



What a Life!

The Autobiography of Dawit Wolde Giorgis

The extraordinary account of a man whose life has been dedicated to the victims of war and natural disaster in Africa.

As head of relief in the Great Ethiopian Famine of 1984-5 Dawit Wolde Giorgis fought to save the lives of millions of his countrymen and women when faced with an uncooperative government and an indifferent world. Knowing his life was in danger, he left Ethiopia to write *Red Tears*, his groundbreaking exposé of Ethiopia's communist regime, while working to free Ethiopia from the stranglehold of dictatorship.

For the past 30 years Dawit has devoted his life to helping those most in need throughout Africa. From rebellions in Eritrea, Angola, Liberia, Sudan and South Sudan to genocide in Rwanda, Major Dawit has witnessed the horrors of war as a soldier, a diplomat, and a humanitarian. In the end he was forced to confront the most agonizing battle of all: his faith in a loving God.

Dawit's autobiography is a unique account of a man who has seen the best and the worst in Africa. He has worked closely with the giants of African independence: Julius Nyerere, Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo, Sam Nujoma, Samora Machel, John Garang, Oliver Tambo. He has confronted the power-hungry autocrats and tyrants. He has met world leaders like Fidel Castro, Daniel Ortega, Giulio Andreotti, Samuel Doe, Thomas Sankara, Jerry Rawlings, and many others in Europe and South America, including Mother Teresa, whose words to him have left a profound, lifelong impression.

Today he continues to work toward the betterment of the African people as one of the foremost analysts at AISSS (African Institute of Strategic and Security Studies) where he serves as executive director.

Dawit Wolde Giorgis is the author of
Red Tears
Kihdet be Dem Meret (Amharic)
Eskedar : historical novel in Amharic
 and many policy reports and studies on Africa

Dawit has been a Visiting Fellow at Princeton, the University of Cape Town African Studies Center, the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, and Boston University African Studies Center.

By Dale Coye (PHD) Editor of this Book: A retired Professor and author from distinguished universities in the USA.

Lobbying and the US Foreign Policy

Since the end of WW II, the U.S. has been the uncontested leader of the new international order. But that has swiftly changed. It is not only China and Russia that are contesting this leadership but there are a growing number of countries that are playing extremely crucial roles in international trade,

security, and diplomacy. In my early years I used to work with high level state department officials who had a sense of history and who understood the implications of steps they take in a highly politically charged atmosphere. Such was the relationship between the USA and the military regime (dergue) during the cold war and during the period of Emperor Haile Selassie. American Foreign policy was seen as:

“Defending and promoting freedom, democracy, and human rights is additionally viewed as a key component of U.S. soft power, because it can encourage like-minded governments, as well as organizations and individuals in other countries, to work with the United States, and because it has the potential to shape the behavior of authoritarian and illiberal governments that are acting against U.S. interests by shaming those governments and inspiring prodemocracy organizations and individuals within those countries.” (U.S. Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress 2021.) This policy has worked up to the end of the cold war. It may still be the preferred policy of the US. But global realities have clearly established that there is no more Pax Americana like it was during the cold war. **Those Days are Gone**

The Republican or Democrats have not yet come to grips with this reality. The U.S will therefore be less effective and more counterproductive in its global involvement until it comes to terms with the growing influence of countries like Iran, Turkey, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and a few others in Euro Asia and many shining African countries who refuse to be manipulated by the USA. When American forces fled from Somalia after a humiliating offensive on its troops, Africa lost confidence in American military might. Successive administrations have vowed never to send combat troops to Africa since then. Yes, the US has the mightiest military in the world. But the world has yet to see any war America has won since the second world war except the invasion of Grenada, a tiny island in the Caribbean.

In the meantime, the military and paramilitary forces of other countries and extremist groups have flourished across the globe and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa without US military aid making any difference. The US cannot solve the problem of Africa and particularly in the Horn on its own. Its sanctions and other threats will only complicate the situation and open the space to be filled by other actors which it cannot control. Neither Ethiopia nor Africa want Ethiopia to be another Yemen, Afghanistan, CAR, Somalia or Libya. It does not wish to have too many actors with different agendas to play any role in the security of Ethiopia. It wants to be helped to sort its problems on its

own without external agendas complicating an already complex security situation.

