EAST AFRICAN TREATY DEBATE

BY: JOHN MASHAKA:

GITAU WARIGI, of the Nation Media Group, brought into light the need for Tanzania leaders, to look beyond 20 years from now, before committing the country into the EA treaty. To describe the Dar es Salaam government as an impediment to the creation of the East African Community reveals that, Mr. Warigi, was not rational on his thinking towards the complication. He failed to employ logic on the reluctance, the ardent nature, and the need for the Tanzanians to study the pros and cons before making a decision.

Describing Tanzania as dirt poor country, whose economy is dwarfed by that of Kenya, a country whose leaders spends time strutting the world than they do in their own country, a country that lacks dynamism and skills to drive its economy forward at the pace of its neighbors, amounts to nothing than a direct insult to the Tanzanians whom he is frustrated with, and angrily courting to join the community. Insulting Tanzanian leaders (Including our Head of State) translates to insulting the wisdom of Tanzanians who elected them.

As a Tanzanian, and a patriot, I am OFFENDED. And depicting Gitau Warigi's, commentary as personal opinion would be naivety and self deceit on the part of Tanzanians, since he is exploiting national (Kenyan) media to let his views of hatred, prejudice, myopic, and stereotype mentality be known. Mr. Warigi, is exposing some of the underlying problems Tanzanians will have to deal with in case the treaty goes through without scrutiny.

Arrogance, superiority complex, recklessness, illogical reasoning, out of scope assumptions and erratic behaviors must be thoroughly weighed before committing our country, into the community. I highly believe he (Warigi) is speaking for the corrupt Kenyan regime, and not the infringed ordinary citizens, whose voices are not represented by the self-imposed rulers. Maybe he was forced serve as a mouth piece (conduit) for some forces beyond his control since he has been more or less of rhetorical than logical in his offensive towards Dar es Salaam.

While economic consequences seem to be of greater concern, our security, social, culture and political setting trepidation were neglected by our brother, a Kenyan, and

an editor, who failed to address our concerns. Yes, there are benefits of forming treaties or other blocs, within different regions, and these benefits can be realized without compromising a country's political establishment, culture, and security. Reforming tariff's system is one of the ways; free movement of people and goods across borders can be another one.

Mr. Warigi, needs to get his facts straight, and learn more about NAFTA before dictating to Tanzanian's the course of action. He is failing to understand that NAFTA has been a one sided Treaty, that has simply failed!

In the United States, as economist and a friend, Gary Bollinger details, NAFTA has eliminated some 1,266,000 job opportunities-primarily for non-college-educated workers in manufacturing. Contrary to what the American promoters of NAFTA promised U.S. workers, the agreement did not result in an increased trade surplus with Mexico, but the reverse.

As manufacturing jobs disappeared, workers were downscaled to lower-paying, less-secure services jobs. Within manufacturing, the threat of employers to move production to Mexico proved a powerful weapon for undercutting workers' bargaining power.

This continent-wide pattern of stagnant worker incomes, increased insecurity, and rising inequality has emerged at a time when economic conditions have been most favorable for the success of greater continental integration. The negative effect of increasing trade and investment flows has been obscured by the extraordinary consumer boom in the United States, especially during the period from 1996 through the summer of 2000.

The boom, driven by the expansion of domestic consumer credit and a speculative bubble in the stock market, spilled over to Canada and Mexico. Their economies have now become extremely dependent on the capacity of U.S. consumers to continue to spend in excess of their incomes. As the air seeps out of that bubble, the cost of those nations' reliance on the U.S. consumer market is becoming apparent.

The wave of unskilled workers crossing the boarder into the US, from Mexico, is creating a social time bomb for the hardworking educated American population who are being taxed heavily to provide social benefits for the less educated, and unskilled migrants from Latin America. Neither France nor Germany has gained anything

substantial from Slovakia, in their EU integration, AND LAND has never been an issue.

While Kenyan's were adapting their master's language, English to be precise, Tanzanians were working towards their national Identity. And this is evident by the national language that has shunned tribalism and brought about pride not only to Tanzania, but for Kenya as well.

