

Does Any Ethiopian Understand the Motive Behind Ethiopia's Unilateral Ceasefire? --- Is Ethiopia heading for state collapse?

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Part II

“Unable to control Tigray, Ethiopia isolates region already beset by famine and war. ... Aid groups report that there has been no Internet, phone service or electricity in Tigray since Ethiopian troops retreated and that no food or fuel are being allowed in....”

The Washington Post

Following a conversation with Prime Minister Abiy on July 6, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken issued a threatening statement and called for **“the complete withdrawal of Eritrean and Amhara forces from Tigray; for full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to populations in need; for the establishment of a transparent process to hold accountable those responsible for human rights abuses and atrocities; and for an affirmation that neither the internal nor external borders of Ethiopia will be changed by force or in contravention of the constitution.”**

The one recommendation to which I and millions of Ethiopians subscribe to is the recommendation for an-all inclusive national dialogue for peace, reconciliation, and national consensus. Without peace, there is no prospect for development. In turn, this requires a lengthy period of soul searching, reflection and strategic thinking on the part of all Ethiopian stakeholders. The international community, especially Western democracies can help Ethiopia and all Ethiopians by refraining from taking sides. The old colonial motive of “divide and rule” does not do the trick.

The most important domestic variable to save Ethiopia from collapse at this critical moment in Ethiopia's long and distinguished history is for **all Ethiopians to pull in the same direction**. For example, US Secretary of State Blinken demanded “for an affirmation that neither the internal nor external borders of Ethiopia will be changed by force or in contravention of the constitution.” By this he meant that the Amhara must abandon their legitimate claim of Wolkait, Tegede, Telemt and Raya. He ignored completely the historical fact that these lands were forcibly annexed and incorporated into Tigray by the TPLF in the 1980s and 1990s. The evidence is out there for the Department of State to consider (See evolution of administrative maps of Ethiopia).

It is vital that Ethiopians who believe firmly and genuinely in the future of Ethiopia, in justice and the peaceful resolution of conflicts understand that the reference to “affirmation that neither the internal nor the external borders of Ethiopia will be changed by force or in contravention of the Constitution” refer to Wolkait, Tegede, Telemt and Raya that were forcibly annexed by the TPLF. Annexation of these lands is not an Amhara or Gondarie issue. It is an

Ethiopian issue. Secretary Blinken should have refrained from emboldening the TPLF or other forces to go to war and retake lands that were never part of Tigray in the first place.

What prompted the USA to declare such a draconian position that affects the internal affairs of a sovereign nation? Failure to recognize Ethiopia's geopolitical and administrative history is patently colonial bordering on racism. The push to legitimize land annexation is tantamount to supporting the secession of Tigray from Ethiopia. Secession too will prove costly to Tigreans.

The Government of the US never expressed outrage when the TPLF that it helped come to power **annexed and incorporated these lands** into Greater Tigray. Nor did it express concern for the Amhara girls and women who were raped by the TPLF at the time. Do not these Ethiopians deserve justice and equality? Is one ethnic group superior to the other? Is this preferential treatment fair? Does it really serve American national interests in the long run?

History tells us that the TPLF vowed to support the USA if its narrow or ethnic elite interests were supported and rewarded. A terrorist group became a darling of the USA and other democracies. Things changed after the TPLF was rejected by the Ethiopian people. Rejection of repression or exclusion by any ethnic group over another is a noble idea that must be celebrated by all peace-loving people and governments. The motive behind demanding that "internal or external border change" is disallowed and illegal tantamount to dictating to Ethiopia that it does not have sovereign rights within its own boundaries. This is an imperial edict that Black Africa must never accept. The colonial and imperial era of dictating policies to countries poor or rich is long gone.

There is another motive that I believe must be disclosed. It seems to me that the US does not want **a strong, unified, prosperous and all-inclusive** Ethiopia and a nationalist Federal Government that would enable it to achieve these aspirational goals. Why else would Ireland, Finland, the USA and other Western democracies make **Ethiopia an agenda item for UN Security Council** deliberation on purely domestic issues?

