

Appendix 6. US intervention and the National Conference conducted by the TPLF

Having murdered most of the high command of the Ethiopian armed forces to avert a coup, Mengistu had reshuffled his cabinet ministers in the waning days of his reign. Then came the 1991 activities of the US government implemented by Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen, who pressured Mengistu to resign on 21 May 1991 and arranged for his exile in Zimbabwe.

Mr. Cohn had assembled a selected group of parties that he would chair in a so-called London conference that opened on 27 May 1991. The parties were the Derg represented by Tesfaye Dinka, the EPLF represented by Isaias Afwerki, the TPLF/EPRDF represented by Meles Zenawi, and the OLF represented by Lencho Letta. Tesfaye Dinka subsequently withdrew from Cohn's London conference; and on the night of May 27-28, the EPLF-TPLF/EPRDF forces marched into Addis Ababa and assumed control of the city and national government. The next day, reportedly Cohen met with leaders of the EPLF, TPLF/ EPRDF, and OLF, as an adviser instead of the pretence of a mediator. [URL1] Cohn's actions set the stage for the division of Ethiopia into two states. The US Government through Cohn provided the cover for legitimacy of the EPLF-TPLF/EPRDF, and certain political and social scientist such as Paul B Henze obfuscated theoretical formulations of democracy and provided misleading accounts in an attempt to magnify the role taken by TPLF/EPRDF and vilifies Ethiopian aspirations for true and unfettered

democracy - more on this below. In short order, a farcical national conference was held from July 1 to July 5, 1991.

A true national conference is held when the representatives from different regions of a nation assemble at a place and hammer out agreements on how best to rule themselves. Normally, such a national conference takes months for its members to agree on issues after serious and frank discussions. In contrast, the five-day (July 1-July 5, 1991) so-called national conference summoned by the EPLF-TPLF/EPRDF was a mockery of the idea of national conference and an insult to the people of Ethiopia. The EPLF-TPLF/EPRDF did not call for nor did they engage the representatives of the people from different regions. Rather, both the parties that attended the conference and the outcomes of the conference were tightly controlled by the EPLF-TPLF/EPRDF. The holding of the conference had far reaching consequences, some of which include the establishment of following principles and acts. [URL1]

- 1) A National Charter was established.
- 2) Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) was formulated.
- 3) An EPLF-TPLF/EPRDF agreement that converted Asab into a free port in exchange for a referendum on Eritrean self-determination to be held within two years was sanctioned.
- 4) An 87 member Council of Representatives was created, with the EPRDF occupying 32 seats, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) 12 seats, the TPLF 10 seats, the Oromo

People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) 10 seats, the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) 10 seats, and other groups 27 seats.

5) The so-called principle of ethnicity was enshrined in the national charter and it constituted the basis of local and regional government. The charter recognized the right of all of Ethiopia's nationalities to self-determination. Also, district and regional councils were to be created on the basis of nationality.

These are merely some of the outcomes of the five-day so-called national conference held in Addis Ababa under the aegis of the EPLF-TPLF/EPRDF. In essence that national conference was a ploy used by the EPPL-TPLF to translate their ideas into actions by which Ethiopia would be destabilized.

References.

URL 1- <http://countrystudies.us/ethiopia/3.htm>

URL2. http://muse.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/access.cgi?uri=/journals/journal_of_democracy/v009/9.4henze.html

URL3- <http://www.andenet.com/art-dec17-2.htm>

URL4- <http://www.andenet.com/art-dec16-1.htm>

URL5- <http://www.andenet.com/art-dec31-1.htm>