

# AIDA

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by Dawit W Giorgis

## **The War Between Egypt and Ethiopia that Never Happened**

The Egyptian city of Luxor is located along the Nile River, south of Cairo on the ruins of “Thebes” which the Egyptians and the ancient Egyptians called “Waset.” Luxor rejoiced the return of Verdi’s Opera Aida, last October, after 22 years of absence, an event greatly awaited by opera lovers from around the world, at the Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, the cradle of Egypt’s civilization. Placido Domingo the most famous living tenor played the lead role 22 years ago in Luxor in 1987 February. **Aida** is being shown in several places during festive seasons like this New Year. Aida has been performed in other ancient settings: at the Pyramids of Giza (since 1912), at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome (since the late 1930s) and, of course, at the Roman Theatre of Orange, since 1936. It has also been staged in stadiums, like in Paris and Shanghai. I wonder why it has not been shown in Ethiopia. After all the story is about an Ethiopian Princess: Aida .

“ **Egypt Independent,**” an online popular Egyptian English news paper, writes on October 26, 2019: “ The return of the Opera Aida to Luxor since its premiere at the same location at the end of 1997, is a message of peace and security from Egypt to all parts of the world, and a step towards making Opera **Aida** an annual event on the global tourism agenda... The Opera Aida in Luxor is classified as a Mega Event and is attended by 4,000 first class spectators, 60 percent of which are foreigners from abroad from Europe, Asia and Latin America, 25 percent of foreigners residing in Egypt, while 15 percent are Arab royalty and former Egyptians princess. The occupancy in Luxor hotels reached 100 percent for the event.” Aida shows the historical tension that exists between Ethiopia and Egypt and how the Nile has always been a flash point for conflict between the two countries.

It is told that Ismail Pasha, Khedive of Egypt, commissioned Verdi to write the opera, to celebrate the opening of the Royal Opera House. **Aida** was first performed at Cairo's Khedivial Opera House on 24 December 1871. **Aida** was written by one of the best-loved operatic composers in history – **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813–1901). Born in Italy, Verdi composed 26 different operas during his lifetime, some of the most popular being La Traviata, Rigoletto and Nabucco. . **Aida** is said to have been the most beloved operas of Verdi. I watched Aida at the Giant Stadium in New Jersey, April 1990, again played by the

favorite Placido Domingo. The Los Angeles Times of 26 April, 1990, praised the show; "as the biggest production of any opera ever." I have watched the video recordings several times. It was a three-hour show. A white woman painted black played **Aida**. I wished then, that a black woman played it. But I have seen other versions on documentary clips in which a black woman plays **Aida**. Such characterizations of whites the role of blacks have created some controversies in the performing art world

In Dec 2016, a controversy arose in the musical-theater society University of Bristol, in England, over the casting of white students for playing black characters The National Review in an article titled **Killing Aida**, writes this: "Bristol's **Aida** never got off the ground, because of student protests. The protesters figured that white students would be cast in the musical. And that would be an injustice to Egyptians and Ethiopians. It would be "whitewashing." So, the musical-theater society canceled the show. "We would not want to cause offense in any way," they said." One of the protesting students said, "Whitewashing still exists. It's been done enough in Hollywood. Look at Liz Taylor in *Cleopatra* it is indeed a clash of art and identity politics. 1

**Aida** is one of the world's best-known operas. **Aida** has been performed over 1000 times. The back ground to the opera is fascinating to those who romanticize the past centuries of mystic love, ,betrayal, chivalry and patriotism. Verdi composed this fictional story, opera, known as **AIDA** knowing fully well what the Nile meant for Egypt. It is a tragic story of two lovers caught between wars of their respective countries. In Act one the king of confirms that Ethiopian troops were advancing and that the troops were led by the King of Ethiopia himself , and have already made their way into Thebes. The king appoints Army General Radames as the leader of the army to repel the advance while simultaneously declaring war on Ethiopia.

Radames hopes by being victorious, to win the hand of his lover **Aida** – an Ethiopian enslaved as handmaiden to Egyptian princess, **Amneris**. However, Amneris is in love with Radamès herself, and is growing suspicious. Radamès returns from battle triumphant, but **Aida** is devastated – her own father **Amonasro**, who is actually the King of Ethiopia, has been taken captive. To make matters worse, the King of Egypt rewards Radamès with an unwelcome gift – his daughter Amneris in marriage. When Amonasro tasks **Aida** with helping him avenge Ethiopia Radame's, loyalties collide, with tragic consequences.

