

Regime Change or more atrocities and Genocide
The Foreign Policy Challenge of the USA
By Dawit W. Giorgis

The choices are very clear to Ambassador Mike Hammer, the US Envoy to the troubled region of the Horn of Africa: Give the Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed the license to continue on his path of wanton destruction and extermination of Amharas and everything that they have owned and lived for including their age-old religion, their culture, their Coptic Church of 2000 years and biblical history; or support the movement to change the regime.

Covert and overt regime change has been a strategic foreign policy of the US during the cold war. Any government who is allied to the Soviet Union both militarily and ideologically was targeted for regime change. The US engaged in 64 covert and six overt attempts at regime change during the Cold war. Even after the Soviet Union collapsed the US has “led or supported wars to determine the governance of a number of countries.”¹

The motivating factors to launch regime changes are many as stated by the USA. For example, in the case of Iraq, the justifications for war have been debated before and after the war. Was it for access to Iraqi oil? To spread democracy abroad? To liberate the Iraqi people from a brutal dictator? To eliminate Iraq’s stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons? To force Iraq to comply with UN resolutions? Some of the questions posed are strategic lies designed to distract international community from the real reasons behind regime changes. They have never been to liberate people and install democracy. They have neither been for human rights violations, to remove dictators and install a democratic order, or to ensure compliance with UN resolutions. In the case of Iraq, it was all about oil; in other words, economic interest of the USA. In the case of Afghanistan, it was to destroy al Qaeda which was responsible for the 9/11 attack.

The US accepts dictators and totalitarian regimes in as far as they conform its strategic and economic interest. The fact that the nation that suffered through 9/11, supports Saudi Arabia, even when 15 of the 9/11 terrorists were Saudis and were funded by the Saudis, is still a close ally of the US shows that it’s never about human rights or democracy, but rather about economic resources, arms trade

and access to resources. Human Rights Watch has listed Saudi Arabia among the ten most prominent human rights violators worldwide in 2022 “In the 5-year period 2018-2022, the US accounted for 78 percent of Saudi Arabia's imports of major arms.” 2

Africa is in a different category. Those countries in Africa who do not have any leverage on US foreign policy are taken for granted. “ Throughout its history, the United States lacked clear objectives on the continent and, as a result, its policies were largely reactionary, vacillating between exploitation, benign neglect, and half-hearted attempts at democratization and humanitarian assistance.” 3 That is why we have perpetual conflicts and instability in most African countries: i.e. DRC, CAR, Sudan, South and North, Somalia, Mozambique, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mali, etc. US appoints envoys after envoys to the region. Envoys have never solved problems in Africa. Solutions emanate from sound policies rooted in the institutions and emanating from short and long-term interests as enshrined in the four main objectives of US foreign policies. These are the protection of US and its citizens and allies, the assurance of continuing access to international resources and markets, the preservation of a balance of power in the world and the protection of human rights and democracy. Vital American interests that may require covert and overt regime changes are the second and the third one.

The Horn of Africa is one of the most complex security zones in the world. The epicenter of the crisis in the Horn is Ethiopia. Even if the US may not be interested in installing democracy or prevent human rights violations in Ethiopia, a civil war and cross border conflicts and proxy wars in the region will affect the global balance of power and can impede access to resources and free trade, and force the US to be involved in some ways. When the US administration leaves such a strategic part of the world to the whim of a deranged dictator like Abiy, it puts the fundamental foreign policy of the US in danger. Advocating regime change is a legitimate and fair way of addressing the issue and is consistent with fundamental interest of the USA.

Appointing envoys is not the right way to solve international problems of this nature. It is complex and rooted in history. The entire bureau of African Affairs and experts in the field should be involved. The Bureau of African affairs depends much upon the envoy for information and recommendations. It should not be that

way. Solutions proposed by envoys are always ad hoc and never address the root causes of the crisis and the broad interest of the US and Ethiopia. The predecessor of Ambassador Mike Hammer, Ambassador Satterfield left after just months on the job. Since June 2022 Ambassador Mike Hammer took over and it is taking him a long time to understand the complex security and politics in the region. His only experience in Africa was in the DRC, between 2018 to 2022. There are not much lessons to be learnt from DRC. DRC remains to be at war since independence in 1960. But since he has been a career diplomat, it should not have taken such a long time to catch up with the realities in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is a very poor country which has been unable to even pay its international debts. It does not have any leverage on American policy. The US and European countries know fully well that the Ethiopian regime is mired in intense struggle to keep its seat. They know fully well that it has resorted to atrocities, human rights violations and genocide in its literal sense. (Intentional elimination of people based on their identity) The US knows also that Ethiopian regime is in no position to challenge American interest. Millions of people depend on US handouts of food aid. An estimated 15,4 million people are projected to be food insecure in the second half of 2023 and the US is the largest single country food aid provider to Ethiopia.

For America Africa is seen primarily as a problem to be managed. Partnerships in the real sense do not exist. Therefore, it does not have clear policies on Africa. The coming decades might force it to have clearer policies and engage Africa as an equal partner that can have relevance in the strategic and economic interest of the USA.