Why do the goal posts keep changing?

By the goal post changing constantly, I mean it changes **from crime against humanity, ethnic cleansing, genocide, rape** to a catastrophic humanitarian crisis and fast forward to **imminent famine** caused by the cordoning off Tigray from unhindered access to food etc. I guarantee you that the story line will change again and again until the end game is achieved. How come Western democracies do not demand that the TPLF cease terrorism or that Sudanese military forces move out Ethiopia?

Secretary Blinken talks about the sanctity of internal and external borders. Who anointed the US to determine an African internal border? After all, the colonial era of dissecting Africa into small pieces along ethnic lines is long gone. It is hypocritical and precedent setting for all Black African nations to dictate that they adjust their internal borders in line with the dictates of the Government of the US. Here I urge all Africans and African Americans to defend Ethiopia.

Let me be more specific. What is the motive of American silence on the Sudanese invasion of Ethiopia?

It concerns me and millions of Ethiopians that the Biden Administration did not demand that Sudanese military forces that annexed Ethiopian lands to halt their aggression and restore the lands they annexed by force to Ethiopia etc. Sudanese aggression, annexation, robbery of properties owned by indigenous people and proxy war are all violations of international law as well as of Covenants agreed by the African Union. Behind this reluctance, it seems to me, is the second filling and completion of the GERD. This is more problematic than the Tigray issue that Ethiopians are poised to solve one way or another.

Be ready for more shocks.

Some policy insiders tell me that we should not be shocked if the Biden Administration proposes a reason to side with Egypt and Sudan and demand that Ethiopia ceases filling the dam. At a time when the Biden Administration tells us that “Black Lives matter,” such a development would be doing the complete opposite in Africa where most of the planet’s Black people live.

At today’s hearing in the Security Council of the UN, US Ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield uttered the following appropriate words:

“The Horn of Africa is at an **inflection point**. Decisions in the weeks and months ahead will have significant, long-term implications for the people of the region. The United States is committed to addressing the interlinked regional crises and to supporting a **prosperous and stable Horn of Africa**. So, we stand ready to support collaborative and constructive efforts by Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan to resolve the issues over the GERD.

We understand that the Nile waters and how these waters are used are important to all three of these countries. And we believe this is an issue that can be reconciled. A **balanced and equitable solution** to the filling and operation of the GERD can be reached with political commitment from all parties. Egypt and Sudan’s concerns over water security and the safety and operation of the dam can be reconciled with Ethiopia’s development needs.

This begins with the resumption of productive, substantive negotiations. Those negotiations should be held under the leadership **of the African Union and should** recommence with urgency. This process should use the **2015 Declaration of Principles** signed by the parties and the July 2020 statement by the AU Bureau as foundational references.”

This statement is in line with Ethiopia’s position. Those of us in the Diaspora involved with the GERD must hammer this point repeatedly. We should also propose that the long-term solution is for all eleven Nile River Riparian nations to arrive at a water sharing Agreement.

The GERD is beneficial to Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan and to the rest of Africa. Look at it from the human side. Does not **the GERD free Black Ethiopian girls** and women from the backbreaking work of hauling woods on their back? Isn't the GERD freedom for the poor of Ethiopia 60 percent of whom do not have access to electricity? Does it not contribute to the African grid that the US supports? At a basic level, "Is Black Ethiopian life less worthy of support by the US compared to Egyptian life?"

Why the bias and selectivity?

Does the Biden administration care that demanding the restoration of lands annexed by the TPLF to the Tigray region will lead to a catastrophe? Does the Administration care to know the historical truth that there has never been a "Western Tigray" before the annexation by force?

I know the history because I spent 6 months conducting research on Wolkait, Tegede, Telemt and Raya. There is literally no historical evidence that these lands were ever part of Tigray. The border lines between the Amhara /Begemdir and Gondar and Tigray are the Tekezie River areas (examine the administrative maps attached).

