Keynote Address by President Isaias Afwerki on the occasion of the 33rd Independence Anniversary , Asmara, 24 May 2024

Dear Participants,

Congratulations to the people of Eritrea inside the country and abroad; to all its friends; and to the free peoples of the world.

Allow me to express my gratitude to all those who contributed to impart additional splendor to this momentous day – the 33rd Anniversary of our Independence – through various inspirational programmes.

We normally assess – at propitious occasions of the annual celebration of Independence Day – the dynamic nation-building process of independent and sovereign Eritrea; and, the progress achieved against the backdrop of our pronounced mission within the context of fluid global and regional developments and trends.

In this regard, our documented observations are our point of reference to properly decipher and understand the ideologies and policies that have been articulated in the past thirty-three years to crystallize a "new global order" after the end of the Cold War. In the past few years in particular, and as the machinations for imposing a uni-polar world order became increasingly untenable due to the resistance of the free peoples of the world, we had managed to identify and predict the visible contours of the aspirations for new global order that serves the interests of the vast majority of the world's peoples.

The exploratory analysis spelled out during our Independence Anniversaries in 2021, 2022 and 2023, were prompted by the imperative to understand, with the requisite depth, what may be termed as the "transitional phase"; with all its fluid attributes. Especially, the ideology of "domination and monopoly" as well as the strategies, plans and tactics of its elite proponents. In this respect, what is the reality and trend now; in 2024?

The war declared 30 years ago to primarily "contain" Russia has become a daily theme today; accompanied as it is by intense propaganda. The subterfuges underway to portray – through enlargement and intensive care – the almost defunct NATO and the European Union as more potent than ever before are too transparent and cannot, indeed, conceal the looming quagmire.

It is patently clear that the billions of dollars spent daily in the futile war will spike into trillions of dollars in the period ahead. As the devastation becomes more expansive with the lapse of time, the perilous situation that will ensue at the global level will be immense in terms of all metrics. Furthermore, the elites of the defunct ideology are becoming more desperate. It is thus difficult to predict the (reckless) policy choices that they may contemplate.

The containment of China is fraught with higher risks than the containment of Russia. The declared war – even if packaged in moderate language and diplomatic niceties – is grossly at variance with the facts on the ground and the tensions that these will invariably entail. The looming tension will not be diminished or averted as the elites of "domination and monopoly" cannot accommodate – due to their innate nature and proclivity – the economic, technological and military growth of China; or its expanding international ties. Above all, as they will not discard their agendas of hegemony and domination, their machinations to contain China in Asia through a web of alliances – using "Taiwan and Hong Kong" as narrow pretexts and the "South China Sea" as a wider cause – is patently evident.

More ominously, their greatest anxiety stems from the economic and technological growth of China. The roadblocks and sanctions they are deploying to obstruct this capability is the "tip of the iceberg". The global crisis that this dangerous mind-set can trigger is not negligible. We must also bear in mind that almost a quarter of the over 30 trillion dollars of US debt will have to be repaid to China.

Another important issue is Africa and the overall situation in the continent in relation to other global developments. In the eyes of the elite of "domination and monopoly", Africa has always been, and continues to be, regarded as their exclusive enclave.

The continent is endowed with almost 60% of global natural resources; and, a fast-growing population of 1.2 billion. Despite all these resources, its opportunities for development were not only suppressed in the past due to slavery and colonialism, but its growth remains stifled in this post-industrial age. It thus remains a marginalized continent condemned to a subsistence economy and the export of raw materials. On the other hand, the voice of the African people saying "enough" to slavery, colonialism and unfair exploitation has been growing in the last few years.

The growing resistance is not confined to rejection of robbery and looting of the continents' resources. It is also combatting polarized ethnic and clan agendas that aim to wreak havoc in its ranks, as well as corrupt and surrogate regimes. Awareness for nation-building, political independence and sovereignty is growing with concomitant initiatives to that end. The aspirations for a new and just global order is likewise on the rise. This is also true in Asia and Latin America as well as the peoples of Europe and the Americas. These are broad phenomena that should be properly analyzed (will need more profound examination in due time).

How about developments unfolding in our neighbourhood and that have closer impact on us? Our neighborhood that comprises of the Nile Basin, the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf.

The liberation struggle of the Palestinian people for independence is a central issue that has come into the forefront in the past seven months. Even if we cannot revert to the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the elites of "domination and monopoly" have

misconstrued the “Two-State Solution” enunciated in Oslo (1993) for dilatory purposes while exploiting weaknesses of leadership and organizational schisms to create “accomplished facts” on the ground. The scheme or end game includes cajoling Arab countries towards“normalization ” while choking and ultimately obliterating the cause of liberation and independence of the Palestinian people. But the just struggle of the Palestinian people has not been debilitated or vanquished. To the contrary, its firmness has won international acclamation and broad popular support. As a consequence, it occupies a central stage at this point in time. In equal measure to the resistance, the oppressive, duplicitous and deceitful trademarks of the “school” of “domination and monopoly” have been fully exposed.

Another development in our neighborhood that should be appraised together with the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people for independence is the pronouncements and positions of solidarity that the peoples of this neighborhood are invoking in their respective countries. This has triggered tension in the Red Sea; and especially in Bab-el-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden. Illicit interferences and naval stampedes by defunct forces of “domination and monopoly”, presumably to “safeguard international maritime routes” using the perceived tension as a pretext; and, its dangerous ramifications, are crucial trends that warrant proper appraisal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Current developments and trends in our neighbours and that have much closer influence and impact – both directly and indirectly – on our domestic situation are numerous indeed. The complications and devastation inculcated by the agendas of instigating division; creating and managing crises; and even provoking invasion and war, concocted and pursued by the elites of “domination and monopoly”, especially in the last 33 years of our Independence, have been enormous. The failure of their myriad hostilities seems to have engendered higher frustration in the camp of “domination and monopoly”. They are accordingly embroiled these days in fomenting another cycle of war. This has become an open secret (all its details will be divulged at the appropriate time).

At this juncture, the simple message to our people is: “No reason for anxiety!”

Indeed, the frontal role and shield of our heroic defense forces; the unparalleled patriotism and resilience of our people who did not only ascertain liberation and independence in 50 years of struggle that exacted precious sacrifices, but also preserved their sovereignty and independence in the last 33 years are testaments to our fortitude.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As our security readiness to all potential hostilities remains intact, the priority of our priorities is, and remains, nation-building. We will thus continue to toil by expanding our development programmes; enhancing their effective implementation; continuously refining the plans charted out; mobilizing the necessary resources; making requisite adjustments and sacrifices; and, reinforcing our institutional capabilities and frameworks.

We express our profound appreciation to our compatriots abroad for the patriotism they have displayed in various trying times as well as in the past year; and urge them to keep this up.

Beyond safeguarding our independence and sovereignty, we will continue to work hard, without complacency, to consolidate the ties of friendship, cooperation and complementarity with our close neighbours and the wider region as well as with like-minded and free peoples of the world.

Peace Anchored on Resilience!

Best wishes for a good rainy season with popular resilience!

Glory to our Heroic Martyrs!

Victory to the Masses!

24 May 2024