

TO BELITTLE AND DEFAME ETHIOPIA IS HATE OR IGNORANCE-DRIVEN

An Introductory Lesson in Politics For “Professor” Al (Alemayehu) Mariam

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A passionate love for Ethiopia starts with a sense of dignified belonging that is true, content, and measured. A sense of dignified belonging that is set to fade away for any number of personal gains is a little poke in the eyes of Ethiopia. Ethiopia may not cry and lose its sight from the many little pokes of injury--courtesy of the few and vociferous Ethiopian Diaspora. As a dotting mother insisting to understand its children, Ethiopia may not in any way deprive its sons and daughters in the Diaspora the benefit of the doubt of their love and concern for its betterment. But, when its name is belittled and defamed to appease and goad its enemies via the type of work that Al Mariam does, Ethiopia's punitive instinct surges in a rush and the rest is very well known to all. Time again, Al Mariam has belittled and defamed Ethiopia, to protect OLF, ONLF, Ginbot 7, and the despicable face of a one-man state of Eritrea under the guise of his queerly-formulated notion of “human rights.”

The tragic loathe that Al Mariam has toward Ethiopia is in its own class. Few from the acrimonious Ethiopian Diaspora may match his aspersion on his country of origin, which he might have willfully raised his right hand to relinquish his citizenship as long as he lives. Time again in many of his diffusive articles, Al Mariam serves Ethiopia to friends and enemies alike on the dirtiest plate imaginable. He caters to those who would love to poke Ethiopia in the eyes, to denigrate it as a nation of stooges with the feeblest mental capacity to develop a country of many. Al Mariam simply and self-righteously thinks that the state of Ethiopia is a total blunder.

For this queerly-formulated reason then, a country that has endured millenniums worth of living in all of its aspects, is being sold by Al Mariam time again as the roughest and darkest state, where lives hinge for mere survival by the thread of some unknown force. To Al Mariam, Ethiopia's commendable economic endeavor to lift itself up by building roads, schools, and hospitals is nothing but a magic pill given to the people, to create in them a political drowsiness to prolong the agony of Ethiopia.

Instead of praising Ethiopia's crudest attempt at democratization, he disparages each and every aspect of it--with diffusive manuscripts that he frequently posts on tabloid websites, accompanied by his miniature mug shot literally begging for attention. You may ask to what end? The short answer is: to an end where interference by a distant muscular “foreign uncle” to “save Ethiopia” from Ethiopians, scouts Al Mariam and his cohort in a power trip back to their country of origin. For all practical purpose of achieving this ultimate goal of a sponsored-

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power-trip back to Ethiopia, Al Mariam and his cohort have to solicit, beg, and plead sycophantically by denigrating Ethiopia to the bottom of a pit set aside for “failed states.”

From the many weak and diffusive articles that Al Mariam has posted on tabloid websites so far, a lone article induces in each and every concerned Ethiopian the interest to know the extent to which Al Mariam will be escalating his hate-driven rhetoric in the near future. In his “What Is It the Ghanaians Got, We Ain’t Got?” article for July 27, 2009, Al Mariam expresses his derision of Ethiopia premised on hyperbole, misnomer, denial, mischaracterization, and downright academic dishonesty. In this said article, the opening statement reads as follows: “Ghana has become the poster country for the triumph of multiparty democracy, stability and economic growth in Africa; and sadly, **Ethiopia has been rendered the iconic failed African state ruled by a one-man, one-party dictatorship with widespread human rights violation.**”

This derisive and boldfaced statement of conclusion is likely to be made by a person who is either driven to hate about everything that Ethiopia is today, or by a “political activist” with the lowest or highest intellect, who nevertheless has made it a habit to introduce into public discourse an article premised on hyperbole, misnomer, denial, mischaracterization, and downright academic dishonesty. Or, it could be the result of two personalities ascribed with both characteristics in one person.

This boldfaced statement is devoid of any academic value, and one needs not to sit in Al’s “political science” class, to profess back to him that he has flunked an unsolicited test in political science to the dismay of his employer at California State University. Al flunked his self-made unsolicited test by a twisted virtue of forwarding a single statement of conclusion devoid of any academic value, drowned in contradiction that lacks the knowledge of an introductory level of political science course.

For the purpose of making it easier to Al Mariam, let’s focus on the political operative words in his one-statement long conclusion, to show him exactly how he has flunked the unsolicited test in political science. The gist of his conclusion entirely rests on the powerful operative three words of “failed African state,” and, it is being buttressed into a superlative degree of comparison by the usage of the adjective word “iconic.” Powerful operative words may be used, supported by authoritative facts or may be injected for two other reasons; ignorance and academic dishonesty. There are also what I call magnifier political operative words, sometimes used erroneously without any authoritative fact to aggrandize and hyperbolize a claim. Both phrases of “a one-man one party dictatorship” and “widespread human rights violation,” suffice the usage of magnifier political operative words, to strengthen a conclusion or a claim in this case by Al Mariam without an iota of authoritative academic input.

