



## HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ISAIAS – PART II

1. On TPLF's visceral political follies and message to the people of Tigray

o President Isaias underlined that the quagmire triggered by TPLF's War of Insurrection must be seen in its cumulative context. It is indeed inextricably linked with its erroneous political objectives from its genesis as articulated in the Manifesto of its formative years in the 1970's. While the people of Tigray had every right to fight – together with other oppressed nationalities – for justice and equality within Ethiopia, the TPLF's secessionist agenda was untenable and a distortion of the legitimate aspirations of the people of Tigray. At the time, the distorted political objective was ultimately rectified after extensive consultations that took several years on the basis of which we were able to subsequently cultivate ties of cooperation.

o Immediately after the fall of the Dergue regime, however, the TPLF reverted to a (dualist) policy of fomenting ethnic polarization to maintain its monopolistic control of Ethiopia while also creating conditions of fragmentation (as a residual option). The umbrella organization – EPRDF – that it created was designed to serve its total domination of economic, political and military power to the exclusion of others rather than serving as a vehicle for cementing harmony and national cohesion in Ethiopia. The 1994 Constitution similarly contained Article 39 that allowed secession and other provisions that corrode national unity and social cohesion. The TPLF's unabashedly pronounced strategy included sowing discord and planting time bombs here and there, that it could detonate to create perpetual conflict in the event that its monopoly of power was challenged.

o The TPLF believed that it can achieve its distorted policy objectives only by allying with, and becoming subservient to, a major power. In this respect, the border war that it unleashed against Eritrea in 1998 under the pretext of "dispute" over Badme and its invasion of Somalia in 2006 were essentially extraneous agendas.

from power in 2018. But instead of rectifying its toxic policies, it unleashed the destructive and costly offensives that raged for two years.

o TPLF's policies and its reckless offensives do not represent the interests of the people of Tigray who have no problem to live in peace with other nationalities in Ethiopia and their Eritrean neighbors. These are accordingly times to say "enough is enough"; a time to draw appropriate lessons both for the people of Tigray and the region as a whole.

2. On bilateral ties between Eritrea and Somalia

• President Isaias elaborated the historical realities that precipitated a political vacuum in Somalia after the fall of the Siad Barre Government.

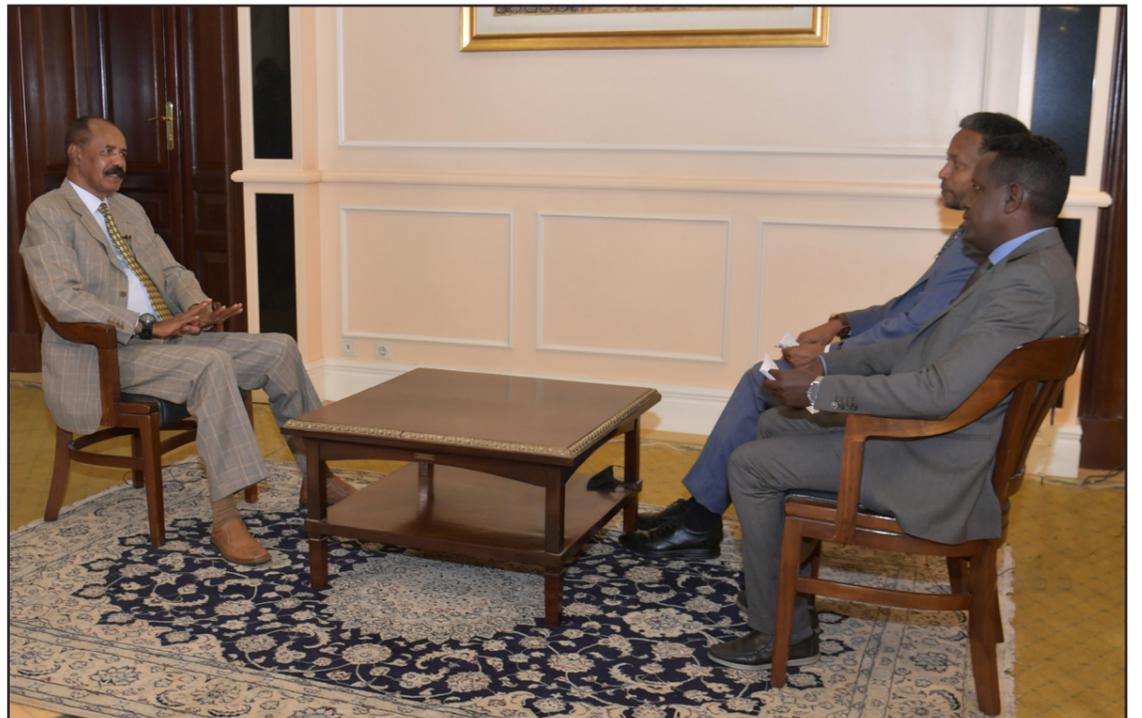
• Somalia's ethnic and religious uniqueness notwithstanding, myriad external interventions coupled with internal weaknesses led to clan politics and debilitating instability. Dubbed as a "failed State", chronic instability and the threat of "terrorism" was exploited by external forces to perpetuate their presence in Somalia.

• In the circumstances, the urgent task is for restitution of a sovereign Somalia that can stand on its two feet. This will require bolstering its sovereign institutions including credible defense forces.

• Eritrea is playing its modest part in this endeavor. This is also buttressed with similar contributions from Somalia's immediate neighbours.

• These modest efforts must be seen as enabling contributions and not as a substitute to the central endeavours of Somalia itself.

• What must be recognized is Somalia's substantive potential contribution to the region in terms of its geo-strategic importance; considerable resources (agriculture, fisheries, and possibly oil & gas); but above all the presence of large communities in the neighbouring countries vital for lubricating and cementing people-to-people.



Kenya

• President Isaias noted that both countries had embarked on nurturing close bilateral ties in the early 1990s during President Arap Moi's tenure. But the relationship remained strained afterwards for a variety of reasons.

• President Ruto's initiative and his recent visit to Asmara contributed to revive the relationship today. This is anchored not only on enhancing bilateral ties but also on alignment of perspectives and views of bolstering regional cooperation that forestalls unhelpful external meddling.

• President Ruto's initiative has also resulted in Eritrea's

decision to resume its membership in IGAD. The desire is to revitalize IGAD as an effective regional institution for promoting peace and stability as well as economic cooperation among the Member States on the basis of synergy and complementarity.

• Eritrea and Kenya have also agreed to work out concrete mechanisms and institutions of coordination to facilitate their bilateral cooperation on a variety of sectors.

4. On ties with Gulf Countries

• President Isaias expounded on the negative ramifications for cooperation in

the wider Horn of Africa/Red Sea Region that prevailed in previous decades as a result of geopolitical power games. The Gulf region was seen as the "sphere of influence" of western powers in the context of the "policy of containment".