I also suggest that the US does not have the moral or legal authority to sanction annexation and incorporation.

The Washington Post's latest accusatory statement of Ethiopia cited above, and Secretary Blinken's statement remind me of an American idiom, "**Damned if I/you do, damned if I (we) don't.**" The narrative on Tigray changes constantly for a reason. The policy and decision makers in the USA and other Western democracies that are determined to bring down the Government of Ethiopia encourage their media to feed into and reinforce misleading and patently false information on the ground. Relentless assault of Ethiopia serves their national interests, ultimate objectives and helps them **justify punitive measures against** Ethiopia.

Where is parity and fairness in US policy?

In summary, the Federal Government of Ethiopia **declared a unilateral ceasefire** which the Biden Administration must commend. Instead of berating Ethiopia, the US should demand that the TPLF and allied terrorist groups also abandon their terrorist acts and declare ceasefire. The reference to the "destruction of bridges" is appropriate.

What is missing is to pinpoint and demand that the TPLF cease destroying investment property and stop placing blame on Ethiopia, including Amhara Special Forces that protect innocent civilians from more attacks by the TPLF. The Mai Kadra massacre is still fresh in the minds of the local population as well as the rest. I urge the Biden Administration to acknowledge that Amhara Special Forces are not in Tigray. They are in Amhara lands.

In part I of this series, I underlined the **incontestable trend** that if **We** Ethiopians within and outside the country do not get our act together, **agree on a unity of purpose**, defend Ethiopia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, defend Ethiopia's legitimate rights to complete the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) by mobilizing and channeling resources, and demand that Western democracies stop dividing our society on the basis of ethnicity, then the failure to save Ethiopia from **disintegration is ours; and not theirs.**

Western donor governments and agencies must refrain from using their alms to pressure Ethiopia to submit to their will. In fundamental ways on the ground, aid has done very little to eradicate poverty; and to strengthen a self-reliant and prosperous Ethiopian society. Most aid monies are stolen. The Federal Government of Ethiopia has yet to show a consistent and bold commitment to remove institutional and structural barriers and to create an enticing environment in boosting domestic productivity; and in stimulating the creation of millions of jobs each year. Those in the Diaspora with means are often discouraged because of lack of **confidence in those with power.**

Finally, at this time in Ethiopia's history, our unified call must be to set aside non-strategic interests and **to save Ethiopia from collapse.** It is only when we have a country called Ethiopia that we can fight with one another as to who can and must govern the country.