A good student of political science and a proclaimed professor of politics are both academically obliged to define key words and or phrases to strengthen their political science arguments. To frequently fail such an academic obligation may beget a student a failing grade while it puts a professor of politics, for example Al Mariam, in future unemployment line in Los Angeles, California. Think about it: How good is a political science professor if he doesn’t have the slightest clue about the meaning of “failed state” and nevertheless uses it as the most pivotal part of his conclusion?

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The ignorant or dishonest usage of the phrase “failed state” by Al Mariam is of great concern not only to Ethiopians but also to the Crisis States Research Center, which is based within the Development Studies Institute of the London School of Economics. The Crisis States Research Center believes that the term “failed state” is used in very contradictory ways in the “policy community” either out of ignorance or purposely--much like it is used by political cohort such as Al Mariam—to mislabel states.

It’s no wonder then Al Mariam is using this elastic phrase to write off the wall in hyperbolic style for a feel good political partying, in order to satiate the negative wishes and dreams of the few and vociferous Ethiopian Diaspora--while flunking an unsolicited test in political science. **Al Mariam, the self-proclaimed “professor,” you flanked your own self-made test; try gain; what is the meaning of “failed state?”**

It’s with this kind of ignorant misuse of the phrase for political-shadow-boxing in the forefront as a great concern to CSRC that, **CSRC became obliged to define the term “failed state” without any ambiguity “as a condition of “state collapse” – i.e., a state that can no longer perform its basic security and development functions and that has no effective control over its territory and borders.”**

It’s hard to exactly know on what political planet Al Mariam spends most of his time to self-righteously render Ethiopia **“a state that can no longer perform its basic security and development functions and that has no effective control over its territory and borders.”**

For now, set aside how the historically and traditionally adamant Ethiopian citizenry feel about this label, and instead, imagine what the reaction of the megalomaniac Isayas Afewerki would be after reading such an utter misrepresentation of Ethiopia. “Are you kidding me?” would have asked Isayas Afewerki; rightfully so, for having learned the great lesson that messing with Ethiopia’s territory and borders either in the Southern or Northern front is playing with fire--the kind that many people envision only in hell after death.

It is mesmerizing where this supposedly enlightened soul gets his cues and impressions to have the temerity and academic dishonesty to call Ethiopia the “iconic failed African state.” Why is Al Mariam purposely and quite from the verge of a treasonous passage, it seems like it, trash Ethiopia as the “iconic failed African state?” How good is a political science professor if he habitually and knowingly ascribes a political characteristic that the measurable political and historical realities of Ethiopia would not provide an iota of authoritative proof?

Mesmerizing; and then again, a sycophant with an ambition for power is just that; he would say anything and do everything to get what he desires. Who is to render Ethiopia the “iconic failed African state” worst than Somalia without the slightest academic authority whatsoever? Nobody except Al Mariam; it’s the habitual urge in him to hyperbolize reality into something unreal that impregnates his brain to give birth to a loaded adjective. It’s almost a must that he has to deride Ethiopia whenever and every time his wishes and aspirations are rendered daydreams. The inevitable outcome is: Al Mariam will continue to buttress his derision of Ethiopia with the loaded adjective word of “iconic” to ask for a sponsored-power-trip back home, but, there is no way the trip will take place even after his muscular “foreign uncle” grows another two arms in due time.

Historically and traditionally, the very fact that Ethiopia peculiarly stayed sovereign speaks a volume and attests to one of the essential attributes of a stable state. **Very few**

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countries in the entire Continent of Africa have had as effective control over their territories and borders as Ethiopia. This is the fact and no one will be able to talk over a fact and win an argument. Today and in the future, no state violates the territory and borders of Ethiopia and wins a battle or a war to enslave it; it is just a fact of the State of Ethiopia, Abyssinia, and the Axumite Empire in one.

As it has been noted by this writer and many others, in today's world, the mere fact that the Ethiopian Defense Forces managed to stay for over two years in the uncharted terrains of what the rest of the world has come to know militarily uninhabitable, is in and itself a superior achievement that too few other forces may be able to duplicate. While many forces were caught craven cold by the sheer prospect of having to go into Somalia for a pointed mission, it is the gallant Ethiopian Defense Forces that went without blinking an eye to perform in ways that gave Lesson Two in quasi-asymmetric wars--for students of military force management and its application. Lesson One was taught during the 1998-2000 Ethio-Eritrean **BORDER** conflict, while the "impenetrable" zigzagging arrays of aegis of Shaebia were overrun by relentless Ethiopian Defense Forces. It is this same potent force that resides at the gates of each and every corner of Ethiopia, and no hate-driven idiotic article sprinkled with hyperbole, misnomer, and mischaracterization will ever enervate its crushing muscle. By all tangible measures, therefore, **Ethiopia is not the "iconic failed African state" with "... no effective control over its territory and borders,"** as Al Mariam is arguing feebly.

