

American Diplomacy in Ethiopia: The Impact on the Amhara People

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The intricate dynamics of Ethiopian politics and the multifaceted role of American diplomacy in the region have garnered significant attention in recent years. Central to this discourse is the impact on the Amhara people, who have found themselves at the crossroads of conflict between various forces. This document aims to critically analyze the actions of the American ambassador to Ethiopia and other envoys, shedding light on their diplomatic maneuvers, the consequences for the Amhara people, and the broader implications for U.S. foreign policy in Africa.

Ethiopia holds a critical position in the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa, a region often at odds with Arab foreign policy strategists. However, American diplomats have yet to fare much better in the eyes of many Ethiopians, as they have occasionally supported corrupt leaders. A notable example is the American stance on Ethiopia's access to the sea, which many educated Ethiopians believe has been undermined.

The root of these doubts lies in the historical support Arab countries, staunch allies of the US, provided to Eritrean separatists during their 30-year war. In 1991, the United States mediated between the TPLF and Eritrean Shabian in London and was the first to recognize Eritrea as an independent country. This decision has left a lasting grievance among Ethiopians, who feel that the US facilitated Ethiopia's landlocked status, affecting a nation of 126 million people.

The situation worsened with the bloody conflict between the TPLF and Shabia in 1998-99 and Eritrea's involvement in the 2020 war, which resulted in millions of casualties and a significant refugee crisis. Despite these challenges, US foreign policy in the region continues supporting problematic figures rather than fostering stability, further complicating Ethiopia's geopolitical landscape.

The Diplomatic Approach of the American Ambassador to Ethiopia

The American ambassador to Ethiopia, along with other envoys, has played a significant role in navigating the country's complex political landscape. However, their approach has been subject to controversy. There have been instances where the actions of these diplomats appeared to sideline the plight of the Amhara people, particularly in the context of attacks by two narrow forces—the Prosperity Party and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

Critics argue that the American diplomats' response to these attacks did not align with the ethical standards expected in international diplomacy. The failure to adequately address the suffering of the Amhara people has raised questions about the impartiality and effectiveness of American diplomatic efforts in Ethiopia.

Efforts to End the Conflict Between Prosperity Party and TPLF

The same American ambassadors have cooperated to broker peace between the Prosperity Party and the TPLF. This conflict, which has ravaged the Amhara region, saw both the TPLF and elements within the Prosperity Party wage war on Amhara land, causing widespread devastation and human suffering. Despite this, the peace talks initiated by American diplomats in Pretoria notably excluded the Amhara people, further fueling perceptions of bias and neglect.

The exclusion of the Amhara from these crucial peace talks is particularly troubling given the extensive damage inflicted upon their communities. By focusing on negotiations between the Prosperity Party and the TPLF, American diplomats have been perceived as prioritizing a resolution that overlooks the grievances and needs of the Amhara population.

The Amhara people, representing a nation with a rich history of three major religions, have maintained the unity and honor of Ethiopia alongside their fellow Ethiopians for three millennia. During World War II, the Amhara stood at the forefront, fighting European fascism and protecting the country from colonization. Their significant sacrifices in the patriotic struggle have instilled a sense of pride and determination to safeguard the nation from foreign invasions. However, they have also faced widespread injustice and have been labeled as oppressors at various times.

With a population of more than 50 million, the Amhara are a prominent ethnic group whose culture, literature, and traditions have significantly influenced Ethiopia and beyond. Despite their contributions and resilience, the safety and well-being of the Amhara people have been largely overlooked by external powers. The British and some Arab governments, along with the Americans, seem indifferent to the plight of the Amhara, especially in the context of the ongoing conflict since the war in 2020 and the continuing invasions today.

Accusations of Bias Toward the TPLF

American diplomacy in Ethiopia has faced accusations of favoritism towards the TPLF. Historical grievances and recent actions have compounded these perceptions. The TPLF has been accused of committing severe human rights abuses, including the rape and forced sexual assault of women, nuns, and elderly mothers. Despite these allegations, American diplomatic efforts have sometimes been seen as disproportionately supportive of the TPLF.

Furthermore, the TPLF's provision of material support, such as grain and clothing, to the Amhara people has been framed as a humanitarian gesture. However, this narrative fails to acknowledge the extensive harm inflicted upon the Amhara communities by TPLF forces. The past three years have highlighted the complexities of this conflict and the need for a more balanced and empathetic diplomatic approach.

The Question of Disarmament and Genocide

In recent discussions surrounding American diplomacy, there have been alarming calls for the disarmament of the Amhara people. This suggestion comes in the wake of their invasion by forces loyal to Abiy Ahmed and the TPLF, leading to accusations of genocide. The notion of disarming a population that has faced such extreme violence raises significant ethical and practical concerns.

The role of American diplomats, particularly figures like Mike Hammer, in these discussions has sparked debate about their complicity in the suffering of the Amhara people. The U.S. Africa chief and the State Department have been urged to address these concerns transparently, clarifying the motivations and objectives behind their diplomatic strategies.