Egypt has always been paranoid about the Nile water cut offs by Ethiopia. That fear is entrenched in the psyche of every Egyptian since time immemorial. This fear has been reinforced by biblical stories, other legends but also by historical

facts like the famine of 1200 brought about by low floods of the Nile which in turn was caused by low rainfall in Ethiopia. It is told that it killed:

“One third of Cairo's population. There was no longer any hope that the Nile would rise; and as a result the cost of provisions had already gone up. The provinces were ravaged by drought. The inhabitants foresaw a state of dearth as inevitable, and fear of famine led to disturbances. Those who lived in villages and in the countryside left for the main provincial towns. A great number emigrated to Syria, the Maghreb, Hejaz and the Yemen.... They went further, and reached the stage of eating little children. It was not unusual to find people [selling] little children, roasted or boiled. The commandant of the city guard ordered that those who committed this crime should be burned alive, as should those who ate such meats.”

Before and after such incidents, there has always been the talk of war between Ethiopia and Egypt. “Verdi's story was partly enacted as a bloody reality when Egyptian troops were annihilated by 60,000 Ethiopian troops after making several disastrous imperialistic forays into Ethiopian territory” writes Steven Solomon in his book; `WATER.

In the first Scene, Act I the king of Egypt Ramfis says:

***“Yes it is rumored that the Ethiop dares one again our power in the valley of the Nilus, Threaten as well as Thebes. The truth from messenger I soon shall follow;”***and so begins one of the most sensational shows on earth, reminding the world of how tense the relationship between Ethiopia and Egypt continues to be.

A romantic grand opera, **Aida** is regarded as the grandest of all grand operas because it is usually lavishly staged with a very large cast and orchestra. Throughout his life Verdi wrote a total of 28 operas. Aida has been adapted for motion pictures on several occasions, most notably in a 1953 production, which starred Lois Maxwell and Sophia Loren, and a 1987 production. In both cases, the lead actors lip-synched to recordings by actual opera singers. The opera's story, but not its music, was used as the basis for a 1998 musical written by Elton John and Tim Rice, Elaborate Lives: The Legend of Aida.

So much about **Aida**. The story underlines the importance of the Nile to Egypt and to what extent Egypt would go to ensure that it keeps on flowing unhindered.

### **The War Drums Have Been Beating**

Earth, like our body, is mostly water. 85% of the Earth's surface is water as is 70% of our body. Earth is mostly water in three forms, vapor solid ice and flowing liquid. Water is the most abused natural resource and one that is taken for granted but with climate change and population growth it has either become a primary reason or a contributing factor to conflict, displacement migration, and food insecurity. In Egypt water has never been taken for granted. Water is more than oil for Egypt. Human beings can live without oil but cannot live without water. Clean water can be obtained from many sources but for Egypt Nile is the only source and its people fiercely protect this self-declared exclusive right. In trying to own this right Egypt makes the maximum use of the Nile. Successive Egyptian leaders have taken the Nile as a national security issue and continued the disproportionate use of the waters of the Nile.

During the colonial era, the British had plans to build a huge storage system in the lower Nile valley, possibly in Ethiopia, where evaporation would be much lowered. It also intended building a diversionary canal to suck out the stagnant waters from the swamps of South Sudan to increase the volume of the White Nile which loses half of its volume through evaporation.

The British left Sudan before they were able to realize some of their Nile projects. The idea of building a storage system, a dam in Ethiopia, was discussed on several occasions between Egypt and Ethiopia during the era of Nasser and the late Emperor. Though that would have helped more Egypt by regulating the flow, decreasing the evaporation and increasing the volume of waters going to Egypt and Sudan. It would have also benefited Ethiopia as well, by boosting its hydroelectric power. However the Egyptians did not pursue it because they never trusted Ethiopia. Under this plan Egypt would not be in control of the amount of water reaching Aswan.