The transition to accepting these emerging realities does not seem to be easy for American policy-makers. The US needs wisdom and lessons learnt from previous engagements. The US cannot and should not act alone but consult all the stake holders, understand the nature of the conflict not through hired agents but through its own independent or collaborative capacity, weigh its implications and take actions that cools the temperatures in the region.

“America will need to learn new rules and play differently in the new balance-of-power world, where others have assets and policies the U.S. does not and cannot control!” The Conversation

With the advent of social media, foreign policy formulation has transformed in a way that requires great caution. The internet has been useful in communication and assessing the feelings and desires of people but with a lot of mix with fake and distorted news and documentaries, it presents itself as a great challenge to foreign policy experts and decision makers who either filter them and search for the truth or accept them the way they are, if they promote their political agendas. The bits and pieces of information posted by some experts or foreign policy and advocacy groups and journalists, most being paid agents or salaried reporters, reflect the views of lobbyists and owners of the conglomerate media. Few can be termed as true, but most are fake narratives propagated by lobbyists. In such situations policy and decision makers should have the kind of people who can go back to history of a particular issue or look at the news in a bigger context to have balanced thought processing.

It can be said with absolute certainty that narratives that the State Department has used to impose sanctions or to support one of the major rebel groups (TPLF) responsible for crimes against humanity along with its partner the OLF, are wrong, and if real independent experts and historians, free of biases get two hours with the lead figure (s) on this case, it can be proved to that the crisis in Ethiopia is not as simple as you think it is. That war crimes and crimes against humanity has been committed on the people of Tigray is undeniable. But what should be known is that the TPLF itself has been committing crimes against humanity on the Amhara people for 27 years and more intensely by its successor Abiy Ahmed in the last three years.

The tendency these days is not about long essays or long discussions but rather short crispy articles that are hollow, unverifiable and don't address the root causes which would have helped in finding lasting solutions. State department does not have the time or the interest to study and analyze the historical background. It entirely depends on individuals who have personal attachments to the TPLF or to their lobbyists. In the 1970s there were many African Study Centers and therefore a better understanding of Africa by American students. Today very few universities have these centers and fewer people study Africa as a subject. Such ignorance feeds to America's chauvinistic approach to all problems in Africa.

Today there are many centers of powers in the world who have the capacity to intervene and challenge the interest of the USA. That was why the 20-year war in Afghanistan was unwinnable. That was why the war in Iraq was unwinnable. That is why the crisis in Lebanon is in a stalemate. That was why the Syrian war was unwinnable. That was why the Libyan war was unwinnable. America has lost its moral credibility. What is real about America is its economic and military might and that alone does not solve or prevent international conflicts. America has to develop a new strategy based on accumulated experience and the new realities on how to use its soft power and collaborate with other countries to find solution to conflicts.

Ethiopia will not benefit from the intervention of many actors. The crisis will be more complicated and the number of armed and fighting factions serving different agendas will increase. Ethiopia does not need that. The USA is putting fuel on fire and introducing an era of total regional instability with probable indirect intervention of African Command (AFRICOM) which has its second HQ in Djibouti. "The Mission of US Africa command with partners is to counter transnational threats and malign actors, strengthen security forces and respond to crisis in order to advance US national interest and promote regional security stability and prosperity." Would AFRICOM intervene if the spill over affects regional countries along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, or intervention by other countries considered hostile to America or extremist elements? Would it be another Afghanistan? With a little bit of reading and a little bit of wisdom the US could be more cautious in handling the crisis in Ethiopia and take steps that is best to its own interest to the region and to Ethiopia as an independent mediator. If Ethiopia explodes the region will explode and its effects will be felt across the continent and in the Mediterranean coastal countries. Ethiopians are resilient people and even though they have their own internal differences they have the will and capacity to go to any length to ensure that the country's integrity is protected. Its history

has shown this to the world. Young white career makers are playing with fire by fanning fake distorted news devoid of history and context white to market themselves with little empathy to how much death and suffering their stories are causing. African experts are rarely heard.