Historical Context: The Legacy of Henry Kissinger's Diplomacy

To understand the current American diplomatic approach in Ethiopia, it is essential to consider the historical context. Henry Kissinger's diplomacy legacy, often referred to as the "Twin Policy," continues to influence American foreign policy in Africa. This strategy, characterized by balancing competing interests and maintaining regional stability, has had positive and negative repercussions.

In the Ethiopian context, the Twin Policy's emphasis on stability has sometimes come at the expense of addressing deeper socio-political issues. The current American diplomatic efforts, viewed through this historical lens, reflect a continuation of this pragmatic yet controversial approach. The challenge lies in reconciling the need for stability with a genuine commitment to justice and human rights for all affected communities.

Henry Kissinger's twin-pillar policy, which marginalized Ethiopia to avoid offending Arab countries, was replaced by President Ford during the Cold War. Ford's policy ultimately pushed Ethiopia into the Soviet camp and later declared the country hostile. Even today, it is difficult to say that American diplomacy towards Ethiopia has significantly changed.

Western policies, particularly those distinguishing the Amhara people from others and imposing detrimental guidelines, mirror the strategies employed by the Italians during their invasion of Ethiopia. Historically, Italy's political propaganda specifically targeted the Amhara.

The renowned author and politician Hadis Alemayehu documented his experiences in his historical notes. He recounted how he and Ras Emru Hailesealase took their army from north and mobilized in the south and southwest. In 1936, Abajobir, the son of Aba Jifar, cooperated with the enemy and announced a bounty of 30 Maria Theresa dollars for anyone who beheaded an Amhara and brought the head to Abajfar.

Going forward: American diplomacy should consider, the criticisms and challenges outlined, several recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness and fairness of American diplomacy in Ethiopia. A specific issue that underscores these challenges is the status of Wolqait and Raya. For over 30 years, the TPLF occupied these regions against the will of the indigenous Amhara people. Despite knowing the true historical and demographic context of Wolqait, American diplomats have uncharacteristically sided with the TPLF, often affirming the

misleading narrative that the people of Wolqait are Tigrians.

This situation is a microcosm of the broader diplomatic missteps that have exacerbated tensions and conflicts in Ethiopia. The case of Wolqait demonstrates the need for a more informed, balanced, and just approach to diplomacy. Below are key recommendations to address these and other issues: **Inclusive Peace Talks:** Future peace negotiations must include representatives from all affected communities, including the Amhara people. Excluding key stakeholders undermines the legitimacy and sustainability of any peace agreement.

1. **Addressing Human Rights Abuses:** American diplomats should prioritize addressing and condemning human rights abuses committed by all parties involved in the conflict. This includes holding the TPLF accountable for their actions against the Amhara people.
2. **Transparent Communication:** The U.S. State Department and American diplomats must communicate transparently with the Ethiopian public and the international community. Clarifying the objectives and motivations behind their diplomatic strategies can help build trust and mitigate perceptions of bias.
3. **Humanitarian Assistance:** Humanitarian aid should be distributed equitably and transparently, ensuring all affected communities receive the support they need. This includes addressing the specific needs of the Amhara people, who have suffered greatly in the conflict.
4. **Long-term Engagement:** American diplomacy should focus on long-term engagement and support for Ethiopia's democratic institutions and civil society. Strengthening these foundations can help prevent future conflicts and promote sustainable peace.

Recent American diplomacy has shown that the third neon Ethiopia isolating the Fano (the Amhara people) is ineffective. If Western diplomacy, particularly that of the United States, seeks to be successful, it must acknowledge that marginalizing the Fano and the Amhara people will never work.

Conclusion

The role of American diplomacy in Ethiopia is complex and multifaceted, shaped by historical legacies, current geopolitical interests, and the urgent need to address human suffering. The experiences of the Amhara people highlight the challenges and shortcomings of the current diplomatic approach. By adopting a more inclusive, transparent, and principled strategy,

American diplomats can contribute to a more just and lasting peace in Ethiopia. The lessons from this context can also inform broader U.S. foreign policy in Africa, emphasizing the importance of balancing stability with a steadfast commitment to human rights and justice.

As long as the United States maintains a policy that does not disregard Africa's importance, it should recognize that promoting lasting peace in Ethiopia is in its best interest. Ethiopia, home to the Organization of African Unity, is crucial to regional stability. Therefore, America, along with other countries and international institutions, is responsible for ensuring Ethiopia's stability, which benefits everyone.

For the past 40 years, targeting the Amhara to destabilize Ethiopia, whether through deliberate actions or strategic diplomacy, has had damaging effects on international trade and politics.

Ethiopia is the largest country in the Horn of Africa and the second most populous in Africa. The history of Ethiopia is tied with the Amara people because the Amara people are at the forefront of the defense and unity of the country. Given its strategic location near the heavily trafficked Gulf of Aden, excessively pressuring Ethiopia could have dangerous repercussions.

The instability in Ethiopia poses a significant threat to international trade, underscoring the urgent need to ensure peace and stability in this pivotal nation. The well-being of the entire region and the global community is at stake, making it a matter of utmost importance for all stakeholders.

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