Kiswahili, that is, is the source our tolerance, and open-mindedness. It is the source of Tanzania brotherhood.

Many of the so-called Kenyan, semi-literate experts have nothing more than broken English in Tanzania offices, and if GITAU Warigi, feels that Kenya is more developed than Tanzania, then there is no need to cry for the Integration, because it is going to be a one sided game. Simple mastery of a foreign language does not constitute a viable skill to be proud of.

Mind you, It is shameful to celebrate one's cultural identity, and a form of slavery of some sort, to abandon your own for that matter. It will be prudent for Gitau, to give exact count of Tanzanians in Kenya offices to that of Kenyans in Tanzania trotting with crude and broken English.

Germans, have their own language, so are the Russians and the British. The Spanish and Italians speak their respective languages. Rwandese, Ugandans, and the Burundis both speak, Rwandese, Kiganda and Kirundi, and so are the Tanzanians. We are proud of Kiswahili; it gives us a unique Identity as Africans and a nation.

A country known globally for her landless and landowners culture, if you will, cannot be allowed to export the pandemic to her neighbors. Tanzania will be committing a crime of a century to her people by following blindly the perilous path of privatizing her land.

We cannot comprehend a situation in which the famous Kikuyu's tycoons, owning millions of hectors of land in Tanzania, yet the "poor" Tanzanians by their definition, stacked in the replica of Mathare, Kibera, and Kariobangi slums as squatters. Land privatization is a social injustice and pandemic a country whose foundation lies on brotherhood cannot adopt.

In 2007, Kenya, exported to Tanzania, twenty hardcore robbers whom were all armed

to their teeth with battle field weaponry, and ready for action. Fortunately, 14, of them were gunned down before they could wreck-havoc to the peace loving Tanzanians. If these men had same passports or Identity cards as Tanzania's, no one would have known their country of origin.

I am sure there are many more cross boarder cases of banditry that do not make it to the national spotlight, but meant to frustrate the peaceful Tanzanians. I assume, these are some of the benefits GITAU is rushing us to enjoy, as the fruits of his "cross-pollination."

Peace and harmony within Tanzania, are not products of coincidence, they are fruits of tolerance; they are social and political forbearance that have evolved through so many years of hard work. Our national pride "Kiswahili" has made the country a model for peace and harmony, as it is next to impossible to identify a Tanzanian by his ethnicity. Yet in Kenya, tribal identity dictates where to do business and where not to, when you belong to a certain tribe. Pathetically it also dictates who to hire for key positions.

Kalenjins and Luos are Kikuyu's arch enemies, and so are the Kikuyus and Luyas. We don't want this type of culture within our borders, and I do hope leaders in Dar es Salaam, are reading the signs on the wall, while working for the best interest of the 40 million hardworking, peace loving Tanzanians. There can be integration without losing our national Identity, pride, integrity, or compromising our security. We can also maintain our political tolerance within the unity without adopting the scary land reform proposal from Kenya.

Ages when people jumped into bandwagons without critically thinking or questioning WHY, are long gone. If our Kenyan neighbors are frustrated with us, I guess that will be their business.

Tanzania is NOT a banana republic, it is a free country ruled by logic, reason, and the will of the people and our leaders cannot jump the ship without knowing where it is headed. We are for the integration, but under a conducive environment where we are going to be treated as equals.

At stake is not the mere signing of the treaty, it is the future of the 40 million Tanzanians who can not be let down out of utter ignorance. If Kenyans are unwilling to compromise, they are at liberty to replace Tanzania, her southern neighbor, with

Somalia, which is poorer than Tanzania, and both of them will benefit.

Mr. Warigi, it is time to wake up from your long snooze, instead of thinking in the terms of 1961. It may have taken a long time, but we are getting there. Tanzania has changed; her youth are well exposed, new vibrant leaders with mastery of your so called language of pride (generation X) are emerging. Times to dictate to sovereign nations on how to think are long gone, and the main Impediments, and obstacles to the EAC ratification is not Dar es Salaam authorities, it is the hasty, arrogance and your erratic attitude of either you are with us, or against us!

Mungu Ibariki Tanzania!

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