• This situation is gradually changing in tandem, and in correlation, with unfolding global changes.

• Gulf countries are diversifying and cultivating solid economic ties with Asia and other parts of the world.

• This trend is entailing more profound ties between the Gulf States as well as with the countries of the Horn of Africa.

## WORKSHOP TO REVISE NATIONAL SEED POLICY

The Ministry of Agriculture on 16 February organized workshop with a view to revise the existing National Seed Policy.

The objective of the workshop that was organized by Regulatory and Inspection Service Department of the Ministry in cooperation with partners was to ensure applicable and affordable seed.

Indicating that the existing seed policy has been designed in 2002, Mr. Tekleab Misgina, Director General of the Department, said that the aim of the workshop is to synchronize the policy with the existing reality.

indicating on the strategic importance of having pronounced seed policy called for regular scrutinize the policy to ensure its practicality.

Pointing out that effective and workable seed policy is the basis for ensuring nutritious food, Mr. Arefaine Berhe, Minister of

Agriculture, said that revising the existing seed policy is appropriate.

Indicating that developing seed policy supported by technology and harmonizing it with the objective situation has strategic and safety importance, Minister Arefaine called on concerned institutions and experts to play due part in the effort.



o The TPLF was ousted

3. On bilateral ties with

The participants of the workshop

# Statement by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh at the 36<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union

*Excellency, Chair  
Your Excellencies,*

Let me begin by conveying the greetings and best wishes of President Isaias Afwerki to this august Assembly and thanking the people and government of Ethiopia for their warm hospitality.

achieved through epic struggles and colossal sacrifices. Moreover, the dream of a united, strong and prosperous Africa has endured, despite daunting internal challenges and relentless external intervention and exploitation. Indeed there's a growing awareness, confidence, energy and determination among African peoples, most prominently

is no less bleak, despite some positive spots. We are blessed with abundant resources and we still cannot secure our food. There's little industrialization in our continent. Critical infrastructure is lacking, or nonexistent. Our educational systems have by-and-large failed to produce conscious youth that are attuned to their societies and the needs of their people, and equipped with relevant knowledge and skills. Poverty stalks our people, our children. Too many of them die from easily preventable diseases. Our resources continue to be plundered, our money flows out illicitly.

cultural, security and foreign relations arenas. The old ways have not worked. We simply cannot continue as in the past, as we know where that has brought us.

A good point of departure is to acknowledge that our current predicament is simply not acceptable, and the need to rectify it urgent and serious. Well-thought, fresh and bold policies and measures are required at the national, regional and continental levels. Our nations need to address challenges and seize opportunities in consonance with their specific situations and the wishes and aspirations of their citizens, and with their full

contribute to regional economic integration as well as peace and security. At the continental level, our attempts to reform the African Union and transform it into a fully-independent- independent of undue external pressure and influence- streamlined, focused and effective organization have not succeeded. We cannot but rededicate ourselves, and find better ways and means, to achieve this momentous and indispensable objective, which, furthermore, will enable us to better advance our interests in a rapidly changing global environment full of grave risks as well as tremendous opportunities.

Clearly, the situation calls for



*Excellencies,*

among the youth.

This year, 2023, marks six decades since the exhilarating inception of the OAU, and a decade since the launching of Africa's agenda 2063. It's indeed an opportune moment for a thorough assessment of the road we have travelled, for a candid and serious reflection on our inadequate successes and consequential failures.

And yet, the reality is that Africa is not where it should be, where its people and youth want it to be. It remains ravaged by conflicts and wars, many of them externally fuelled; and our initial target year to silence the guns, 2020, has come and gone.

concerted, systematic and radical action. It requires new paths, new policies, and new approaches- in the political, economic, social,

involvement. We need to address the failings and shortcomings of our regional organizations to enable them to effectively

*I thank you.*

*19 February 2023 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

## NEWS

### MICRO-CREDIT AND SAVING PROGRAM IN NRS

At an activity assessment meeting organized in the port city of Massawa on 16 February, it was reported that in 2022 the micro-credit and saving program in the Northern red Sea Region disbursed over 24 million Nakfa to groups and individual beneficiaries.

citizens with a view to improve their livelihoods through creating income generation schemes.

Mr. Tafla Asmerom, head of the program, called on customers to return their loans on time.

Mr. Abdu Ibrahim, head of the program in the region, said that the objective of the program is to create loan opportunity for

Indicating that micro-credit and saving program is making commendable contributing in improving livelihoods of citizens,

Pointing out that the significance of the program is growing from time to time, Mr. Amine Ketema, Director General on Administration and Finance in the region, expressed readiness of the regional administration to stand alongside the program in its endeavors.



### REGULAR MEETING OF SOUTHERN RED SEA REGION ASSEMBLY

The Southern Red Sea Region Assembly conducted its 19th regular meeting on 17 February in the port city of Assab.

Commending for the coordinated activities conducted, Mr. Ali Nur, Chairman of the Assembly, called on the members of the Assembly to play leading role in the implementation of the charted out development drives.

At the meeting activity reports were presented of the sectors of education, health, agriculture and development as well as potable water supply.

The participants of the meeting conducted extensive discussion on the reports presented and adopted various recommendations including for proper follow-up on potable water projects and encouragement of school aged females attend regular education.

Speaking at the occasion, Ambassador Mohammed-Seid Mantai, Governor of the Region, commending the strong participation the public demonstrated in the implementation of the development programs, presented charted out programs for 2023.

**ERITREA PROFILE**

**Published Every  
Wednesday & Saturday**

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# INTERVIEW OF PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI WITH NATIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS PART II

National media outlets conducted second part of an interview with President Isaias Afwerki on important regional issues and trends last Saturday. Full text of the translated version of the second part of the interview follows.

As you mentioned in part one of the interview, the people of Tigray have paid a very heavy price for TPLF's reckless adventures. Having gone through this horrific experience, what developments can we now expect from the people of Tigray? Recalling TPLF's myriad and willful campaigns to foment hate and internecine conflict between the people of Tigray and other peoples in Ethiopia (as well as its Eritrean neighbor), what message do you have to the people of Tigray?

This must be viewed in its wider and cumulative context as the malaise was spawned over a long period of time. Its genesis must, thus, be properly analyzed and understood. The question that always comes to mind is why did we find ourselves in this situation in the first place? Why did the TPLF get embroiled in this malaise?

The struggle was arguably just when it was first launched as it was against the domination or hegemony of one specific nationality or ethnic group. This was within the context of the political reality of Ethiopia at the time. The basic question is how marginalization and its ramifications – how the right of nationalities – should be addressed.

Our collaboration begun in the early 1970s. But this had to undergo tugs of ideological battles for many years, extending to the second-half of the 1970s, owing to the erroneous political objectives laid out in TPLF's Manifesto, which included Tigray's secession from Ethiopia and the declaration of independence.