Furthermore and ignorantly so, Al Mariam's conclusion is replete with contradictions. For example, on one hand, Al Mariam is arguing that Ethiopia is not only a "failed state" but an "iconic" one on that. On another, he is arguing that the Ethiopia of today is "**...ruled by a one-man, one-party dictatorship...**" How is it possible for a state to be an "iconic failed African state" and a "**...state ruled by one-man, one-party dictatorship...**" at the same time? This is an epic contradiction---the result of ignorance or academic dishonesty. If this contradiction is the result of ignorance, Al Mariam should have read few pointers about failed or successful states.

Had Al read Max Weber's take on this subject, he would have learned that, a state ruled by one-man, one-party dictatorship is tantamount to a state with a monopoly to use physical force within its borders, which Max Weber ascribes to a successful state. A failed state to Max Weber comes as a result of the dominant presence of warlords, paramilitary groups, or terrorism. When the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force of a state is overrun by warlords, paramilitary groups, and or terrorism, the very existence of the state becomes dubious and it becomes a failed state.

The Ethiopian state is a democratically elected and internationally recognized state with the monopoly on the **legitimate use of physical force**, and winks to no warlords, paramilitary groups, and terrorism from Ginbot 7, ONLF, OLF, and to the destabilizing force of a one-man rogue state of Eritrea. And, according to Max Weber, a better positioned state to keep its borders and territory intact when ever the need to exercise its legitimate physical force against the likes of ONLF, OLF, Ginbot 7, and other enemies arises is a state which is successful. The Ethiopian state of yesteryears and today's has been there and has done that without any ambiguity.

"Professor" Al Mariam will not be the last person to misuse "failed state" since a dozen different meanings accompany and crowd into this remarkably elastic phrase. Worse still, it has

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become an all-purpose phrase of political abuse rather than a concept to be studied thoroughly. Overzealous users of the phrase such as Al Mariam are hindering researched and polite academic discourse from taking hold on the subject matter, to satiate their own ego and political-view. In so doing, Al, much like any other ignorant abuser of the phrase has made “failed state” a highly charged term of disdain for opposing political world-view. For this reason, the complex and challenging economic, political, and social change that is engulfing Ethiopia is thus being reduced by Al Mariam into a phrase “failed state.”

For Al, by way of a convoluted rationale, the double digit economic development that Ethiopia has registered for consecutive years is being done purposely, to put the Ethiopian people under a spell and to prolong their agony; the killing of Ethiopian and Chinese citizens at the hand of ONLF is a struggle for freedom, while the punishing legitimate physical force by the Ethiopian Defense forces is a “wide spread human right violations;” the hate-driven illegal demonstration bent on the killing of innocent Ethiopians is a “legitimate insurrection,” while the reasonable legitimate physical force in response to it is a “genocide;” a parliamentary election, that almost all observers including the Carter Center certified as fair is “undemocratic,” while abrogating the civic duty bestowed on the Kinijit candidates who won their seats democratically is a “struggle for democracy.”

Furthermore, to Al, his host country, US, is the beacon of democracy, and Ethiopia, the “iconic failed African state ruled by one-man, one-party dictatorship.” And yet, after experimenting with democracy for over two hundred years, his host country has only two parties with almost identical fundamental program, and only 74 of the 535 seats both in the House and Senate are won by women; while in just two decades, Al’s “iconic failed African state,” Ethiopia, is home for 18 different parties with contentious political programs, and 116 of the 526 seats for the House of Peoples Representatives are won by women.

Nearly 60% of the combined seats in US House of Representatives and the Senate are won by the ruling Democratic Party, while 61% the of the seats in the House of Peoples Representatives of Ethiopia are won by EPRDF-the ruling coalition of four political organizations. Succinctly put, America is ruled by two fundamentally identical parties with 13.8% of women participating to shape America’s future, while Ethiopia is ruled by eighteen disparate parties with 22% of women participating to shape its future. **And yet, Al Mariam has the temerity and the academic dishonesty to label Ethiopia “...the iconic failed African state ruled by a one-man, one-party dictatorship...”**

This is an insult that no Ethiopian will take lightly. And then again, Al has the right to free speech---an American one that is; until he reads “**Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy**” a book by Noam Chomsky, first published in 2006, in which Chomsky argues that the United States is becoming a “failed state,” and thus a danger to its own people and the world.” **Dear “Professor” Al Mariam, please stray away from becoming the icon of a failed personality, a danger to you, the American people, and the enduring people of Ethiopia.**

“What Is It the Ghanaians Got, We Ain’t Got?” in a word; oil.

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