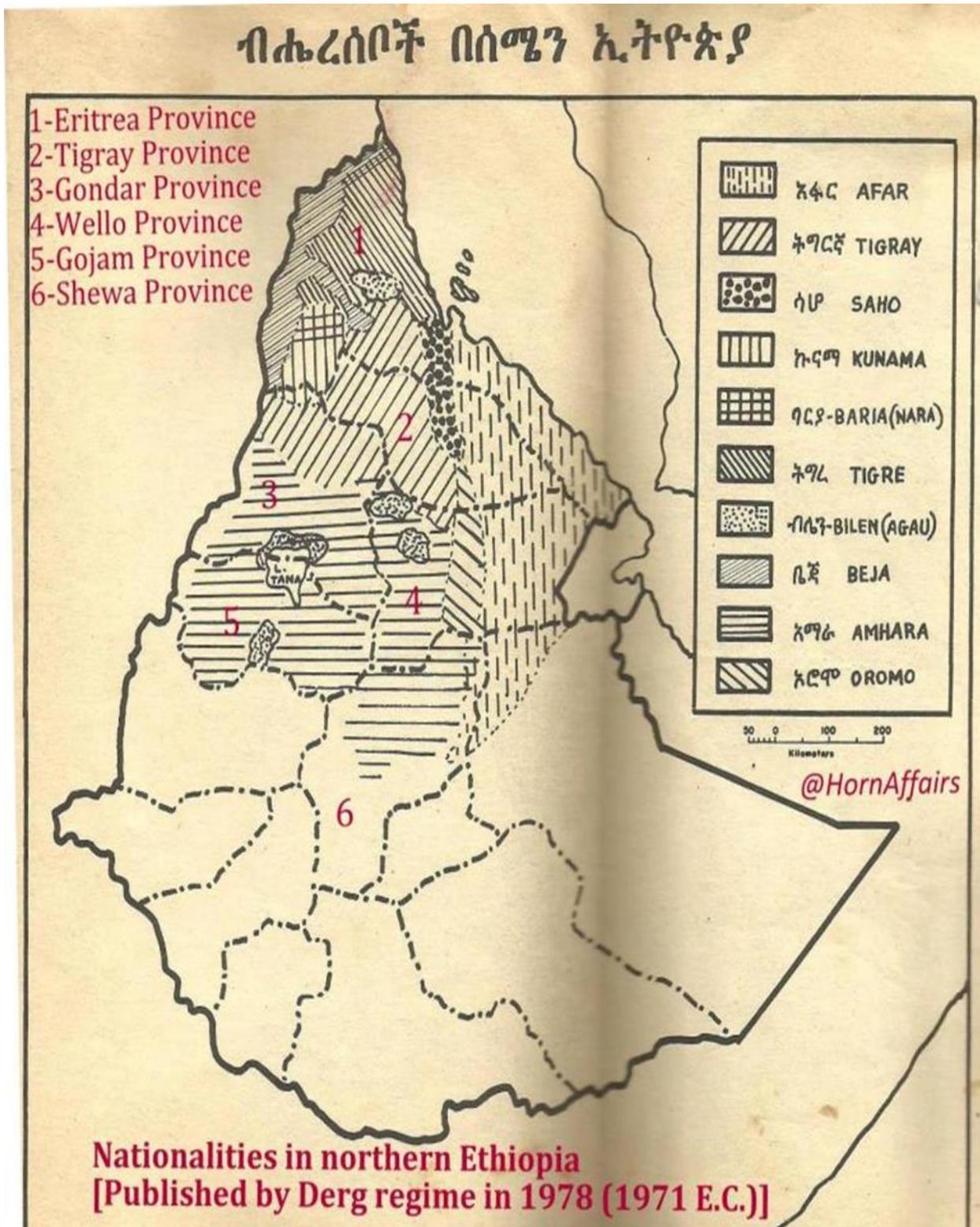
The one compelling theme in the latest of changing narratives by the US Department of State that I also defend is the appeal and call that the Ethiopian people deserve an "All party conference and political dialogue that will lead to national reconciliation, peace and national consensus."

Ethiopia's sustainable and equitable development is virtually unattainable without peace.