Ethiopia was not able to finance the project on its own because the international lending institutions, both bilateral and multilateral were much more influenced by Egypt than Ethiopia. Nasser began the ambitious plan of building the Aswan dam. It's huge 344-mile long, eight-mile wide Lake Nasser reservoir stored over two times the average annual flow of the Nile. For the first time it protected the Nile from drought and flood. This did not last long. By 2005 the population of Egypt tripled to 74 million. After completing the Aswan dam in 1956 Nasser manipulated the newly independent Sudan, which was still relying on Egypt for its security, and concluded the Nile Waters Agreement. Though Ethiopia was the source of four-fifths of the waters of the Nile, Egypt has always claimed imagined historical rights over the Nile.

There are four major theories of allocation of international waters that have been proposed: **Absolute territorial sovereignty • Absolute territorial integrity • Limited territorial sovereignty • Community of interests.** but international law only recognizes limited territorial sovereignty and some elements of the community of interest.

“• Limited territorial sovereignty finds expression in principle of equitable and Reasonable utilization

• Equitable and reasonable utilization central within both UN Watercourses Convention and The UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE)

- neither instrument provides hard and fast rules on who gets what, when?
- Process by which States can reconcile competing interests, and where possible, maximize benefits

From watercourse as a whole

- Interpretation of equitable and reasonable utilization changes over time, which
- Requires cooperation
- Interaction between science and law
- Recognition of developments in state practice

Neither Egypt nor any of the riparian states can have exclusive or disproportionate claims over the waters of the Nile. It has to be negotiated. Despite this, under the 1959 agreement Egypt got the three-quarters or 55.5 billion cubic meters of the available flow after evaporation and Sudan received one quarter or 18.5 billion cubic meters which at the time exceeded its needs. This agreement ignored Ethiopia's interest and all the seven upstream riparian states. The argument over Egypt's grab of the waters was source of tension between the Emperor and President Sadat. During the era of the military regime, the dergue, President Sadat continued the highhanded policy of Egypt. As the war in northern and Eastern Ethiopia intensified, it became clear that Egypt was increasing its involvement in three fronts: supporting the Eritrean Liberation Movements (ELF,EPLF) the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Siad Barre government fighting to annex the Ogaden under the guise of the Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF), later transformed to (ONLF) That was one way that Egypt was flexing its muscle. In 1979, Sadat brazenly threatened to use Egypt's military might if Ethiopia tries to take away or in any way compromise its exclusive rights on the waters of the Nile.

During the great famine in Ethiopia, when Ethiopia experienced successive years of deficit rain and millions were exposed to drought and resulting famine, Egypt was affected as well. The Nile experienced its lowest level between 1979 to 1988. Sudan was also severely affected. The Aswan Dam could not protect Egypt as it plunged to 40% below normal. It was reminiscent of the 1200 AD famine. It

was another shock for Egypt and again its national security threats was raised to the highest level. Nasser died before the completion of the Aswan dam and though it was a successive and bold project it was now up to his successor Anwar Sadat to ensure that the nation was protected from the perennial existential threat. The Aswan dam also compromised Egypt's desire, as the vanguard of Arab nationalism, then, to challenge Israel at will like it did in three wars (1948, 1956 and 1967.) Israel threatened Egypt that it will bomb the Aswan dam if it tries to ignite another conflict. Sadat made a strategic decision to make peace with Israel. Egypt's primary security threat was water and not Israel.

The successor of President Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, took a more moderate approach partly because his foreign minister was Boutros Boutros -Ghali, a seasoned diplomat who believed in dialogue and cooperation. The project to reroute the swamps of South Sudan to the White Nile was suddenly suspended in 1984 after 70% of the project was completed. The project was attacked several times by the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement. Ethiopia had something to do with this attack or so did Egypt believe. It was a signal to Egypt that it cannot exploit the Nile at will.

Hosni Mubarak used his leverage on Ethiopia by arming and supporting the secessionist movements. Though Boutros Ghali's Nile diplomacy seemed to be moderate, a silent war was waged on Ethiopia that made Ethiopia ever weak and unable to assert its full rights on the Nile. Ethiopia was not seen, as a threat at the time precisely because Egypt had all the cards and was supported by the entire world. With the military regime's adoption of communism as its guiding ideology and the mushrooming of internal rebellion from all corners of Ethiopia, Mengistu's grandiose ambition of creating a strong assertive Ethiopia was in tatters. Egypt relished this and continued to fan the flames. Ethiopian student movements and radical elites were willing and or ignorant partners in this. The current Egypt's support to ethnic and religious extremism in Ethiopia is the more aggressive version of Egypt's and the Arab world policy of the 1960s and the 1970s. It was implemented under the cover of fighting communism but beneath that façade the real agenda was the dismantling and weakening of Ethiopia.

