

3-19-10

Horn Of Africa Conference and the political marginalization of the Ethiopian Diaspora.

Among the plethora of the Ethiopian alphabet soup organizations, two of them, Advocacy for Ethiopia (AFE), and Ethiopian National Priorities Consultative Process (ENPCP), have recently announced “the convening of a historic three-day conference” in Crystal City, Va. Wonderful. Who wouldn’t want to participate in a “historic” conference that would discuss all the ills facing Ethiopia and come up with the solutions to the problems that has faced Ethiopia , for millennia? Then, wham. The paragon, the mistress, the savior of certain insecure and unpatriotic section of the Ethiopian Diaspora is the key note speaker. The lady from Lisboa, Ana Gomez.

A very casual political analyst will see the obvious timing, (upcoming Ethiopian election), the usual participants who have an incestuous relationship with each other, and whose existence is predicated on bad-mouthing every progress that is taking place in Ethiopia . If there is one significant trait to these groups, it is their propensity to get gratification from miserable news to justify their own shortcomings. These are the type of organizations who will salivate if they hear of a bridge collapse in Ethiopia and scramble to paste it on their websites. On the contrary, if the news from Ethiopia is of economic progress, improvements in health care, etc. not only it is not reported on, but they will try to find ways to belittle the progress achieved.

Anyone who remotely considers himself concerned for Ethiopia should be delighted that Ethiopia is gaining prestige at the world stage. And whoever has visited the country recently returns amazed with the enormous strides Ethiopia has made within the last ten years in spite of the monstrous challenges facing it. These are just facts.

Back in December of 2009, just before the climate change conference in Copenhagen, Advocacy For Ethiopia, (AFE) wrote a press release entitled: “Ethiopia: No Blank Check for African Kleptocrats at the Copenhagen Climate Conference”. According to AFE, this letter was sent to the Secretary General of the UN, president of the EU, the Prime Minister of Denmark, the U.S. Secretary of State, the President of the World Bank, etc. Again, according to AFE, “This call has been endorsed by the Oromo American Citizens Council (OACC) and several other Ethiopian civic and political organizations”. So what does this August group of the Diaspora calling for? Part of the AFE’s press release stated,

“We are disappointed that the African Union has selected and the Climate Summit has given an opportunity to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia to represent the African continent. We believe that Meles Zenawi is the wrong person to represent Africa ”.

Interesting. This is a statement from an organization that hopes for a strong and prosperous Ethiopia ? What a sham. Any organization that couldn’t differentiate between a political leader and the general interests of the masses of the citizens is a trickster. If King HaileSelassie or President Mengistu were elected by African leaders to represent the continent of Africa , any

Ethiopian worthy of his nationality and pride should be dignified of the honor bestowed on the country's leader.

To call for financial support not to be given to Ethiopia, and to be dispirited when Ethiopia is gaining prestige through her leader, is something to be expected from those who wish Ethiopia to remain weak. Feel glum all you want, the people of Ethiopia are moving forward.

Other organizations like the Ethiopian National Priorities Consultative Process (ENPCP) were of course in unison to show their disappointment at the selection of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia as the spokesperson for Africa. What an irritating value of exaggerated self worth, to try and tell the leaders of Africa whom they should, or shouldn't select as their representative.

Not to be outdone, the Union of Oromo Students in Europe (UOSE), called "on the leaders of the free world and the Secretary General of the UN to discount Mr. Zenawi as a legitimate voice of Africa". I suppose, it is only organizations like AFE, ENPCP, UOSE are the chosen ones to tell the Africans who "their legitimate voice should be". How mournful?

While still on the same subject, the president of the Oromo Studies Association OSA, Haile Hirpa, Ph.D. wrote an open letter to Yvo de Boer, chief negotiator, UN climate change conference 2009, which declared "we are very much disturbed that... Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, is taking the central stage in this important conference of this international scale, and reportedly representing African nations". I guess it would have been palatable to the

OSA if Ethiopia did not represent Africa and did not have a central role to play. What a hateful and envious statement to make.

Continuing writing in his open letter, Haile Hirpa, Ph.D. asserted that "Ethiopia is the poorest country in the world having the highest number of refugees in the world". A total adulteration of the facts. Either, this Ph.D. considers the readers of his open letter very gullible, or he thinks his Ph.D is a license to fib.

After this coordinated performance by the Diaspora alphabet soup groups, in Feb.2010 the 14th AU summit held In Ethiopia, after commending his leading role at Copenhagen climate conference, unanimously re nominated Meles Zenawi to represent Africa in international forums in global climate conferences. Few days later, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon announced to the world, the formation of a new high level advisory group on climate financing to be co-chaired by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

This week, in London, after being warmly welcomed by her Ethiopian Diaspora adulators, the anointed Ana Gomez said "It is crucial time for you and friends of Ethiopia that Ethiopians in Diaspora could play a great role by using all alternatives such as lobbying their local MPs, demonstration and rallies to make Ethiopia's problem visible before the international community." Included in this program was Mr. Obang Metho.

There is absolutely no doubt, that this conference called by AFC, ENPCP and others is a coordinated strategy of trying to undermine the Ethiopian national elections of May, 2010 and

try to discredit the hard won successes of the Ethiopian people. The conference will gather the usual suspects, with some presence of international NGO's whose career is based on disgusting pronouncement of " Ethiopia is in great danger of plunging into a new crisis". At the least, the conference will be a platform for spooky declarations to fill the Diaspora websites with toxic, and the marginal role of the Diaspora in Ethiopian politics will continue.

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