

The anti-Eritrea campaigns in cyberspace are in full swing and it is not just the economic, social and political systems in Eritrea that are under attack, it is the people and their hope and confidence in the future that is now being attacked.

The word 'hope' derived from late Old English word 'hopa' which means 'confidence in the future'. The doomsayers know that even a slight amount of hope can lead to significant changes not just in one's own life, but even change the entire course of history.

Tanishka Safri wrote:

"...Hope is essential for human existence. Hope is as old as humanity. Hope is a desire with an expectation for something, especially something good, to happen. Hope implies little certainty, but it implies confidence in the possibility of that desire. Hope affects the thinking of a person and the way he or she perceives events. Hope not only shapes a person's behavior, but also motivates him, increases persistence and enables a person to go on, keep trying and not give up. Hope opens up new creative possibilities and fills an individual with positive emotions such as happiness and courage..."

She goes on:

"...Hope serves as a promise or reason for expecting a better future, and without hope, a change is spiritually inconceivable. Research shows that people who score high in hope have better psychological health (lower levels of depression and anxiety, and higher levels of happiness and well-being). In college, more hopeful students showed greater all-around success, and more of them finished their graduation. High-hope people have been shown to cope better in burn injuries, spinal-cord injuries, severe arthritis, chronic fatigue syndrome, and even cancer. Hope allows people to approach problems with a mindset and strategy-set suitable to success, thereby increasing the chances they will actually accomplish their goals, therefore having hope or to hope, is essential in life...Hope is like the sun, which as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us..."

During the liberation struggle, facing an enemy supported by powerful states of the time, amidst the constant Ethiopian bombing raids, and against all odds, Eritrea declared, "Our Victory is Certain". Despite the pain and suffering...in the hearts and minds of all Eritreans everywhere, hope loomed large.

William Blum, an American historian explains in his seminal book, "Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II", says that if one were to flip over the rock of American foreign policy of the past century (with the Europeans in tow), what crawls out would be... invasions ... bombings ... overthrowing governments ... occupations ... suppressing movements for social change ... assassinating political leaders ... perverting elections ... manipulating labor unions ... manufacturing "news" ... death squads ... torture ... biological warfare ... depleted uranium ... drug trafficking ... mercenaries ... human traffickers... all instruments used to kill Hope.

The end of World War 2 brought an end to European colonial era, but gave birth to an even deadlier era of neo-colonialism with its economic, social and political policies under which the people of Africa in general, and the people of the Horn suffered greatly....and Hope was assaulted.

One such nation, Eritrea, bore the brunt of the insidious and catastrophic policies for the region, spent the better part of the last 60 years in a bitter 30yr long armed struggle for independence, and the last 28 years in ensuring its territorial integrity and sovereign rights in an increasingly hostile international and regional environment, which included an aggressive two year war of aggression and occupation in 1998-2000, imposition of a 9yr long unfair and illegal UN sanctions, an unprecedented 20- year long campaign of defamation and vilification by the western media and the NGO community in tow, as well as a sustained campaign to isolate Eritrea from regional and international forums.

Successive Ethiopian regimes, propped up by the West, wreaked havoc in the lives of millions of Eritreans and Ethiopians. The refusal of the US led international community to grant Eritrea its independence after the defeat of Italy in World War 2, and colluding to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia, a US ally, emboldened the regime to forcefully annex Eritrea in 1962 triggering the bitter 30-year long armed struggle for independence. In 1991, with the liberation of Eritrea from the clutches of Ethiopians colonialism, peace and hope were restored in the Horn region. But both peace and hope would soon be threatened.

Barely 6 years into independence Eritrea witnessed the machinations of yet another deadly US policy for the region and the propping of a mercenary minority regime in Ethiopia to do its bidding. Eritrea was forced to defend itself against Ethiopia's invasion and occupation in 1998-2000. Ethiopia refused to resolve the "border conflict" peacefully and emboldened by the diplomatic, financial and military shield and support from the international community launched three successive offensives against Eritrea. Thousands lost their lives and vital economic infrastructures were destroyed and millions were displaced from their homes and villages. In December 2000, the Algiers Agreements were signed bringing an end to the destructive war.