Just before I left Ethiopia at the end of 1985, the Tana Beles project, funded by the Italians , was underway. This was a project at the mouth of the Nile, near Lake Tana. I was the one who signed the draft grant agreement through Salini who was the actual broker to the grant from the Italian government. It was a response by the Italian government to the ongoing drought and food shortages in Ethiopia. I had already agreed to allow Italian experts to conduct the feasibility study. At one time, when I accompanied Mengistu to Bahr Dar, I asked him if he could visit the team which was doing the feasibility study on the ground. He refused to see it. He later endorsed it and did appreciate our effort as it turned

out to be a success story. It became a pilot project picked up by Meles for the design and construction of the GERD. Meles initiated the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) for purely political reasons. He was trying to distract the attention of the people and bring back the earlier nationalist feelings of Ethiopians at a time when his regime was losing the support of the majority of Ethiopians as a result of his minority ethnic dictatorship. Those were the years when the Arab world was rocking because of the Arab uprising (Arab Spring) that toppled so many governments. Since the beginning the construction of the GERD has been plagued by corruption with millions of dollars being channeled to the pockets of individuals and into dubious enterprises, which benefited only the ruling minority. Recent reports from Addis state that 59 people have been charged with corruption related to the GERD.

The Tan Beles project was the last international agreement that I signed before I left Ethiopia, in November 1985. The then ambassador to Italy, Ambassador Tesfaye Abdi, was fully involved in the prolonged discussion that culminated with this agreement. This project was not welcome by the Egyptian government. The Ethiopian Ambassador in Egypt was given a stern warning by the foreign minister Boutros- Gahli who indicated that such acts, which did not seek Egypt's consent would lead to conflict. During the same period, " when Boutros-Ghali learned that Israel hydrologists and engineers were doing feasibility studies on a number of dam sites in Ethiopia, with the potential to store as much as half of the volume of water reaching Aswan, he summoned Ethiopia's ambassador to the foreign office in Cairo in November 1989 and sternly warned that any damming of the blue Nile would be taken as an act of war by Egypt unless it had its consent. "

And then came the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, initiated by Meles Zenawi, the leader who took over from Mengitsu. Ethiopia is building one of the largest dams in the world, on the River Nile near the Sudan border. The dam will flood 1,680 square kilometers of forest in northwest Ethiopia (an area about four times the size of Cairo), displace approximately 20,000 people in Ethiopia, and create a reservoir that will hold around 70 billion cubic meters of water – equivalent to the entire annual flow of the Blue Nile at the Sudan border. According to International Rivers the project's projected electricity capacity of 6,000MW.

Although it is Africa's biggest dam project and will have lasting impacts on its longest river, the GERD has been developed under a veil of secrecy. The dam will impact Ethiopians and downstream neighbors, yet its planning process has been top-down and unilateral. The public and dam-affected people have not been given a meaningful opportunity to critique the project or process. The Ethiopian government has stated it will not make changes to the project.

According to International Rivers, even donor governments were taken by surprise when the project was suddenly begun. Norway, which had been designing two Nile dams for the Ethiopian government, was blindsided by the GERD project, which nullifies the work already done on the other two dam projects. *Development Today* magazine reports that Norway wasted about US\$2-3 million in work done on the now-obsolete projects.

Damming a shared river in a secretive and unilateral fashion goes against best practices for managing shared rivers. Says Mohamed Allam, former minister of irrigation and water resources in Egypt: "This is not just about Egypt and Sudan. International rivers are governed by laws and conventions, in accordance with which any action that affects water quotas requires advanced notice and guarantees against possible harm."

In 2013 after construction began, Ethiopia agreed to the formation of an international Panel of Experts, with members from Egypt and Sudan, to review the GERD's social and environmental impacts on downstream nations. The 10-member panel submitted its report to the governments in June 2013. International Rivers received a leaked copy of the report in March 2014, which it published with a summary. The panel found numerous important gaps in the project documentation, and noted: "The (hydrological study) is very basic, and not yet at a level of detail, sophistication and reliability that would befit a development of this magnitude, importance and with such regional impact as GERD."