July 8, 2021

References

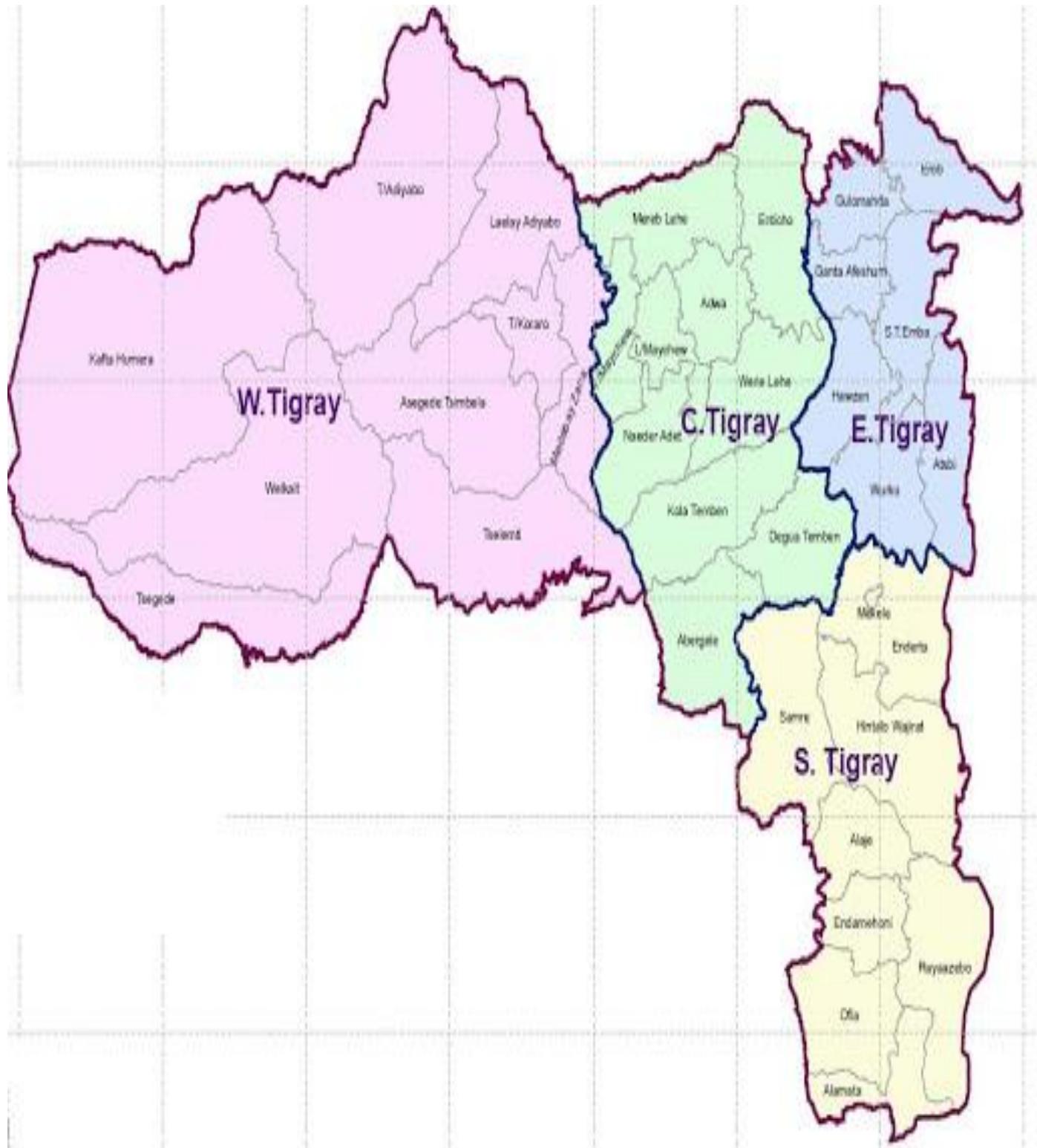
Map I: Geopolitical map of Ethiopia by ethnic designation under the Socialist Government



Map II: Geopolitical map of Ethiopia before TPLF took power, 1991



Map III. Western Tigray: the evolution of annexation and incorporation after 1991.



Note:

Map III depicts annexation and expansion. I urge the reader to notice the huge expansion of Tigray after it annexed and incorporated large tracts of lands that belong to the Amhara population. This is what US Secretary of State Blinken is demanding that PM Abiy Ahmed restore to Tigray. The price that the Amhara population will pay upon restoration will be huge and permanent. Has anyone asked what the indigenous population would say or do?

Therefore, one must reflect about the devastating consequences of restoration. The way forward is for all Ethiopians to live and work in any part of Ethiopia without fear. For this to happen, the ethnicity-based Constitution must be changed or amended or scrapped.

The last point is this. **West Tigray is a new and post 1991 phenomenon** instilled in the minds of Western democracies and embraced as fact by a large segment of the Tigrean population.

The region is among the least developed because budgets were diverted deliberately to keep the indigenous population poor and backward.

Part III will follow soon