Considering the sanctity of colonial borders and the role this in turn played in the formation of African nations through various processes, including the countries of the Horn of Africa, the consensual position was that struggles for self-determination cannot exist outside this framework. As such, the demand for secession was completely indefensible, especially when viewed in relation to the formation of other countries in this region including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan; the process that led to the drawing of borders in Africa; and the struggle for rights

within these set boundaries.

This stark difference in interpretation and objectives between us resulted in extensive consultations that took several years. Our argument was that the struggle ought to be aimed at, and confined to, bringing about change in Ethiopia. It also needed to be inclusive; to bring about fundamental change in the whole country; to redress and rectify issues of injustice, inequity, ethnic bigotry, and marginalization.

This was ultimately rectified – after having agreed upon clear and shared objectives – and we were subsequently able to cultivate ties of cooperation. The political pronouncements of the time, the organizational structures, and the public awareness campaigns taking place in Tigray reflected these common understandings. As such, our cooperation continued.

External interference was rampant during the whole period. First, there were interventions from the US and Israel to prop up the Haile Selassie regime. Then, in the mid-1970s, the Dergue took power and with it came the involvement of the USSR. This continued for 17 years after which the Dergue regime fell and justice was achieved.

The fall of the Dergue regime in 1991, which coincided with the end of the Cold War, led to a new epoch in our region's history, ushering in the envisioned just changes in Ethiopia, as well as the termination of the historical injustices perpetrated against Eritrea. The new epoch was characterized by the absence of external meddling in the region's affairs.

The end of the Cold War entailed changes at the global as well as the regional levels. In the context of Ethiopia, the fundamental issues under consideration revolved on how to handle the future political dynamics in the country and effect a just transformation anchored on inclusiveness and solidarity – taking into account that this was a struggle waged not only by the people of Tigray but numerous other oppressed nationalities.

A Conference on Peace and Democracy was accordingly held in Addis Ababa in 1991. Various arguments were raised, before



and during this conference that highlighted the need to take into consideration the just struggles of all nationalities – the Oromo, the Amhara, the Somali, the Afar, and other groups – when formulating the transition to a new political dispensation.

The TPLF however embarked on misguided political and organizational trajectory. It is within this context that TPLF perverted the process and created the EPRDF. The idea was to form a “coalition” of individuals that ostensibly represent different ethnicities but that the TPLF would manage and/or micromanage. In the first place, the EPRDF organizational structure was subordinated and supplanted by the TPLF's Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray. The TPLF was, in effect, betraying the ethos of the struggle against marginalization to create a new alliance in which it was the new hegemon. In the process, it marginalized the other political groups in the coalition. This could not be viable. As it happened, the OLA eventually pulled out. This derailment eventually percolated to affect others in the whole country.

Eritrea's approach has always been to urge for composed consultations. This was the case during the consultations that took place in the 1970s as mentioned earlier or the ones that took place in this context, in 1991. Our view, as presented at the time, was that whatever political system is created ought to be inclusive; reflect the historical, decades-long, struggle against oppression and marginalization; and not leave room for division and fragmentation.

The centrifugal trend begun to

emerge soon after the convention of the Conference on Peace and Democracy. It was not addressed promptly. We continued to observe the situation with reservations as we were firmly convinced that the path chosen would ultimately imperil the

Melles (bluntly) that the draft Constitution was not fit for any people, let alone for the people of Ethiopia.

African countries have emerged from colonial rule. The primary task, the overarching project,

**“TPLF policies and reckless offensives do not represent the interests of the people of Tigray who have no problem to live in peace with other nationalities in Ethiopia and their Eritrean neighbours.”**

cultivation of participatory and inclusive political dispensation in Ethiopia. The drafting of the new Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia occurred against this backdrop.

Owing to our cordial working relationship at the time and having been in constant communication about these developments during and after the 1991 Conference, Meles paid an unplanned visit to Asmara at the end of 1994 and gave me for comments, the first draft of the Constitution. He stated it had not been shared with anyone at the time.

Immediately after the first glance, I recognized that I would need a couple of days for a more comprehensive appraisal and accordingly asked him to give me more time.

In my view and setting aside the irrationality of Article 39 on the right to secession, the entire document was not amenable for possible amendments here and there. In those times, Meles and myself had nurtured a habit of communicating our views to each other candidly on all the issues on which we maintained periodic consultations. So I told

remained nation-building in a forward-looking mode. Fragmented and dispersed constituencies; disparate communities some of which were privileged while most were deprived and marginalized; must be galvanized together in the common task of cohesive nation-building. In my view, the proposed Draft Constitution would not solve Ethiopia's challenges and would only lead to further polarization. The people of Ethiopia deserve better.

Melles quipped: “I knew you would say this”. I told him fine and went on to add: “your proposal is idealistic and cannot be applied in practical terms... What if it leads to fragmentation tomorrow?”. Melles retorted: “we have no other choice... this is the only way we can control Ethiopia”.

EPRDF, of course, was concocted as a convenient “umbrella coalition”, as a tool of political charade to give the superficial impression of equal participation by all. But how would this be managed and what are the conceivable benefits of a system that incubates polarization?

**C**ontinued on page 4

# INTERVIEW OF PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI WITH NATIONAL ... PART II

**C**ontinued from page 3

But for Melles, the strategy was clear. In his words: "For us, this is the only viable strategy. We plant time bombs here and there. If all is smooth, well and good. If not, we will detonate all the bombs".

Needless to say, this strategy was not constructive. One cannot build a nation through this path. Indeed, nation-building requires one to enact a deliberate process that builds bridges, erases fault lines, brings people together, and sustainably consolidates integration over time.

Any political structure or system that leads to further disunity and polarization is doomed to fail. This is true for Ethiopia as a whole, including the people of Tigray.

One could rightly argue prior to the launching of the struggle, the people of Tigray were marginalized, discriminated against, and wronged, and as such had every right to struggle and bring about a system that would rectify these offenses. Nevertheless, the path chosen or options taken thereafter were erroneous.

In any case and as I mentioned earlier, Melles' response was: "I knew you would say this... I just wanted to hear your views and let you know what we are planning...".

In response, I thanked him sincerely for giving me the chance to provide comments on the Draft Constitution and reiterated that the system envisaged is not fit for Ethiopia. But sadly, the tone had begun to change: the side that waged a struggle against marginalization was now marginalizing all the others, in an ironic role-reversal, as it climbed on the ladders of power.

Unfortunately, this was the reality that transpired after 1995 – and the developments of the past two years are a direct result of, and can be traced back, to the flawed policy choices articulated then. This mind-set also provides a clear answer to my first question of "why was war necessary?"