The TPLF is fighting its war not in Tigray but in Amhara region. The Oromos whom the PM represents, have made it look like it is a war between the Amhara and the Tigreans while the Oromos silently continue to massacre and displace Amharas living in Oromia region. (Documented and irrefutable). This case of genocide is currently being examined by international legal firms hired by concerned Ethiopians. The ambition of the Oromos to completely dominate the politics of Ethiopia is behind all these crimes which has now turned into open war. The State Department human rights reports first comes from the Embassy. How can the US embassy miss this very important point of Amhara's being slaughtered like animals because they are Amharas? I have and so do many people irrefutable evidence of this genocide. It was not done once or twice or thrice but over 30 years and more intensely since this PM came to power. Why were these crimes not mentioned by State Department.? Is this a conspiracy against Amharas? In what way does denying or simply not mentioning these serious intentional, planned and executed by OLF and TPLF help the interest of America? How can there be peace in Ethiopia with the denial of the truth or by siding with genociders? How can the US Embassy conveniently dismiss this point to focus only on the war crimes in Tigray? If US embassy do not have the information and the evidence it can ask any person in Addis, Metekel, Wlegga, Ataye, Maycadra, Gura Ferda, etc. They will provide you readily. Why don't New York Times or Washington post, BBC and Al Jazeera reporters go to Metekel, Wellega, Ataye, Arsi and talk to the people on their own without government minders? What purpose does it serve to talk only about the war in Tigray when there are ongoing crimes in other places and a political crisis that cannot be resolved with only stopping the war? With extremism flourishing in the Horn and across Africa at an alarming speed, would it not have been clear that America's indifference to all Ethiopia's other problems, national and transnational, would create a lot of space for these elements to create another front? The counter terrorism department within the state department surely understands the presence of ISIS in Ethiopia and in most of the Horn.

Sometimes lobbyists are invited by congressional staff to draft bills. Why don't congressional staff go to above places and talk to the survivors of genocide and crimes against humanity on the Amhara population. Generally foreign governments or entities hire US-based lobbyists to supply information that

favors their clients to US Congress or State Department officials who have the direct responsibility of preparing reports on a given situation. Such officials range from members of Congress and their staff to State Department officials—as well as to the wider public through general PR campaigns. That notorious human rights violators have more favorable human rights reports from the State Department is strong evidence that foreign governments and other entities lobby on human rights....more from excerpts of my book

Here are Some Excerpts from my Book: P art II

Foreign Policy of the USA

“It was Samantha Power, former US ambassador to the UN, who said it best: “Foreign policy is an explicitly amoral enterprise.”⁷⁰⁴ That would be a corollary to the advice from Machiavelli’s *The Prince*: “Politics have no relation to morals” and may be the reasoning of successive US ..administrations who seem to have no qualms about establishing close ties with Saudi Arabia, an immoral, repressive, corrupt regime, the most backward government on earth, a government that administration officials, in rare moments, have identified as the “kernel of evil.” The United States has been enabling this immoral behavior for decades, and it has only gotten worse in the America of the Trump era. With its utter failure to manage the covid 19 outbreak, with so much unrest in the streets and angry polarization in the population, America has become a country that much of the world scorns and sometimes pities because these things were not supposed to happen in the America we have known and followed. “... [T]he U.S. today simply doesn’t look like the country that the rest of us should aspire to, envy, or replicate.” ⁷⁰⁵

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To put it bluntly, the US is the *source* of most of the destabilization in Africa. Before 9/11 there were no known violent extremists movement in Africa and in most of the world—no Boko Haram, no Islamic State or Al Shabaab. After 9/11 two things happened. The US demanded all countries establish anti-terrorist legislation, which was welcomed by most African leaders. However, the measures adopted by many countries to counter terrorism legitimized repression, leading to the stifling of freedom of expression, detention of journalists, murdering political opposition, and generally violating human rights—the very evils that the legislation was expected to prevent. This repression created more terrorists.

