The Goal Post Keeps Moving:
Monitoring Group's Charges against Eritrea shift from "destabilizing Somalia" to "destabilizing Ethiopia"

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By now, it has become abundantly clear that the two sanctions against Eritrea, 1907(2009) and 2023(2011), had nothing to do with stabilizing Somalia or reconstituting it as a viable state. It also had nothing to do with the "staged" Djibouti-Eritrea "border dispute"; it was rather an elaborate scheme to divert attention away from the string-puppet regime in Ethiopia and its lawless adventures in the region, including the invasions and occupation of Eritrea and Somali territories.

If the UN Security Council (UNSC) really cared about avoiding border disputes, it wouldn't have gone after an ant of a border dispute when an elephant of a final and binding border ruling lingers unimplemented. What this means is that the whole "sanction Eritrea" agitation was nothing but to desperately redeem the irredeemable client regime in Ethiopia at the expense of Eritrea and Somalia. That is why Eritrea is being demonized and attempts are continuing to hold Eritrea's development hostage to undeserved sanctions.

This week, the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group finally admitted that it: "*received* ***no credible reports or evidence*** *of assistance from Eritrea to armed opposition groups in Somalia*. … *Eritrea is currently* ***a marginal actor in Somalia, with little, if any influence, either positive or negative***." In other words, with this admission, the first of the two reasons Eritrea was sanctioned for in 2009 has evaporated into thin air. The second excuse was the of "border dispute" with Djibouti. This too is now under the mediation of Qatar and no matter what the SEMG wants to make out of it, the prudent step the UNSC should take is to facilitate for its expeditious solution rather than letting poor Djibouti continue to be a pawn of US-Ethiopia conspiracy from New York to Geneva.

What we saw above being the findings of the SEMG, yet, it is not recommending the lifting of, or easing of the unjust sanctions against Eritrea. Quite to the contrary, it is calling for maintaining these sanctions and recommending ridiculous steps to chock Eritrea's nascent mining industry. Why? What is its rational? Because, get this, "*Eritrea continues to harbour, train and equip armed opposition groups from neighbouring countries, especially Ethiopia*." Never mind, Ethiopia had been openly harboring, training and equipping groups hostile to Eritrea, including two Al-Qaeda affiliated groups (It has to be noted Ethiopia had continuously harbored elements hostile to Eritrea ever since it came to power in 1991. Even when Meles was telling Eritreans "do not scratch you wounds" on May 24, 1993, it was while hosting groups hostile to Eritrea and was going to use them to *add* salt *to Eritrea's* wounds.) Never mind, the Ethiopian Prime Minister had publicly admitted that Ethiopia is doing everything necessary to bring about a regime change in Eritrea; and never mind, in one of the confidential US diplomatic cables from Addis Ababa, Meles had told a high US official (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State) that Ethiopia is about to perpetrate a heinous and atrocious crime against Eritrea:

> "*Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles told visiting AF/DAS Wycoff and CDA on November 19 that he wanted to give the USG a 'heads up' that Ethiopia was considering* ***actively supporting armed Eritrean opposition groups*** *if the international community fails to take action to isolate Asmara. … Pressed by Wycoff to describe the 'pro-active' measures being considered, Meles said one option would be to* ***directly support opposition groups that are capable of sending 'armed propaganda units' into Eritrea****. Meles said that the groups with the most capability to operate inside Eritrea are those '****that you don't like from the lowlands, like the Keru****' who he said would be 'much better able to survive in Eritrea.'*" -- US Embassy Cable, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). Mon, 30 November 2009. http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09ADDISABABA2817.html

Who could be the people Meles is telling the US "**those you don't like**"? As the cable's END NOTE explains: *"The Keru are a primarily Muslim ethnic group most of whose members live in Eritrea."* Meles couldn't have been implying the US doesn't like Moslems? No, it can't be; he knows better. He knows that the US was in bed and doing business with several large and small Moslem countries; from Turkey to Afghanistan, Pakistan to Bangladesh, Egypt to Nigeria, Saudi Arabia to all Gulf States and to Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population in the world." Not liking Moslems" had never been a declared and undeclared US policy. So Meles was not talking of Moslems. However, US distaste to "Islamic terrorists" is undeniable. These are the groups one can comfortably say the "US doesn't like". So, Meles was openly telling DAS Karl Wycoff, "Ethiopia will be harboring, training and equipping Islamic terrorists", those groups the US doesn't like. In saying this Meles was also revealing that he can do that at a moment's notice.