The TPLF believed that it can achieve its distorted policy objectives only by allying with, and becoming subservient to, a major power. Oddly, this was openly rationalized by a morally reprehensible saying: "if the person who has an illicit affair with your mother is powerful, you have to embrace or mollify him".

The idea that one can align with external powers to solve



domestic issues is unconscionable. Domestic challenges ought to be solved through just and honorable procedures and all other external partnerships have to be based on this. Not the other way round. As it happened, the TPLF enlisted the full support of Washington as well as many others in Europe.

So over the past 25 years, the TPLF became the errand boy and surrogate of foreign agendas. In as far as domestic policy is concerned, the situation degenerated to incubate spiraling conflicts and polarization rather than cohesion and harmony.

In this respect, the "border" war that the TPLF unleashed against Eritrea in 1998 under the pretext of a "dispute" over Badme was not the agenda of the people of Tigray by any stretch of imagination. Various drastic and irrational policy changes were enacted haphazardly in and around the border areas that hampered normative and informal trade hitherto enjoyed by communities on both sides. Instead of focusing on larger trade issues that would benefit everyone, why was it necessary to nitpick on minute issues; such as regulating petty and informal trade to be conducted by opening Bank accounts etc.? Why were senseless issues all of a sudden blown out of proportion with the aim of creating divergence?

Our approach was solution-oriented.

To address these vexing problems, we proposed for harmonization of policies – economic, trade, investment, etc. The assumption was that practical implementation would be carried out with flexibility and in a manner that would allay unnecessary

misunderstanding and friction. We also believed that, given the historical ties of the people on both sides of the border, trying to impose physical checkpoints would only lead to unnecessary complications.

Unfortunately, our proposals were shunned.

Any sober mind would be hard-pressed to understand why Badme became an issue. Indeed, there was no good-faith dispute; nor was it the agenda of the TPLF clique. This was an agenda of external powers. A simple issue was deliberately compounded to provide the pretext for conflict. We appealed for calm explaining that the international border was not drawn by us and there was no need for new inventions.

But, this was invariably the pattern with all the other problems that unfolded thereafter – raise senseless issues out of thin air and deliberately complicate them to instigate hostilities.

Eventually, the border war was unleashed on us, causing the unnecessary spilling of blood, and leading to further deterioration in our relations. The putative "border dispute" was ultimately settled by an international Arbitral

Court. Yet the TPLF blocked its implementation by raising another spurious argument on physical demarcation even when the Arbitral Court had accomplished the task with detailed precision – metre by metre - through virtual

demarcation.

It must be emphasized that this was not really the choice of the TPLF but a deliberate act of interference by the Administration in Washington at the time in order to keep this issue unsettled. It cajoled the TPLF leadership to shift goalposts – to keep refusing to abide by the decision, to call for "negotiations", etc. Jendayi Frazier (Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the time) and other US officials kept making public pronouncements to that effect.

How can one negotiate on a matter that was resolved by the Court? This is not tenable by any standards. Still it was frantically pursued in order to exacerbate the tension and conflict that had caused so much human loss and devastation.

It is within this context that the struggle for justice waged by the people of Tigray began to incrementally take a different form. Indeed, once the fundamental rights of the people of Tigray were ascertained, the policy objective should have focused on creating a conducive climate for harmonious relationship with other peoples in Ethiopia. But over the past thirty years, a perverted mentality was deliberately fomented that agitated for Tigrayan "supremacy" in all sectors – in the political, military, economic etc. domains. This was anathema to the nurturing of harmony among the peoples; to bolstering national unity. The party that fought ethnic oppression and marginalization cannot morph into the oppressor by any logic. But this was the tone and political theme that the TPLF leadership embarked on and that did not represent the interests of the people of Tigray. Its inevitable byproduct was increased polarization.

This was the framework within which all conflicts were situated, including the "border" conflict with Eritrea, the invasion of Somalia in 2006, etc. It is also the framework within which the people

In a nutshell, TPLF's folly, which lasted 30 years and claimed an entire generation, failed miserably within Ethiopia and derailed the quest for legitimate rights of the people of Tigray leading to the most recent catastrophe.

One would have expected the TPLF to recognize the disastrous consequences of its policies and take appropriate measures of rectification. On the contrary, it resorted to fleeing ahead; a pre-emptive tactic so to speak; to wage a new round of war and conflict to cover-up its past misdeeds.

As it happened, the TPLF was the biggest hindrance to the consolidation of the very positive and welcomed reforms that took place in Ethiopia. By the same token, it worked feverishly to scuttle the peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia. These developments were seen as the biggest threat to the TPLF and their "reversal" became its primary preoccupation. To this end, it declared a war (of Insurrection) and went on committing one reckless invasion after another in the three rounds of offensives that it unleashed.

How can one perceive these disastrous blunders as promoting the interests of the people of Tigray? Considering the fact that the people of Tigray had fought against marginalization since the 1970s, and even before, and fully ascertained their fundamental ties, why would they be plunged into such a quagmire when they could have lived in peace and harmony with the other nationalities in Ethiopia as well as with the people of Eritrea with whom they could have nurtured warm ties as a geographically closer neighbor? Whose interests do the misguided adventures of the past 30-years as well as the most recent war really serve? In effect, these reckless adventures are the desperate, last-ditch, acts of a failed clique that craved to regain its lost power.

It has to be reiterated – no matter which way and from which angle one tries to rationalize it - that none of TPLF's misguided adventures were aimed to serve, or were ever in the interests of, the people of Tigray. They cannot be explained in terms of cogent political, security and economic calculus. One cannot find a plausible explanation for the incessant and deliberate fomenting of animosity, antagonism, resentment, fear, etc.

**C**ontinued on page 5

*"In a nutshell, TPLF's folly, which lasted 30 years and claimed an entire generation, failed miserably within Ethiopia and derailed the quest for legitimate rights of the people of Tigray leading to the most recent catastrophe."*

of Tigray were deliberately isolated to be at loggerheads with all their neighbours. Their relationship with the people of Eritrea soured further, and so did their relationships with virtually all the nationalities within Ethiopia.

# INTERVIEW OF PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI WITH NATIONAL ... PART II

**C**ontinued from page 4

The third and last war, dubbed as the “decisive battle” by the TPLF, will undoubtedly have its repercussions. The enormous amount of young people forced to die in vain; the vast and critical resources wasted; the irrational

from this quagmire. There is no reason for a conflict with Eritrea or with other nationalities within Ethiopia.

This is a time for introspection; a time to look back and draw appropriate lessons, both for the people of Tigray and other

and constructive contribution. Its neighbourly ties with the people of Eritrea must be consolidated. It has vast interests with the other peoples of Ethiopia which must be nurtured for the common good. The agonizing lessons gleaned from TPLF’s three offensives are too fresh to require delving into past history to underscore the pitfalls of TPLF’s toxic policies. The policy choice that the people of Tigray have to make is indeed starkly clear. And they have no need for external advice or sermonizing.

