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Wikileaks: Indicators of Challenged Commitment to Protection of National Interests By Mwangi Wanjumbi

The ongoing Wikileaks bring to mind a remarkable story of commitment to state protection. Many years since reading 'The Mossad,' an interesting account of leading espionage sensations, I still recall the fascinating and eventually sad case of Eli Cohen. This greatest Israeli spy of all times had been assigned to check on the events in Syria, a hostile neighbor. In particular, the Israelis were continually scared stiff of the proximity within which Syria could patrol the entire Israel from the Golan Heights.



Meanwhile, Eli made his way to Syria through a stint in Brazil, where he posed as a successful businessman (or something like that), for some years. Finally, he relocated his interests to Damascus, Syria where he excelled enormously. During the day, Eli was a successful authority in business. By night, he was the master spy who articulately relayed all information gathered, to his Israel masters. And as the upward mobility continued, Eli was almost nominated to the post of Syria's Deputy Defense Minister. Though Eli was finally discovered and executed, his service to the nation of Israel will remain in people's minds for many years to come. Above all, the Israelis captured the Golan Heights two years after Eli's execution, guided by his earlier designs. So, how does this relate to Wikileaks?

Here at home we have been treated to sometimes sensational information easily passed by our own leaders, to foreign governments (America in this case). The same leaders are expected to be impeccable nationalists by any standards. They have in any case continually taken oath of protecting and defending the state. More still, they are public servants, who are by all means subject to state secrets act.

Ironically, the sometimes damning information is freely shared with American diplomats over simple lunches and/or dinners. Even if, the nation is enjoying absolute freedom of speech, it appears that our 'respected and trusted' leaders have been unable to distinguish between what should be shared with foreigners and what should be left out. Even more worrying is that some of this information is supposed to be shielded away from the public domain, for a cool 30 years.

Obviously, national leadership calls for patriotism of those charged with the respective roles. In fact, the very act of freely giving out information, by our elected leaders puts their loyalty to the nation into question. There should be no excuse that we never had any explicit leadership values, prior to promulgation of the new constitution. But, even if inexplicit, we had some values, as advocated by the national anthem. Top of them all is defending our nation from our neighbours (and other foreigners). How can we proclaim to be proud Kenyans, bestowed with responsibility of protecting the same state, whose secrets end up being shared with foreigners?

Without doubt, it has now been proven that the patriotism of some of our leaders' is questionable. Further, some leaders do not respect or are not aware of the principles of

communication as is applicable to state matters. Apparently, the relationships of such leaders with foreigners need to be henceforth curtailed or substantially controlled.

Perhaps, interaction with foreigners needs to be with designated officials only. Further, the interactions need to be allowed only during broad daylight, and in pursuance of official duty. Naturally, we must avoid situations where we are seen to be disadvantaging our own country, when others like Eli Cohen, paid through their own lives for the protection of their own nation.

Inevitably, we must act and be seen to be committed to the protection of our nationhood and therefore sovereignty, whatever the cost. Indeed, some of the Wikileaks are humiliations, which could have been avoided, if all our leaders were committed to protection of national interests.

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