Yes, he can. How? He has been hosting Al Qaeda-trained terrorists (self-proclaimed Eritrean mujahedeen) in Addis Ababa since 1998. He had done it in the past; it was nothing new for him. It was in the same area Meles was contemplating sending more terrorists that 49-year old British Geologist, Timothy Nutt, was killed by Ethiopia & Sudan sponsored Jihadists in 2003. According to the BBC, Nutt "was found with his throat cut in a dry stream-bed near the village of Bisha." He was working for the Canadian firm Nevsun Resources, a company that was exploring for gold at the time of Nutt's murder. One also needs to note that it is this very same mining industry that Ethiopia and its allies had tried to destroy in its early stages through acts of terrorism they are now targeting using a sanctions regime. It was also in this very same area in 2005 that two American citizens of Eritrean origin were ambushed by such Ethiopian-sponsored terrorists and their Eritrean driver was killed. After the normalization of the Eritreo-Sudanese relations, Ethiopia is the only remaining patron of these "religious terrorists" that are

vowing to destabilize Eritrea by targeting innocent civilians as they did in Barentu in 2004 by attacking women and children attending an outdoor independence concert.

In the same cable mentioned above, Meles is quoted urging the U.S. "**to redouble sanctions efforts and especially to reconsider targeting remittances as what he called a 'key instrument' for pressuring Asmara. Citing as examples his own Amcit [American Citizens], ethnic-Eritrean cousins, he said, 'If the U.S. were to insist that paying taxes to Asmara is a felony, it would be easier for them to resist the tax. The Diaspora could say, 'We can't pay you.**'" DAS Karl Wycoff's reply is also very revealing:

> "Wycoff assured Meles that the **U.S. remains committed to achieving a UNSC sanctions regime against Asmara** and continues to broaden the discussion beyond the P3 [US, UK and France] and Uganda with a hard push by USUN [Susan Rice's office]. He said the USG was also expanding efforts to undercut support for Asmara, noting for example **he been sent on a trip to Cairo, Riyadh, Jeddah and other cities both to promote efforts to undercut flows of support to Asmara.**" – ibid.

This cable was sent less than a month before the passing of UNSC Resolution 1907 (2009) with "**a hard push by USUN**", in other words, Susan Rice. So here we have it. The main aim of the sanctions regime imposed on Eritrea was not about Somalia. It was not also about peace and stability in the Horn Africa. It was all about saving the Ethiopian regime.

The Monitoring Group was established to legitimize evidence fabricated by the Ethiopian Intelligence Services and its handlers. In its several annual and semi-annual reports the SEMG had attempted to do exactly that. Now it is openly admitting, for the first time in its history, it has "***no credible reports or evidence of assistance from Eritrea to armed opposition groups in Somalia***." It is also being forced to eat its own words by admitting "*Eritrea is currently* ***a marginal actor in Somalia, with little, if any influence, either positive or negative***." But instead of closing shop and leaving the Horn of Africa in peace, it is attempting to move the goal post against Eritrea once more. The charge of the Monitoring Group is no more about Eritrea "destabilizing Somalia", but Eritrea "destabilizing Ethiopia." We have seen above who is publicly and secretly admitting of destabilizing its neighbor. If there were any who thought the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group had an iota of credibility and peace and security of the region was in its agenda, its latest report once more confirms otherwise. Nothing credible was expected from this discredited Group, and true to its nature, it yet again is doing the bidding of its patrons.