*The new President of the Federal Republic of Somalia conducted two official visits to Eritrea. Subsequently, the Somali forces trained in Eritrea have returned to their country. In this context, what is the overall development in Somalia, and how is its relationship with Eritrea, and the neighboring countries, in general?*

In many respect, the reality in Somalia can provide an instructive image of the overall situation in our region. The end of Cold War coincided with the profound changes that unfolded in Ethiopia. This provided a momentous opportunity for the Horn of Africa; and most especially for the people of Somalia.

Somalia’s formative statehood that culminated in the 1960s through the unity of the two sides - one colonized by the British, the other by Italy - had ushered in a great hope for the people of Somalia. In this context, one must highlight the significant role played by, and the immense contributions of the people of Somalia, towards the overall developments in the Horn of Africa region. This is particularly true between 1960s-1990s. It is also relevant to mention the relationship that the country enjoyed with the former USSR and the ensuing political dynamics and swift changes that occurred. The political changes that swept Ethiopia in 1974, however, led to a shift in global alliances, which in turn negatively affected Somalia. And for the subsequent 17 years (1974-1991), Siad Barre’s Government had to grapple with myriad complications.

Somalia’s borders that were naturally determined - as it is universally the case in the African continent as a whole - by colonialism, does not incorporate all the people of Somali origin in the Horn of Africa. As such, and within this complex geographical

reality, Somali interpretation of nationalism in the 60s, 70s, and 80s - with its ebbs and flows - was quite wide and included the 5 regions - British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, the North-Western District in Kenya, a Somali Region in Djibouti, and the Ogaden in Ethiopia. It is within this context that Somalis (irredentism) was viewed as a “national security threat” by the three neighbouring countries - Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. This also led to manipulations within various Somali forces vying for control. This was further exacerbated by the changing global climate.

I recall a story of Somalis, in the 1960s, burying a coffin labeled “clannism”, to signify the absolute rejection of division based on this superficial difference. Somalis were quite conscious of the need to move away from myopic and shortsighted calculations towards a broad-based, inclusive nation-building process.

Unfortunately, this path did not materialize. And in 1991, after the fall of the Siad Barre Government, Somalia became mired in endless internal conflicts and turmoil. Somalia’s ethnic and religious uniqueness notwithstanding, myriad external interventions

to highlight Somalia’s highly significant geostrategic position - in the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden, Bab al Mandeb, and the Red Sea. In the same breath, owing to the resourcefulness of Somalis - no matter where they are located within the borders of these neighboring countries - one could imagine, in an ideal situation, their contribution to the development and growth of this region, and the enhancement of people-to-people harmonious ties. Unfortunately, the internal divisions led to this being a lost opportunity. In addition to internal schisms, foreign interference played a significant role in weakening the Somali State. As it will be recalled, the United States intervened militarily in Somalia during Aideed’s Presidency whose nadir point was the Black Hawk down incident.

What were the consequences of US, and other external, military intervention at that time? And why was the region incapable of contributing to a solution to the Somali conundrum? Unfortunately, the governments in Ethiopia and Kenya at the time, having declared Somalia a “national security threat”, had their own reasons to hamper any positive efforts towards a lasting solution.



and nonstop fear-mongering campaigns organized to instill a sense of “siege mentality”, of keeping them hostage; the intense and deceitful political campaigns; may have contributed to initially lead many astray. But on the other hand and in retrospect, this is the time for sober minds to say “enough is enough!”

True to form, the TPLF continues to wallow on falsehoods and deceit. In the latest episode, it is posing as a “peacemaker”, which to any observer is absolutely absurd and laughable. Does this faction have no shame? Obviously, this is done to try and silence and/or usurp the growing

peoples in Ethiopia, from the mentality and perspectives on a Federal system that prevailed in the 1990s; and, from what subsequently transpired in the 30 years thereafter.

It is imperative to create a new platform now. The opportunity lost is not small to the people of Ethiopia; including to Eritrea. The foundations that should have been laid in the 1990s and that could have been bolstered incrementally were not embarked on at that time. The wall that should have been built was not built. The TPLF leadership derailed the whole process to inculcate the malaise that we are

*“The overarching objective is to ensure that Somalia is out of the woods to assume its rightful place and invaluable contributions to the region. This will require concerted regional support. In any case, we have to shoulder our modest part.”*

popular calls and trend for peace within Tigray as people have really had enough with war. As if the people can forget the arrogant and very recent calls for endless wars, the TPLF is now trying to claim a narrative of peace and appear as peaceful. This is truly shameless and does not, in any way, represent the people of Tigray.

The people of Tigray, without any doubt, have at this time learned a very valuable and critical lesson. They know, more than any other people, what has transpired. The central message is: it is not only the people of Tigray but we have all gleaned an important lesson. The people of Tigray must extricate themselves

grappling with.

At this juncture, what is imperative is to recoup lost opportunities for the people of Ethiopia and bring about a conducive platform for social cohesion and unity; that eradicates toxic climate of ethnic polarization, animosity and bloodletting. A platform that enhances more robust ties with the people of Eritrea. Deceitful acts intended to revive the defunct policies and toxic mindset will not serve the interests of the people of Tigray. In effect, the people of Tigray will not need advice or sensitization campaigns from others. They have suffered from the excruciating ordeal for almost a generation now. The people of Tigray can make a decisive



coupled with internal weaknesses led to clan politics, debilitating instability, and chronic corruption. Narrow clan politics and nepotism became rampant. This was in a country that is unique in Africa in terms of ethnic and religious homogeneity.

As a combined result of all these problems, the country was dubbed a “failed state”. Clan politics and the resultant chaos gave rise to the Union of Islamic Courts. This was prior to the emergence of what is termed Al-Shebaab.

At this point, it is important

All of this is relevant to underline that the situation in Somalia has a significant effect on the region at large. The country, with its 3,300 kms long coastline, immense agricultural potential, mining and other natural resources, and perhaps most importantly the geographical spread of the population over a significantly wide area, grants it a very unique position in the Horn of Africa, with the ability to contribute to regional prosperity, complementarity, and development.

**C**ontinued on page 6

# INTERVIEW OF PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI WITH NATIONAL ... PART II

**C**ontinued from page 5

Within this framework, Somalia's relationship with Eritrea is based on historical ties that date back prior to, and during, the Siad Barre Administration. These historical bonds manifested themselves in various ways over time, including solidarity and assistance, a shared vision and complementarity in the region. Our desire to bring forth and convert these historical ties to tangible actions that contribute to regional cohesion and unity is too palpable to merit emphasis. These are not choices that depend on the whims of one political party, individual or specific government. Finding avenues through which

we can all benefit from the immense potential of our region, assist and complement one another's efforts, and contribute to our shared development and growth is not a choice but a matter of duty.

