

Never Wrestle With a Pig: You Will Both Get Dirty and the Pig Will Love it

By Mezgebe Gebrekiristos

While training nursing students, a curious healthcare educator asks his student a simple question: “What would you do first if you caught rabies?” The trainee’s answer that raised a lot of eyebrows in the class was: “First of all, I would bite my mother in-law.”

Our planet is full of the likes of the aforementioned student nurse who don’t hesitate to hurt their perceived enemies in anyway they can. A classical example is the king of wars in the Horn of Africa, Isayas Afewerki of Eritrea. Under the leadership of Isayas, the tiny country in the north initiated and fought wars virtually with all of its neighbors—Djibouti being the latest victim—during the last fifteen years. Furthermore, like a crazy dog infected with the rabies virus, he has been involved in biting his own people for crimes they have never committed. To this day, no cure has been found for the rabies that infected Isayas’ brain; and the spree of mass killings and disappearances of innocent Eritreans continues unabated.

Isayas’ madness is not limited to countries that border his country. It has been a public secret that Eritrea is currently fighting the legitimate Somalian government by assisting various terrorist groups such as the UIC and the Alshabab; thereby compromising the genuine efforts of the Ethiopian troops and other interested parts who would like to see a strong and prosperous Somalia in the near future. Eritrea is serving as a hub for all terrorist groups where their senior leaders get military training. The country gives sanctuary to all anti-peace elements in the Horn of Africa; and, in essence, it has become an incubator of terrorism. This fact has been reported by many reliable sources that voiced their concerns over the country’s reckless pursuit that is tantamount to active sponsorship of terrorism--aimed at destabilizing the Horn of Africa.

Given Isayas’ utter ignorance on diplomatic norms and self-evaluation, this author will not be surprised if he declares war on the United States of America. In fact, Eritrea has been slamming the U.S. for its failures in feeding its people and its rough relationship with Ethiopia. Eritrea’s unwarranted rhetoric on the U.S., at times, has been harsh—bordering demagoguery as witnessed in the recent speech of Osman Mohammed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea, while addressing the 63rd session of the U.N. General Assembly. Sometimes, I wonder why the U.S. is not responding to Eritrea’s provocative statements in kind. But I remember, when asked the same question by an Ethiopian Journalist, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi jokingly answered: “Probably the Americans have the ability to discern between a dog that has normal teeth and a dog without any tooth.” For now, that might explain the delayed reaction of the United States of America towards the Eritrean government despite Isayas’ continued bad-mouthing pattern on the U.S. and its allies on the war against terrorism. How long will the U.S. patience last? Only time will tell!

But even a dog without any tooth can do some damage to Ethiopia’s interest--if not to America’s. In fact, Isayas’ main purpose for assisting the terrorist groups in Somalia was spurred by his desire to divert Ethiopia from fighting its number one enemy—the Poverty. Ethiopia effectively denied Eritrea the war that Isayas dearly coveted for the last eight years. As a result, he started a proxy war in Somalia—a country that is hundreds of miles away from Eritrea.

In closing, since we already know that Isayas yearns for wars and is utterly jealous of Ethiopia’s impressive consistent economic growth, the last thing we should do is go to war with him. Words of wisdom: “Never wrestle with a pig; you will both get dirty and the pig will love it.”

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