Although Ethiopia says the dam will benefit downstream neighbors and will have no ill effects on their water supply, there is no denying that the dam will give Ethiopia greater control over the river's flow. A major concern is how filling the huge reservoir will affect water security in Egypt, which relies almost totally on the Nile for its water supply. Depending on how long it takes to fill the reservoir (it has been estimated it will take from 5-7 years), the Nile flow into Egypt could be cut by 12-25% during the filling period. One hydrologist estimates that the reservoir could evaporate 3bn cubic meters of water a year – three times Egypt's annual rainfall, and enough to meet the basic needs of up to half a million people. A major shortcoming is the lack of gauges on the Blue Nile in Ethiopia, which means data on the river's flow is inadequate.

According to a Bloomberg reporter who has reviewed the Panel of Experts report, the project document concludes that "Egypt faces a 6% reduction in the High Aswan Dam's electricity-generating capacity and no water loss if the reservoir is filled during years of average or high rainfall. If the reservoir is filled in a dry year it would 'significantly impact on water supply to Egypt and cause the loss of power generation at High Aswan Dam for extended periods'." The Panel is calling for a "comprehensive" additional study of the dam's impact on water resources, stating: "The analysis presented is very basic, and not yet at a

level of detail, sophistication and reliability that would befit a development of this magnitude, importance and with such regional impact.” 7

With coming into power of Mohamed Mursi head of the Freedom and Justice Party (Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt) situation got worse “Egypt's water security cannot be violated at all,” Mr. Morsi stated. “As president of the state, I confirm to you that all options are open. Egypt is the Nile's gift, then the Nile is a gift to Egypt,” he said, quoting popular sayings about the river in an emotive televised speech. “The lives of the Egyptians are connected around it... as one great people. If it diminishes by one drop then our blood is the alternative.” Egyptian politicians were also inadvertently heard on live TV proposing military action at a meeting called by President Mohammed Morsi. One of the politicians suggested sending special Forces to destroy the dam; another thought of jet fighters to scare the Ethiopians; and a third called for Egypt to support rebel groups fighting the government in Addis Ababa. “This could yield results in the diplomatic arena,” liberal politician and former presidential candidate Ayman Nour told the gathering. Egypt apologized for this but it clearly once gain expressed the extreme measure that Egypt would take if GERD, in any way, affected the historic flow of the Nile to Egypt.

Mohamed Morsi was removed in 2013 and General Abdal Fatah Sisi stepped in but the stalemate continued. For eight years, Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan have been engaged in tripartite talks to reach a final agreement on the rules of filling and operating GERD, without reaching any result. Egypt approached the US to mediate and the White House announced that it “supports... ongoing negotiations to reach a cooperative, sustainable, and mutually beneficial agreement on filling and operating the dam.”

Egyptian Presidential Spokesman Bassam Rady said his country welcomes the White House statement, pointing that the failure of the negotiations to reach tangible progress reflects the need for an effective international role to bring the views of the three countries closer. Egyptian foreign ministry stated:

“The U.S.-brokered talks over the controversial dam being constructed by Ethiopia on the Nile River brought positive results,” the ministry said in a statement on its face book page. Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan have agreed on a timetable for reaching an agreement to set the rules for filling and operating GERD, it said. The meeting gathered on Wednesday the foreign ministers of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, the U.S. and the World Bank representatives. After four urgent meetings with participation of the three countries' water resources ministers, along with representatives of the U.S. and the World Bank, they agreed on “filling and operating the dam in two months starting from Jan. 15, 2020,” it said. There will be another two meetings in Washington on the invitation of the U.S. Ministry of Treasury to evaluate the course of progress in the negotiations,

the statement added. The stakes are high. Talk of physical conflict between the countries along the Nile has receded, but Egypt sees the dam as an existential threat that could decimate farming and damage power supplies. Egypt's claim is based on passion not reason. Alharam, Egypt's own paper tries to reason out.

