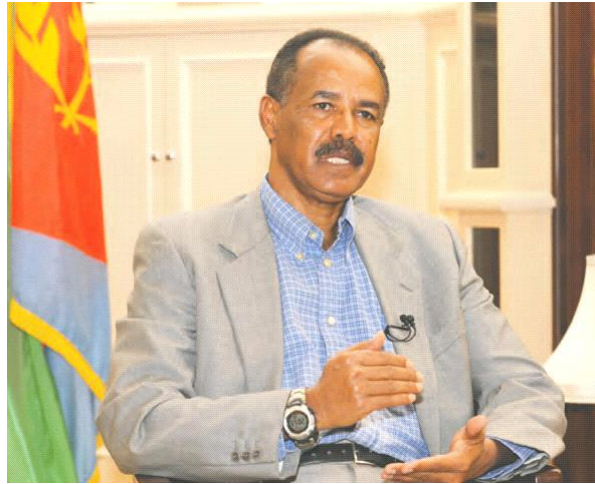


**President Isaias Afwerki:
Weyane have committed four major mistakes
The TPLF has come to the end of the road
The Game is over!**



Mr. President, Ethiopia is in tatters and overwhelmed by political crisis. Conflicts are transpiring regularly within and among the ethnic regions/kilils; mass protests are directed against the government, and the ruling party is engulfed in spiraling internal strife and acrimony; with reports of deep divisions. Where is Ethiopia heading?

The situation in Ethiopia concerns us more than any other case in the region or the neighborhood for evident reason. What has been done over the years? I read a joke in the news very recently that the Ethiopian parliament, meaning Weyane's parliament, has established an inquiry group to investigate the conflicts between two ethnicities. We can look at the contents of Article 39 of the constitution of the Federal Democracy of Ethiopia. This brings us to Weyane's number one agenda; that they want Ethiopia to be plagued by perpetual ethnic strife. If we ask what has transpired in Ethiopia over the past 25 years, the answer is simple; destruction of the country that emanates from the regime's divisive policies. When our ties were good in the early 90s, we used to discuss paramount matters that affect the destiny of the two brotherly peoples; because the future of the two peoples is interlinked. We have fought and sacrificed together. Early on, during the liberation struggle, the TPLF's agenda of the self-determination of Tigray was, for them, independence. We kept telling them that this is not right; [however] they kept on emphasizing that they don't want to live together with the Amhara. This was dropped later but apparently they felt that as they were a minority in numerical terms, they can only rule Ethiopia by driving a wedge and conflicts amongst the other constituent ethnic groups. This agenda was a dismal failure.

The “Progressive” Constitution of the Federal Democracy of Ethiopia was drafted against this backdrop. The overarching state of mind behind this framework was institutionalization of ethnic cleavages in Ethiopia to make it easier for the TPLF to rule the country. Before the EPRDF was even formed, and other forces were around, we used to tell them that this is not the right way. In 1991, we told them to have a transitional constitution for the Ethiopian people to know where they were headed. We were not meddling in their case at the time. Because we were partners, we envisage at least 10 years of transition period. The EPRDF was for them a mere umbrella; not a veritable vehicle for cultivating unity. Now forming an “inquiry committee” to investigate the cause of the conflicts is really risible.

I was one of the first people to look at draft of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (because of our good ties at the time). I maintained from the outset that the inclusion of Article 39 allowing ethnic self-determination up to secession was misguided. In a country of ethnic diversity, instead of organizing their unity for a developed nation, they disregarded the gravity of the situation and kept it as an organizational structure. It is a very dangerous game and the key architects behind this dangerous game were the Weyane regime.

Weyane have committed four major mistakes:

First: Dividing the people of Ethiopia was a strategic folly. Monopolizing or controlling was another grave error.

Second: Putting the resources of the country in the hands of a few people mostly representing a certain ethnic group is very dangerous. They made campaigns in the US and Europe, proclaiming that Ethiopia is lucrative for investment; that it was registering double-digit economic growth; they indulged in reckless selling of the lands. All these led to the prevailing situation. What is the status of Ethiopia’s economy at the moment? It is not what the IMF or the World Bank have advised to [revive] the economy by devaluing the Birr, the country’s legal tender. How can an economy that registered a double-digit growth be in such ailing conditions?

Third: Controlling the military and the security. How did the current security problems in the country unfold? They didn’t even need to have the military or security to live in peace with Eritrea. A mutually-friendly grounds for peace and security was all that was needed. There was no reason for them to go to Somalia or wage a war with Eritrea from the beginning.

Fourth: The government's fourth agenda was to control the situation by relying or becoming subservient to foreign powers. This inevitably engenders dependency. They felt they could rely on external powers to control the domestic situation at home and to betray and victimize Eritrea. What has unfolded in the last 25 years demonstrates the gross errors committed by the TPLF regime and its international partners. If we closely examine the government's policies on politics, economy, security, and foreign policy, the blatant mistakes are clear. The turmoil we see today was not triggered by a single factor; rather it is the accumulated outcome of years of miscalculations in internal and external policies.

Looking back to the past, we can refer to the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations' role in the unfolding crisis in the country. They are responsible in many ways for encouraging a government that was never ready to lead a country responsibly. Where were these administrations when such shambolic policies were being drafted and consequently implemented to devastating outcomes by the Ethiopian government? Why were European government giving a deaf ear to the early warnings coming out of the country? In truth, we cannot just grasp the current unstable climate in the country from internal agendas of the government, but we as well have to shed a considerable amount of light on external and foreign agendas. The government is not capable of handling or delaying such a dire condition for a long period of time. It simply doesn't have the capacity to do so.

The biggest obstacle was the political and economic injections that were made to delay the unfolding circumstances. Major investments were made in the country; in return, these injections not only created the crisis we are witnessing today, but they also played a major role in keeping it under wraps for a long period of time. However, the "intensive care" that was provided could not postpone the inevitable crisis for an indefinite period. The political, economic, security and foreign relations that were said to be positively harnessed over the last 25 years were a slippery slope for Ethiopia. They were misled by Washington and European counterparts. Over the years we saw the government of Ethiopia disregard the history they shared with the Eritrean people. We were betrayed and every tactic imaginable was deployed to erase our entire history. Attempts were made to put a wedge between the good people of Eritrea and Ethiopia. 25 years have been lost and the opportunities for development and stability that were squandered were immense indeed. But we regret nothing. The good relationship between these two countries will never wither.

The government is perhaps in its last straw as it strives to hold a tight grip on power. Assurances of political and economic reform are pronounced every day. Talks of the release of political prisoners are said to be underway. More

promises are being made to resolve the ethnic-based political representation, all of which are nothing but false promises made to keep the current government in power and minimize the severity of the crisis. All these efforts notwithstanding, the TPLF has come to the end of the road; it is Game Over!

15 January 2018