Somalia, with all of the challenges that it had to face over the past one or two epochs, has lost many opportunities. Adding fuel to fire, its neighboring countries did not make an effort to play a constructive role.

Oddly enough, one of the key points consistently raised and discussed with Meles - and on which we thought we could cultivate consensus - in the immediate aftermath of the new changes in the region in 1991 was the need



to support Somalia constructively while primarily focusing on our respective domestic agendas. We in Eritrea pledged to expand our relationship and contribute to the best of our capacity, but, as this was more directly related to Ethiopia, we urged the TPLF to take leadership in this task and contribute positively to Somalia's needs.

Sadly, instead of contributing with earnestness to the implementation

of common regional programmes, the TPLF chose to do the bidding of its external sponsors. It is within this context that it sent its forces to invade Mogadishu in 2006. This was clearly not a regional agenda or IGAD's agenda. It was a task given to it by Washington.

This was utterly perplexing to us as we had hoped, and had agreed, that neighboring countries ought to have a constructive role in pushing Somalia forward into a better position, not drag the country backwards in fulfilment of Washington's agenda.

It is within this context that we chose to withdraw from IGAD for the next 16 years - protesting the failure of a regional bloc to find regional solutions to regional challenges and its inability to put an end to such collusions.

Eritrea's consistent views with regards to Somalia - and this must be coordinated with our neighbours in the region - is that the country needs to extricate itself from the quagmire. At the outset, it needs to consolidate its unity and put an end to destructive clan-based politics that does not serve the interests of the vast majority of Somalis. In some ways, there are analogies with other political configurations in the region. The Federal structure appears to exacerbate further polarization along clan and other divisive lines.

The overarching objective is to ensure that Somalia is out of the woods to assume its rightful place and invaluable contributions to the region. This will require concerted regional support. In any case, we have to shoulder our modest part.

At the outset, this requires an unequivocal commitment to unity and national cohesion that discards clan allegiances and cleavages.

Secondly, the rifts between the north and south is providing ample maneuvering space for external meddling who seem bent on driving a wedge between the two Somalias. As such, this must be resolved with utmost urgency. Unilateral Declaration of Independence will not be useful to the proclaiming party and the region as a whole. Thirdly, regional and neighboring countries ought to make adjustments in their perspectives on Somalia in a constructive spirit. And above all, Somalia needs to bolster its institutions as an independent and sovereign nation; beginning with the consolidation of a credible defense force. The country simply cannot afford to function with various militia groups - UIC or various externally sponsored terrorist groups such as Al-Shebaab, etc. A stable Somali government is naturally predicated on robust institutions, including a credible armed forces.

Eritrea is committed to play its modest part in this endeavor. 5000 soldiers were indeed trained here but this is far from covering the needs of the country considering its relatively large landmass and long coastline. These are matters for the decision of the Somali government and they will obviously require meticulous planning. The ultimate aim is consolidation of robust institutions - including armed forces - that promote the interests of, and are loyal to, the people of Somalia, its national unity and development agendas. This will preclude insidious external interventions under the pretext of fighting terrorism etc.

The commitment that Eritrea undertook bore positive fruit and was widely accepted by the Somali population; not just the Farmajo Administration. As expected, the mudslinging and pathetic defamation that followed, essentially by Washington and others in the league, were incredible. Despicable innuendos were peddled to sully the project including false accusations of killings, deploying them in the conflict areas in Tigray, and other ludicrous lies. The preposterous efforts to derail this project from achieving its objectives have not stopped even when they have all returned home. Various subterfuges have been put in place to disperse them.

The very obvious reason behind all of this scheming is the desire to perpetuate the "failed state" narrative; providing the necessary context and pretext for continued interference and control; and, blocking any chance of Somalia achieving sustainable peace and development.

The challenges are of course enormous and cannot be downplayed. Various forces who are meddling in Somalia's internal affairs are working feverishly to roll-back the positive progress and future plans of the restitution of a sovereign Somalia. They are arming militias; fomenting clan divisions through bribes and other corrupt means; and instigating conflict between the two Somali entities.

On the other hand, Somalia's endowments are also huge. Its maritime resources and agricultural potential are substantial. Potential

*"President Ruto's positive outlook and initiative was indeed a very welcome change and enabled us to have frank and comprehensive discussions. The subsequent visit to Nairobi further solidified the initiative, enabling us to envision and outline tangible plans."*

oil and gas discoveries can augment its endowments.

Taking into account these complex realities, the urgent task at hand is the restitution of a sovereign Somalia that can stand on its own two feet; a Somalia that can move away from being the poster country for hunger and drought; a Somalia that can sustainably make use of its vast natural resources for the benefit of its own people; a Somalia that can achieve its security and development needs and priorities; and a Somalia that can claim its rightful place on the regional and global stage.

These are essentially and primarily the task and responsibility of Somalis. Partners must commit to making enabling contributions. But they can never act as a substitute to the central endeavors of Somalia itself.

*Various official visits took place in recent months, including by the new President of Kenya as well as high-level officials from the Sudan. As is known, Eritrea's articulated and cherished vision is peace and stability to prevail in the region that would enhance economic cooperation and partnership also with Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti and the two Sudan. Are these aspirations shared by these countries at this point in time? What would be the potential prospects and challenges?*

Eritrea's relationship with Kenya must be gauged within the wider regional agenda and strategy. Our two countries had embarked on nurturing close bilateral ties in the early 1990s, during President Arap Moi's tenure. This was closely related to the developments in South Sudan and the majority of consultations and meetings were held in Kenya at the time as it supported a very conducive

environment and platform.

Unfortunately, the relationship became strained afterwards, during both Kibaki's and Uhuru's tenures, for a variety of reasons. One recalls the deplorable episodes when our citizens - who were journalists - were kidnapped in the streets of Kenya and handed over to our enemies. This was not, really, Kenya's agenda. It was done under the bidding of foreign intelligence agencies. The complications that certain intelligence agencies which used Nairobi as operational base

has its own history and can be divulged in greater detail. This is a very wide-ranging topic that would be best discussed separately. Suffice it to say that this period had a very negative effect on the region at large - especially as it related to developments in the Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia. This also negatively affected regional cooperation at large, especially in the post-2006 period after the TPLF's invasion of Somalia. And as a consequence of, and related to the latter episode, it was the same foreign intelligence agencies that took the role of coordination between the TPLF regime and the Kibaki and later Uhuru governments on Somali/regional matters.

All of this is stressed to say that Kenya, up until that point, was unable to have the envisioned positive contribution in the region. This especially applied to its dealings in the southern Somali context, southern Ethiopia, as well as South Sudan due to its geographic proximity. In is also within this context that Kenya's relationship with Eritrea suffered - owing to external pressures and meddling.