Quoting Al Ahram, Addis Standard writes: " The completion of the Aswan Dam on July 21, 1970 sent one critical message to Africa, and most importantly to Ethiopia. That is, the Aswan Dam was meant to divorce or delink Africa in general, and Ethiopia in particular, from the waters of the Nile. The Nasserites' Dam proclaimed that Ethiopia was no longer a provider of fertility, sustenance and survival to Egypt. In other words, the radical young military officers voiced that the Aswan Dam was a game changer to make Lake Nasser the source of the Nile waters abandoning Lake Tana or their calculation amplified that the Aswan Dam would make Lake Nasser Lake Tana's superior. Removing Ethiopia, the major contributor of the Nile, from the waters of the Nile was absolutely a mirage as their geopolitical calculation was against nature, humanity, history, geography and sustainability....This principle was the unilateral, myopic and narrow entitlement of Egypt to the waters of the Nile anchoring the water security based on the delusory paternalistic hydro political hegemonic mindset. This kind of delusion has continued to the present day forsaking Ethiopia's survival, water, and food insecurity."

But Ethiopia holds the high ground in its claim. Dr, Gebre Tsadik Degefu's brilliant argument in his book lays to rest the legal and historic tiresome argument of Egypt. Politics aside Meles has also made a brilliant case for the dam as well as the benefits for Egypt at many international and bilateral meetings. In successive meetings Ethiopian experts have skillfully argued how the dam benefits Sudan and Egypt. However Egypt continues to echo the unfounded fear for domestic politics. Egypt has to make its house in order and understand that the Nile is no more going to be taken for granted. The colonial era and the era of AIDA is over Ethiopia has endured so many losses as a result of its complacency on the use of the Nile. It is no more going to be business as usual.

More recently Egypt has demanded to get fixed volume of water. Ethiopia cannot guarantee that. This will depend on nature and consequences must be shared. As I write this a friend of mine familiar with the issue sent me a message from Addis: " Egypt wants a FIXED volume to flow from Ethiopia every year. They want the so-called technical guidelines to reverse every element of the major political agreement reached by the three heads of states. More seriously they want the US and the World Bank to be part of the agreement. It is their backdoor way of imposing an international treaty agreement on Ethiopia.... The only technical negotiations we should have at this time is 'how many years it should take to fill the dam?' Ethiopia has made provisions for the water to continue to flow while the filling proceeds. In the end, Egypt may lose less than 10% of the water from the Nile for just a few years. That is all but greed and their confidence in the backing they are likely to get from the US and the World Bank have emboldened them." The World Bank had refused to finance the GERD

under pressure from Egypt and its allies. Now the World Bank and the IMF have opened their doors to Ethiopia. That is not a simple coincidence. Many believe that its quid pro quo. “We will give you money to finish the dam to you agree to the terms and conditions of Egypt.”

Three countries and two observers have been cited in the heading of the last technical report. We have seen such strategies too many times. Observers slowly become active participants and try to impose their agendas. The seven Nile basin countries should be the only countries that should discuss any question related to the rights on the waters of the Nile. Ethiopia should not allow this case to be internationalized. That is what Egypt wants because it has certainly overwhelming backing from those who own the UN, the World Bank and the IMF and the entire Arab World. It was wrong to take the case to the USA. What did the government of Ethiopia expect from the USA? Ethiopia surprised Egypt and Sudan by announcing that the first phase of filling the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam Lake would begin in July 2020. Egypt wants to prevent this from happening. During the last UN general assembly meeting PM Abiy’s statement was unequivocal and a good response to Sisis’s speech a few days earlier. Ethiopia’s should have a firm stand and a very strong skillful team at all the negotiations. It has a lethal weapon that no body can take. The firm position it takes today will affect all other relationships with the Arab world. It must be able to have its own quid pro quo. The option that it has, is much more powerful than they have. Ethiopia’s weakness is money and the money it may get today in exchange for this vital interest of Ethiopia will come to haunt it forever because their agenda of ever weakening Ethiopia will never change.

“The last round of talks in Cairo was disappointing, and despite that, we hoped to reach an agreement on disputed issues between Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia,” Bekele said at the meeting, which aims to negotiate the rules of filling the GERD reservoir.” Ethiopian Minister of Water, Irrigation, and Electricity Seleshi Bekele made the announcement during the third round of talks that kicked off in Khartoum between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, and in the presence of the representative of the US Department of the Treasury and the World Bank. The arms twisting through the big powers will continue so will Egypt’s attempt to more aggressively destabilize and disunite Ethiopia. And it seems that it has recruited, found or bought willing partners in Ethiopia. The multi pronged offensive has started as can be seen in Ethiopia. Egypt is not alone in this but united, Ethiopia can overcome this challenge.

### **The Undeclared War ( Part II )**