The Eritrea Ethiopia border conflict was resolved through legal arbitration in 2002 when the independent Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) delivered its final and binding delimitation decision. It awarded Badme, the casus belli for the conflict, unequivocally to Eritrea. In 2007, the EEBC delivered its final and binding demarcation decision. Ethiopia refused to accept the delimitation and demarcation decisions and tried every gimmick in the book to amend, revise and reverse the decision. The US led international community refused to enforce the EEBC decisions and allowed Ethiopia's occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories, including Badme, to continue for over 16 years.

The regime in Ethiopia was labeled the "US' staunch ally" in the Global War on Terror launched in 2001 and the minority regime enjoyed US and the West's economic, financial and military support and shield as it invaded and occupied neighboring states, committed massacres against its own people and threatened to destabilize the entire region. Its ethnic based policies sparked conflicts that raged across Ethiopia and threatened its implosion.

Alongside Ethiopia's 20-yr long belligerent stance, Eritrea was also battling an even more sinister and insidious attempt to thwart its independence, retard its economic development and kill hope. The orchestrated defamation and vilification campaigns by the massive NGO community, with the western media in tow, attacked every nascent Eritrean institution. The mushrooming of several cyber NGOs in 2001 targeted Eritrea's youth who were lured out of the country with false promises of asylum and education. In addition to those who perished in the Mediterranean Sea, many more languish in refugee camps in neighboring states, the Sinai and Libya, leaving the comfort of their homes and hope behind.

The youth were used as pawns by Ethiopia, its sponsors and its surrogates in the Eritrean Quislings League, disguised as "human rights" and "democracy" activists, to effectuate "regime change" in Eritrea. Most of the groups were funded by US and European agencies such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). William Blum who has written extensively about foreign interventions in Africa and elsewhere writes:

"...In a multitude of ways, NED meddles in the internal affairs of foreign countries by supplying funds, technical know-how, training, educational materials, computers, fax machines, copiers, automobiles and so on, to selected political groups, civic organizations, labor unions, dissident movements, student groups, book publishers, newspapers, other media, etc ..."

The people of Eritrea withstood the onslaught with sheer determination and sacrifice. Their resilience bore hope.

The 27 year long joint struggle of the peoples of the region resulted in new change in Ethiopia. The ouster of the minority TPLF regime ushered a new era in Eritrea and Ethiopia relations, with a new government in Ethiopia, under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Peace between the two countries has been restored and hope for a better future with it.

Ethiopia under the minority TPLF regime, a state that received the most international aid in the region, that was touted as being the most “investment friendly”, that was said to have achieved “double digit growth”, that was recognized as being “staunch ally in the Global war on Terror etc. etc. experienced the most peacelessness and poverty. Unfortunately, Ethiopia is still reeling from the effects of the regime’s 27- year long misrule. It will take some time for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to reform the systems corrupted by TPLF and its handlers.

Today, another development in the Horn, the ouster of Omar al- Bashir in the Sudan, has brought renewed hope in the Horn region. Ghassan Charbel, editor-in-chief of Asharq Al-Awsat in his 5 August 2019 article, “Ethiopia, Sudan, and a Strange Visitor Named Hope”, wrote about the changes in the Horn region. There is no doubt that the Eritrea Ethiopia peace declaration and the removal of the cancerous minority regime in Ethiopia, has had a domino effect in the region. There is much more that needs to be done to establish stable peace in a region long known for its volatility and peacelessness, but as Ghassan Charbel wrote:

“...Hope is a strange visitor in this part of the world. The bet is that the people embrace this visitor....Hope is now knocking on doors it has long forgotten...”

Finally, there is a journalist that understands what is happening in the Horn of Africa, unlike the naysayers, or is it doomsayers, who are having a hard time accepting the new realities in the region. The new hopeful reality in the Horn is borne in the struggles of the peoples of the region and the growing consciousness of the ordinary citizens and their great suffering and sacrifice. These pundits ignore history and the machinations of the forces that colluded to prevent the socio economic and political development of Africa in general, and the Horn states in particular. They blame African’s for the economic stagnation, but ignore the international structures that impede development and promote peacelessness and hopelessness. These conflict entrepreneurs want to kill hope again....

The people of the Horn region are ready to face the challenges of the future with renewed hope and confidence. Hope has been injured many times over in the Horn of Africa, but it remains alive...despite the many attempts to kill it.