting point for a new political venture.

Zendiro

You can send me your comments by the following email address.

zendiroarticle@yahoo.com