Secondly, despite the fact that 15 of the 9/11 Al Qaeda hijackers were from Saudi Arabia as was bin Laden himself, the United States attacked Iraq, which had nothing to do with Al Qaeda. Records show that Saddam Hussein opposed Al Qaeda which was inspired by Saudi Wahhabism. The Iraq War led to Saddam's demise and a chaotic occupation that allowed ISIS to take over much of the country, increasing its power and enabling its ideology to spread to Africa. When bin Laden, on the other hand, was promoting Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan at the time the Soviets were occupying Afghanistan the United States supported him. When the situation reversed after the expulsion of the Soviet Union and bin Laden attacked America on its own land, the US unleashed a campaign in Afghanistan that the world supported. But in that entire time the USA *refused to condemn* Saudi Arabia, the source of the Wahhabi ideology that the hijackers and bin Laden espoused. Even though the 9/11 report was vague on the direct link between hijackers and Saudi government the most recent revelations show that a Saudi diplomat is suspected of directing support to two of the hijackers.⁷¹³ The Trump administration was doing all it could to keep his name under wraps, but it leaked out owing to a slip-up.⁷¹⁴

The US has never sanctioned Saudi Arabia for any fault in this or its wahhabization program across the world. In the meantime Saudi Arabia continued to export its brand of Islam across Africa by training, through corruption, and other methods. The most outrageous example of the US failure to take any action against the Saudis was when in October 2018 the prominent Saudi journalist who was legally residing in the USA, Jamal Khashoggi was murdered and literally cut to pieces in the Saudi Embassy in Istanbul. The proof was overwhelming that his execution was ordered by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), even senators in Trump's own party were outraged, but the president refused to denounce him. Trump even boasted privately to journalist Bob Woodward that he personally protected the Crown Prince from any consequences of that assassination.⁷¹⁵

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Why has it become an impossible challenge to stop this alliance with a country that is waging war on humanity, and particularly on people that have recently emerged from centuries of colonialism? It is not just the weapons, the oil, and its strategic importance in the Middle East. US foreign policy is also driven by powerful Saudi lobbyists. Part of that lobbying has been mentioned already, in the form of Saudi "donations" to hundreds of universities, think tanks and

academic institutions in the US, used to influence and appropriate academic discourse.⁷⁰⁸ The other part is found in the business world, where senior US government officials aspire to work in Saudi-owned or influenced business organizations when they leave public service. Recent research indicates that 50% of senators and 46% of congressmen become lobbyists when they retire.⁷⁰⁹ The Saudi ability to offer financial gains translates into an environment where many have a vested interest in the Saudi status quo, and are either reluctant to take principled positions, or are outright defenders of Saudi interests.

Overall in the last decade Saudi Arabia has recruited two dozen US firms as foreign agents and spent nearly 100 million dollars on American lobbyists, consultants and public relations firms. These hired guns have attempted to rebrand the Saudis more as allies in the war on terrorism than as the leading purveyors of radical Islamic views through schools in the US and around the world.⁷¹⁰ One estimate puts the overall spending (of Saudi Arabia) on lobbying and propaganda at US \$87 billion.⁷¹²

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John Kerry stated in his nomination hearing for Secretary of State: “more than ever, foreign policy is economic policy, which means global competition for resources and markets will outweigh every other consideration.” It has been, in fact, these “resources and markets”—in other words “money”—that have carried the day when decisions must be made on US foreign policy.

The perfect example of what John Kerry meant can be found in US-Saudi relations: it’s all about oil and guns. The United States is Saudi Arabia’s largest trading partner, and it is also the largest US export market in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is one of the leading sources of imported oil for the United States, providing more than one million barrels per day. Then there are the guns. Saudi Arabia buys billions of dollars’ worth of weapons and the powerful lobby of the military-industrial complex ensures that this relationship flourishes. “In 2011 the US sold a record \$66.3 billion in weapons to countries abroad. Saudi Arabia bought \$33.4 billion worth of arms, the most by any country in the world.”⁶⁹³

Part III will follow

