**Obama and Meles Zenawi’s Ticket**

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For decades, the West fed the people of Africa lies about democracy, the rule of law, standing for the rights of people, freedom of press etc… ad nausea. But contrary to the advertising and flouting of these grandiose’ ideals, Western nations have served Africans tyranny with all its vice on a bloody platter. The Bush administration, Tony Blair and their Western allies were notorious for cuddling African tyrants like Meles Zenawi. When President Obama run for the White House, his lead slogan was, “Change We Can Believe In.” Africans believed on President Obama and envisioned a change that they could themselves believe in through him. However, President Obama did not bring change. Rather, he embraced former President Bush’s approach of cuddling tyrants for strategic gains.

In the 2008 Presidential election campaign, President Obama was able to motivate the democrat base and managed to bring a new voter base. President Obama energized the youth that is traditionally hard to motivate and added, a new voter group that is getting more significant in the US presidential election.

In Virginia, this demographic group is comprised of emigrants from the Far East, Africa, Middle East and other parts of the world. This demographic group includes Ethiopians, Somalis, Eritreans and others from the Horn of Africa that reside in Arlington, Fairfax and Alexandria counties in large numbers. In the 2008 presidential election race, this group voted heavily democratic and gave President Obama a decisive victory by 6-7 percentage points. For first time since 1964, Democrat, a Black Democrat at that won the State of Virginia overwhelmingly.

The numbers are revealing. In Arlington, out of 108,870 total votes, 72% of the votes totaling 78,994, in Alexandria 72% (50,473) votes and in Fairfax, out of 511,353 votes 60% totaling 310,359 people voted for Obama. Of these numbers, chunks of the populations represent the above mentioned demographic. These heavily populated areas decided the 2008 Virginia presidential race.

However, more than the actual votes, the energy that the Obama candidacy aroused was historic. President Obama was able to motivate untraditional voting groups into a political euphoria for the ages. Kids were holding on to his every world. Parents wanted President Obama to be the role model and took his rise as a proof, that in life, all is possible including the possibility of becoming a President if one does all the right things. People spent hours glued to TV yearning to hear his powerful words. They wanted to trust him, believe in him and, his message for change. Kids campaigned selling his agendas and made substantial funding contributions for his campaign. In recent presidential elections history, American s have never witnessed young blacks around the country actively participate with that level of excitement.

Will that be the case in the 2012 election? Will Ethiopians, Somalis, Eritreans and others from the Horn of Africa vote with the same enthusiasm again? The answer is a big NO. President Obama will have serious problem recapturing their votes let alone exciting them to campaign for him as they have in the past. The Obama campaign will face serious repercussions for continuing Bush’s policies; for betraying their trusts and for misleading them into believing his message of “change.”

In May 18, 2012, President Obama invited Meles Zenawi to the G8 meeting in Washington and, for the Global Conference on food security. The reasons President Obama invited Meles Zenawi to this high-level global meeting is consistent with that of George W. Bush’s.

President Obama invited tyrant Meles Zenawi to give him exposure, to raise his status as global player and, to use him as a voice in his quest to sell his Africa agenda that aims to exploit the strategic importance and riches of Africa. Meles Zenawi happens to be the mercenary agent that fits the qualifications perfect. Meles is a brut, unashamed to lie and, he happens to be ruling a country that houses the African Union. Meles Zenawi also assists US military in the Horn of Africa. So, he is indispensable tool of US Africa policy. Hence, what President Barack Obama did by inviting Meles is no different than Bush’s, just pursuing US national interests with flawed, unsustainable and damaging policies.

President Obama is knowledgeable about the kind of leader Meles Zenawi is as well as his track record of repression and brutality. President Obama is fully aware about the current state of the region and particularly Ethiopia. The people of Ethiopia and the region are desperate for peace, stability and opportunities to develop. And Meles represents none of that.

What President Obama did is a slap to the face of Africans and particularly the people of Ethiopia because; it is hypocritical to bring Meles Zenawi to a conference on food security when he is selling fertile land to multinationals by uprooting people from their homes. It is a shameful reminder of the hypocrisy of the West to invite a ruler as a spokesperson on food security when he has consistently starved people for decades.

Concerned Congressman Chris Smith (NJ-04), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights said on this matter,

 "Several years ago, I introduced legislation to sanction the Ethiopian government for the killing of peaceful protesters in 2005 and its broader violations of human rights,"

Congressman Smith further noted,

"Not only do human rights violations continue in Ethiopia, but the government has now added the element of displacing their own people in favor of foreign interests farming Ethiopian land instead of their own citizens. Having Ethiopia at the table to discuss food security is counter-productive based on their land policies.”

**Concluding Remarks** President Obama is no different than George W. Bush! Ethiopians need to know and understand what President Obama did, while particular to Ethiopians, is as significant to Africans because the issue Obama wanted to exploit is food security and, when pertaining to Africa, Obama chose, tyrant in Chief Meles Zenawi to address it. By inviting Meles Zenawi, President Obama made it clear to the people of Africa and specifically the people of Ethiopia that he doesn’t care about the country, the people or governance. Obama showed the world Meles Zenawi is more important than Ethiopia and Africa.

By his brazen disregard to the people of Ethiopia and Africans, President Barack Obama inadvertently advertised, in the election of 2012, a vote for Obama is a vote for Meles Zenawi. By inviting Meles Zenawi to the G8 meetings, President Obama affirmed his continuous support for Meles. Hence, voting for President Barack Obama in the 2012 election is tantamount to voting for Obama and Meles Zenawi’s Ticket. This is what all voters need to keep in mind when voting.

To be continued…

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