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Editorial Page

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Editorial

Abay River is primarily an Ethiopian Resource

Ethiopia is the foremost source of Abay – providing 86% of the Nile water. However, it is the country that has made the least use of the water of Abay. When European colonel powers embarked on the scramble for resources including water, Ethiopia kept her eyes on survival fundamentals ---territorial integrity and political independence of the country. Nonetheless, Ethiopia has always retained the rights, desires and plans to utilize he Nile water. In fact, Ethiopia has no other option than harnessing its water resources for consumptive and non-consumptive purposes. Even there is no legal or intuitional obligation that limits Ethiopian policy makers from fulfilling their national duties—using the water of Abay - in the best interest of the Ethiopian people.

Uncontrollably scourging drought in Ethiopia has led to large scale starvation, death and dislocation of people for many years. The vitality of seeking durable long-term remedies to the problems of drought and famine is underline by the wealth of historical evidence due to the frequent recurrence of the problem. In terms of altering the power of drought, water is a very powerful resource by far mire than other resources such as oil. For Ethiopia therefore. electrification, mechanization and irrigation are not luxurious phenomena but rather life –and –death issues.

Moreover, there is a demographic alarm that is ticking to remind Ethiopia to look into the wise utilization of its resources as its population is projected to be 20% higher than that of the Egyptian population by 2030. Thus, Ethiopia cannot morally, ethically and politically afford to let its population starve for fear of conflict with downstream riparian states. Of course, it is imperative to find a solution that narrows the gap between the assertion of historical right by Egypt and Ethiopia’s legitimate demand for justice an equitable share of the water – and hence Ethiopia cannot afford to live with the edict of the colonial history by which she was not even shackled due to the bravery of her population.

The unsustainability of trying to maintain the status quo on the basis of [wrong] historical rights by downstream states are difficult to justify. If the rhetoric of useless colonial history that Ethiopians fought to their teeth subsides, suspicions and mistrusts reduced/removed, Abay can offer a great potential for friendship and cooperation-- given that opportunities seized in time with the right sprit. As cooperation is advantageous to all riparian countries, it should be forged seriously in order to anticipate and resolve conflict before they boil out of hands. Cooperation in the use of Abay/Nile will surely promote peace and stability among the riparian countries to the extent of creating Nile Basin economic community. As economic and political links are strengthened among the riparian countries, war becomes an old-song to be thrown to a dustbin of history to be forgotten forever.

Therefore, Egyptian should bear in mind that ‘what is good for goose is good for ganders.’

Busha Taa, PhD
Editor – in- Chief