Nevertheless, President William Ruto's initiative and his recent visit to Asmara has contributed to revive the relationship. It was a very welcomed initiative as we chose not to dwell on problems of the strained relationship and lost opportunities but on broader issues in a normalized setting. Our discussions during his visit to Asmara were quite comprehensive and were anchored not only on enhancing bilateral ties but also on alignment of perspectives and views of bolstering regional cooperation that forestalls unhelpful external meddling.

**C**ontinued on page 8

## United Nations Development Programme



# VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT VA/02/2023

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Asmara invites qualified applicants (Eritrean) for the following vacant post:

**Job Code Title:** Radio Operator  
**Classified Grade:** G3  
**Duty Station:** Asmara

### Organizational Context

The overall mandate of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) is to provide leadership, operational support, and oversight of the security management system to enable the safest and most efficient conduct of the Programmes and activities of the United Nations System.

### Position purpose

This position will be supporting key functions and operations of the United Nations. The role of a Radio Operator can be challenging and unpredictable as they may be required to respond and assist callers in need of immediate assistance. They will have the responsibility to pass key information and instructions in a timely and calm manner to UNSMS personnel and others, as required. At times, the work will be fast-paced and intense, but highly rewarding as the Assistants will be part of a response and support team which contributes to the work of the United Nations.

### Key Duties and Accountabilities

- Receives, transmits, or relays security and safety messages and information on behalf of the Designated Official/Area Security Coordinator/Senior Security Personnel (as applicable) via all identified means of communication to personnel;
- On receipt of notifications of security and safety incidents, escalate these via the appropriate and defined channels for follow-up and support;
- Using the SCS, monitors the movement of field missions, as defined by the Security Risk Management (SRM) process and appropriate local standard operating procedures (SOPs);
- Based on the local SOPs facilitates the provision of immediate support to the UNSMS personnel involved in security or safety incidents: alerts the response and support functions through the appropriate and defined channels, gives the necessary feedback and input to the personnel involved in the incidents, maintains the communication link to personnel, acts in an overall supportive role. Records all information and communications related to these incidents.
- Notifies the respective UNSMS organization/security focal points when their personnel are involved in a security or safety incident.
- Monitors the usage of the SCS and ensures it is used according to established SOPs; guide personnel on appropriate behavior when using the SCS.
- Verifies the operational status of the SCS to ensure that personnel can use or access the SCS and that the SCS is functioning properly. Reports any anomalies to the appropriate authority for further action or guidance.
- Undertakes personnel headcount in accordance with instructions from the Designated Official /Area Security Coordinator /Senior Security Professional (as applicable), or an established SOP in a timely and accurate manner.
- Maintains the contact and residence details of all UNSMS personnel and their eligible dependents, and the contact details of premises and vehicles.
- Maintains the UN warden lists.
- Maintains the contact details of the response team emergency services

and support structures of host government, local authorities, and contracted private security companies; directs personnel to the nearest one during times of security or safety incidents.

- Maintains records and logs of actions and communications undertaken to support security or safety incidents or any other critical communications.
- Prepares and submits reports, as directed by the SOC Supervisor.
- Perform other duties, as directed by the most senior security professional.

### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

#### Education

- Secondary Education preferably with specialized certification in Radio Telecommunications and Information Technology or any related fields with three years of progressive experience in installation, maintenance of HF, VHF and Satellite phones or any other related fields.

#### Experience

- Minimum of 3 years of progressive relevant work experience related to operational communications and direct interaction with a broad range of clients.
- Prior working experience within the UN system, an international NGO, or another international organization is desirable.
- Prior working experience in the Armed Forces/Police Communication & IT-related field is desirable.
- Experience in Disaster Management or a similar related field is preferred.
- Good understanding of computer-based tools such as MS Office Suite and other computer-based, web, and smartphone applications is desirable.
- Experience with radio communication, satellite, and web-based communications is an asset
- Language requirements English is Required and other UN Languages are Desired

#### Application

Interested applicants should apply on the link below:

[https://estm.fa.em2.oraclecloud.com/hcmUI/CandidateExperience/en/sites/CX\\_1/job/8465/?utm\\_medium=jobshare](https://estm.fa.em2.oraclecloud.com/hcmUI/CandidateExperience/en/sites/CX_1/job/8465/?utm_medium=jobshare)

<b>Closing Date:</b> 10	<b>March 2023</b>
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Copy of document indicating exemption from/completion of national service should be uploaded.

**UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.**

**UNDP does not tolerate sexual exploitation and abuse, any kind of harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks.**

(Only Short-Listed Candidates will be contacted).

## INTERVIEW OF PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI WITH NATIONAL ... PART II

**C**ontinued from page 6

This, of course is not a novel idea. Rather, it can be traced back to the road-map charted out in the early post-colonial years and the pronounced objectives of the Founding Fathers in establishing the Organization of African Union (OAU). This was not a matter of re-inventing the wheel. Instead, recognizing that we have lost significant opportunity over the past few decades, we resolved to accelerate the process of achieving these sweeping objectives in an effort to make up for lost times.

President Ruto's positive outlook and initiative was indeed a very welcome change and enabled us to have frank and comprehensive discussions. The subsequent visit to Nairobi further solidified the initiative, enabling us to envision and outline tangible plans.

Kenya's participation at the US-Africa Summit; bilateral meetings they carried out with others at the margins of the Summit; and various

***"In the context of the post-Cold War, the Gulf region was seen as the 'sphere of influence' of Western powers in the context of the 'policy of containment'. The countries slated for candidacy within the 'sphere of influence' essentially provided the material inputs for hegemony and the looting of resources to mollify the predators' insatiable greed."***

other concurrent developments, further impelled them to reinforce their call for regional integration and cooperation. This was partly in reaction to unconstructive external meddling lurking in the background and various attempts to block regional initiatives.

President Ruto's initiative resulted in Eritrea's decision to resume its membership in IGAD. Indeed, Eritrea would not have had any reason to suspend its membership from IGAD under a climate that was conducive for working together. Suspension of our membership occurred because, in our view, the organization could not implement the regional objectives, goals and charted out strategies as it became increasingly instrumentalized by external forces. If these anomalies are rectified – which would imply

***"The current changing global dynamics and the gradual rejection of, and moving away, from a unipolar global order has given rise to gradual shift in outlook within the Middle East and the Gulf as well."***

improvement in its organizational and operational modalities – resumption of our membership becomes automatic.

As such, the desire at this time is to revitalize IGAD as an effective regional institution for promoting peace and stability as well as economic cooperation among the

Member States on the In the Gulf basis of synergy and complementarity. This is especially urgent during this context of rapid global shifts as well as less than ideal scenarios in several countries within our region. We must work to support where needed and positively contribute to resolving regional issues in a way that complements the priorities and needs of sovereign regional governments. The approach and pace must be vigorous to recoup the opportunities lost in the past 20 or so years.