“China and Russia view Africa as an opportunity to be seized. From 2007 to 2017, U.S. trade with Africa dropped by 54 percent as China’s grew by 220 percent. While Russia’s total investment in Africa pales in comparison to the United States and China, it has grown by 40 percent since 2015. China supports 46 port projects in Africa — financing more than half and operating 11. The United States supports zero.”³

Ethiopia could have a leverage on US policies given its strategic location, demography, population economic potential. But for now, Ethiopia does not seem to be a threat to any country except itself, first and foremost, a country that is in

tatters and a regime that can be bought for an offer. The Western powers are interested to keep the status quo.

Ethiopia has become a weak and impoverished country which has the most corrupted regime with a begging bowl on one hand and drones on the other to kill its own people. For the US this status quo is not of concern and causes no harm. It refuses to get through the blind spot and observe that deluge that is about to overwhelm the nation and beyond. Hundreds of thousands of Amharas have been killed mutilated and subjected to extreme tortures all because of their identity. Over 4 million Amharas have been uprooted from their homes and made IDPs (Internally Displaced People). Abiy has declared war on the Amhara region. Amhara resistance spearheaded by Fano has become indomitable. Abiy has come to accept that Amharas have the capacity and determination to come and get him. Amharas are determined change the status quo. They have proved that they can. In its attempt to stay in power the regime is about to launch an all-out war of extermination. America knows that Abiy Ahmed has enough Amhara blood in his hands and will not hesitate to implement a final solution to the Amharas (Shattered Glass) 4 But the US envoy Mike Hammer refuses to see it coming or he pretends as if he does not know. It is a creeping genocide moving to its crescendo.

The US knows the agenda of the Arab expansionists and Muslim fundamentalists. UAE has officially joined the war on Amharas and has demonstrated its air power at the Ethiopian air force base. Turkey has sent dozens of drones. Extremists are probing their way in. The Red Sea has already become a theater of war with Yemen as a proxy joining the Middle East war in the middle East. Through benign negligence the US will slowly lose control of the situation in the Horn and along the Red Sea. It might be forced to intervene directly. In the meantime, Amharas will be slaughtered because that is the end game for Abiy: the extermination of Amharas.

Would the US administration allow Abiy to continue waging war to exterminate the Amharas? Would it repeat the same mistake it made in Rwanda? This time it will pass the one million marks. In the war that took place between the regime and the Tigray region over 1 million people from Tigray (Obasanjo report) and 380000 from the regime (from statement by Army chief of staff) were killed in just nine months. Amharas are 60 million and Tigray population just 6 million. The death toll, displacement and migration will be staggering.

Ambassador Mike Hamer bears the responsibility for the escalation that will result in one the most complex wars with different proxies: a brutal internal and cross border war and genocide in modern history. Does Mike Hammer realize this? While the war on the Amharas has been raging and stories of human right violations and atrocities have dominated the news in every Ethiopian media for the last for years; how can he not mention it in his last presentation to the joint congressional hearing? How can he not know what is happening all over the Amhara region?

There are discussions amongst the Amhara intellectuals as to whether or not the American foreign policy in Ethiopia is not based on inherent suspicion and dislike towards the Amharas? There are many instances that bolster this argument. One of course is the famous Kissinger policy “: exploiting ethnic, religious or other differences to keep the country weakened and embroiled in enduring conflicts “At different times this policy might have worked but in the modern age when there are competing powers, playing with this option will be a very primitive and counterproductive. If it is not this then it is denial. This will be the height of hypocrisy that will haunt Ambassador Mike here on earth and beyond. The denial is not explainable. The facts are there in every corner of the capital documented compiled with all the evidences that is there for him to check. In one of my favorite books: “The March of Folly” the author Barbara Tuchman writes, referring to the American folly in Vietnam, that folly consisted not in pursuit of a goal in ignorance of the obstacles but in persistence in the pursuit despite mountains of evidence that the goal was unattainable. She writes; “The question raised is why did the policy makers close their minds to the evidence and its implications. This s the classic symptom of folly: refusal to draw conclusions from the evidence, addiction to the counterproductive. The “why ‘of the refusal and tis addiction may disclose itself in the course of retracting the tale of American policy making. “ 5 Why does Mike Hammer who has the power to tell what he witnessed and make regime change the only road to peace in Ethiopia and the region, refuse to do just that. Accept the truth and defend the cause of Fanos for regime change as the ultimate aspiration of all Ethiopians. As I write this, I heard that 57 women and children were killed by a drone attack.

Is Mike Hammer serving the best interest of the USA? Is it the foreign policy or Mike Hammer that is complicated? Either way Fano is determined to do the job. There is no force in this world that can stop it from protecting Amhara integrity and bringing about a democratic and just political order in unison with all other

ethnic groups that form Ethiopia. The world is on notice. The US will serve its own interest by being on the side of this just struggle.

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https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=The+strategic+logic+of+Covert+regime&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholart

2 214 Sept 2023

Pieter Wezeman, Senior Researcher, Arms Transfer Program, at SIPRI

3 <https://warontherocks.com/2022/06/america-ignores-africa-at-its-own-peril/>

4 Ibid

5 <https://borkena.com/2023/09/07/response-to-ethiopia-shattered-glass-kristallnacht-by-dawit-w-giorgis/>

5 The March of Folly: Barbara Tuchman, Page 235