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The statement made by US President Donald Trump during his last election conference before the start of the presidential elections concerning Egypt's right to bomb the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) unless Ethiopia agrees on a formula that can satisfy all parties - sparked a great deal of controversy on this sensitive issue.

While some considered Trump's statement as a green light for the regime in Egypt to bombard GERD with missiles, others considered it incitement against Ethiopia, and insult to the Egyptian regime - which failed to take a decisive stance in handling this disaster despite the escalating tone of the Ethiopian officials' discourse against Cairo- due to the growing relationship of both Egypt and Ethiopia with China and Russia. In this regard, some observers suggest that Trump may have wanted to lure Egypt into war against Ethiopia, similarly to what happened with former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, when he was given a green light by the US ambassador to Iraq to invade Kuwait!!

However, others believe that Trump's comment was as a kind of indirect denial of what has been reported that the construction of the dam was carried out through secret agreements between the downstream countries and Ethiopia, under the auspices of the United States during the Trump administration.

Anyway, it is not a secret that we have become used to the fact that the American maestro is the one that orchestrates all our issues, whether small or large, and accordingly, all strings of the game regarding GERD are in his hands and subject to his own will.

The conspiracy theory

Therefore, if we accept this fact, we can simply consider the following as sufficient evidence:

- Removing Sudan from the US list of terrorism and accordingly exempting it from sanctions,
- The big leap of Lt. General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, head of the Sudanese Sovereign Council, towards normalization with Israel, and the subsequent Zionist interest in treating the pro-normalization activist, Amb. Najwa Gadaheldam before she died after being infected with COVID-19,

- The support provided by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo -generally referred to as Hemetti- Vice President of the Sudanese Sovereign Council, to the counter-revolution in Libya, and
- The UAE's permeation into Sudan's economy.

On the other hand, the repeated Ethiopian statements are shocking, provocative, and haughty, something that the Egyptians have not experienced before from an African, developing or Arab country, which made many Egyptians change their "mental" image of Addis Ababa as a modest country.

In the face of all this, the Egyptian reaction was so miserable and crushed that it succeeded in transmitting the feeling of fear to the souls of the people, and worked to convince Egyptians that their country could do nothing but hope that Ethiopia would take even one step back with respect to its tough positions, as the regime would accept any concession, whatever it was – in attempt to interpret this betrayal as wisdom in dealing with the status quo.

The Egyptian official media passed through its analysts concepts such as:

- Egypt cannot bomb the Ethiopian dam with missiles because countries such as China and Israel are protecting it with the use of deterrent defense systems,
- Sudan, which Egyptians were confident of its support, has abandoned its northern neighbor. Consequently, Egypt would not be able to strike GERD due to lack of direct borders between Egypt and Ethiopia, and because its collapse would be a disaster for Egypt.

On the Israeli side, it seems that it has been waiting for a green light from the United States to intervene and act on the whole issue.

Sometimes Israel emerges in Sudan, and sometimes it emerges in Ethiopia, especially on the issue of the Renaissance Dam, not to forget the grand reception and welcome with which Netanyahu was received in the Ethiopian Parliament and his frank comment there that Israel would benefit from the Nile water.

Since we believe that all these regimes are just obedient servants of the US administration, all these positions must be pre-meditated in order to justify surrendering to the fait accompli and deliver water to Israel as the only solution to the current dam crisis.

Such justifications are not only intended to persuade the Egyptian people, but also to convince parties within the regime that never believed that a clandestine activity was carried on behind the scenes to reach this point.

This fact being exposed will necessarily lead to questioning many campaigns waged by the Egyptian regime, including the war on terrorism, changing the religious discourse, the Suez canal duct, the deal of the century, and many other topics that the opposition monitors.

In this case, some can imagine that what has been leaked about Egypt's leasing a military base in South Sudan - if the news aired on South Sudan's state television is correct, although it was denied by its government – may be targeting Turkish bases in Somalia, Sudan and Djibouti, and not for attempting to strike Ethiopia's dam.

The confrontation approach

However, many of those that reject the conspiracy theory suggest that the whole thing is related to the confrontation capabilities available to each country, arguing that only power and interests matter in this regard, excluding any pre-meditated deception against Egypt.

They also claim that Ethiopia and Israel have interests in maintaining joint cooperation between them; and that Sudan decided to side with the stronger side, the party that owns the lake, water, and accordingly electricity (Ethiopia); and makes friends with those that possess military power and international influence (Israel), where the Sudan-Israeli cooperation has resulted in success lifting sanctions against Sudan from the first moment.

The question here is, what are the most important power tools or pressure cards that Egypt possesses?

Egypt's pressure cards

- The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is geographically located in the area that is considered the home of the Oromo tribes, the majority of which are Muslims, and they are against construction of the dam there after the Ethiopian government had snatched their lands from them; and they call for secession from Ethiopia through the Oromo Liberation Front. Meanwhile, Muslims whose number is estimated at 45% to 56% of the population according to data from some research centers, and at 34% of the population according to official data, complain of marginalization and persecution. In this case, given the fact that Egypt's Al-Azhar has a great influence on the Muslim Oromo tribes, the Egyptian government can use this pressure card.
- Egypt can also use the pressure card of the Egyptian Orthodox Church, where the Orthodox Christians make up about 50% of Ethiopia's population, according to official statistics, and they are the most influential group in the country.
- Ethiopia suffers from lack of a direct access to the sea, which forced it to rent a share from Port Sudan in 2018 and a share from the main port of Djibouti that is linked it to Addis Ababa via a railway, in addition to having a "military base with French support" there. In this case, both Sudan and Djibouti can help Egypt use this situation as a pressure card on Ethiopia.
- It is also possible to use the Suez Canal in Egypt and Bab al-Mandab in Yemen, as two pressure cards on Ethiopia, by imposing additional duties on Ethiopian goods, or threatening to block their transit.
- Ethiopia suffers from multiple separatist movements, especially in the Ogaden region that Britain delivered to it from Somalia in 1954, despite its ethnic and religious affiliation to Somalia and Yemen – another pressure card that can be activated.
- Arab countries, especially Sudan and Somalia, had supported Eritrea in gaining its independence from Ethiopia in the last century. Likely, Egypt can now support Eritrea in the face of the Ethiopian pressures practiced against Asmara since its secession.
- Egypt can also use the investment card, where Egypt can invest there, especially in agriculture and livestock, for the benefit of both countries.

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- Finally, with regard to the military options, Egypt can use the alleged military base in South Sudan, if there is any, to carry out military action against the dam.

These are only "some" Egyptian and Sudanese pressure cards that can be used in the face of a disaster of the size of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