Furthermore, Eritrea and Kenya – recognizing the lost opportunities in the past but without being held hostage by it – have also agreed to work out concrete mechanisms and institutions of coordination to facilitate their bilateral cooperation on a variety of sectors. Same as above, Ruto's commitment in this area and outlook is truly laudable.

The external chorus fuming by this renewed commitment further demonstrates the need to accelerate this process. One may ask what is

there to gain from wanting to throw a wrench at this initiative? The answer, as stated earlier in a different context, is the same – regional cohesion and unity in this strategic area does not serve external interests. This is to be expected and is not a new phenomenon. It should not derail us from our vision. On the contrary, it should provide further impetus to rapidly work towards achieving our shared vision of peaceful coexistence, shared development, and sustainable peace.

We discussed bilateral areas for cooperation in great detail – touching on sectors such as energy, water, agriculture, and other areas, including social sectors. We also discussed trade and investment, recognizing that this has to be situated in practical sense – what can we buy from Kenya and what can

Kenya buy from us? Do we have the required transport infrastructure in place? Do we have complementing policies? As such, taking into account the huge task ahead, we have committed to address these challenges, put the necessary mechanisms and structures in place, so as to move from good wishes to actually creating an enabling and

practical environment in this field.

We have also resolved to firmly situate our bilateral agreements within the broader regional context. We have agreed that the Kenyan Government will initiate platforms for all of us within the IGAD community to come to a common understanding of our goals, to set out regional objectives and priorities, etc. This will go a long way in making up for lost time and moving forward towards our shared goals. We must also be cognizant of impending challenges and be equipped to resolve and move past them.

Having said all of this, it is obvious that we are committed to a monumental task. Still, the newly established environment is one of immense hope and optimism and has the potential for equally monumental benefits for all of us in this region.

***There appears to be a gradual shift on global issues in the Middle East, especially in the Gulf countries – from their traditionally Western-leaning outlook towards a more balanced stance. In this respect, their ties with Asia are growing. What are the future prospects of these shifting perspectives? How is it viewed by the West? In the same context, what is the current relationship with Eritrea?***

The four regions that make up what we term as our neighborhood are the Nile Basin, the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, and the Gulf. From our perspective, these four regions have complementarity in many respects. In addition to interactions within the neighbourhood, these regions have their own specific ties with other parts of the globe, including the dominant forces in the West. This complex matrix of relations adds to complications in the whole neighborhood.

In the context of the post-Cold War, the Gulf region was seen as the "sphere of influence" of Western powers in the context of the "policy of containment". The countries slated for candidacy within the "sphere of influence" essentially provided the material inputs for hegemony and the looting of resources to mollify the predators' insatiable greed.

This was especially true in countries that were rich in oil as they were quite literally considered as their exclusive enclaves; enabling the Western powers to significantly boost their economies at the expense of looted resources from these regions. When seen historically from the beginning of the 19th century, the pillage of resources has continued for almost 100 years.

This pillage was justified by the "security guarantees" that they ostensibly were providing to

these countries. Unfortunately, this rationale of "vital protection and security" was broadly accepted, in terms of pliable mind-sets, by the countries at the receiving end of the pillage. This state of affairs gave the predators the opportunity to exacerbate divisions within the region and thereby buttress their exploitative practices.

This is a very summarized version of a truly gloomy reality that had gone on for decades.

This reality must also be seen in the context of the dominant outlook in the heydays of the unipolar world order. The uni-polar world order was predicated on premises of full supremacy – with no power that could ever compete with them – in the military, technological and economic domains.

In the neighbourhood in question, this strategy was translated through the establishment of a constellation of foreign military bases – whether it was in Somalia, the Red Sea, the Gulf countries – and the attendant subordination of the national armies through bilateral security and defense agreements. These skewed arrangements allowed for the deployment of foreign naval and air forces.

Sadly, and as I stated earlier, the old guards within the region's countries accepted this reality as a matter of fact and rationalized the pillage and looting as a corollary of the support provided to guarantee their "security" and "protection".

The current changing global dynamics and the gradual rejection of, and moving away, from a unipolar global order has given rise to gradual shift in outlook within the Middle East and the Gulf as well. As such, and within the past 30 years, the Gulf countries begun to slowly diversify and cultivate solid economic ties with Asia, and in particular China, and other parts of the world.

This shift has been influenced by many factors. In the first place, the "containment policy" has floundered with time. Initially the focus was on Russia – as they also have hierarchies in their perceived threats and resultant policy of containment. But now, it is shifting towards China even if this is not spelled out explicitly. Their assumption in earlier times was that China will remain a power house for their investment with its cheap labour and resources. But China is in a position now, especially in terms of the projections in the coming five to ten years, to effectively frustrate the dreams and fantasies of the uni-polar world order.

Of course, this has resulted in significant anxiety within the countries hitherto enjoying

unrestrained access to looted resources. In an effort to block the process of multipolarity and an effort to "contain" China, they have effected various strategies one of which is creating the "debt trap" narrative specially to curb China's growing ties with Africa. In addition to this, they began effecting covert and overt harassment of countries that choose to diversify and create new links.

countries, there are economic consideration, growing markets for their oil etc., that impels them to diversify their ties in global terms. So the changes are correlated with ongoing global dynamics and trends.

There is an interesting parable recited by King Abdallah to Madeline Albright when she claimed that the US was providing his country "protection" – the story tells of a herder who got a dog in an effort to scare off a hyena that was stealing about one goat per week. Ironically, the herder was forced to feed the dog about one goat per day. The moral of the story was that sometimes, the one tasked with "protecting" (i.e. the US) would cost ten folds the price paid for diversifying.

The trend is positive as these countries have seemingly shaken off the erroneous mentality that the West has their best interest at heart. In the same vein, consciousness against hegemony is slowly rising and they are gradually choosing to base their ties on relationships that provide mutual benefits and are not based on "with us or against us" sort of harassments.

Eritrea's ties with the Gulf States were hampered from developing within a framework that was free of influence, meddling, and disinformation. At this time, however, we are seeing some positive and reassuring trends that are related to the gradual shifts in alliances mentioned above as well as the Gulf countries renewed sense of sovereignty. The Gulf countries are fostering new economic ties with Asia, Latin America and other powers besides their traditional domains. This trend is also entailing more profound ties between the Gulf States and other countries of the Horn of Africa.

As expected, and quite unfortunately, some quarters continue to go along with directives received from Washington and Europe, but this is something that we hope can be rectified and remedied over time as the global trend continues shifting and our region grows stronger and more confident in its dealings. We remain committed to, and genuinely believe that, we can positively work towards mending and strengthening of these relationships.