

H.R.2003 IS A PRODUCT OF EMOTION

For any person with a rational mind the recent H.R. 2003 bill “The Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007” approved by the US House of Representatives should unquestionably be opposed not least it undermines the determination of Ethiopia to promote democracy, social justice, peace, and stability and negates with the efforts of the US in war on terrorism in the greater Horn of Africa. This bill should also be opposed due to the fact that its very architectural design from inception to where it is now is full of *emotions* that include, but not limited to, the following.

Firstly, Congressman Chris Smith admitted that its inception dates back to the time when he was onboard from Addis Ababa to Washington, DC (1 2). He drafted the bill in a way similar to an artist who spontaneously writes a fiction while on sleep and the idea of having a punitive legislation came to his mind when he was still afresh with his anger with PM Meles.

Secondly, when the bill was approved by the US House of Representatives, the majority of them did not know the location, let alone the internal politics, of Ethiopia in the world map (3). This further suggests the bill was approved without undergoing the usual process of passing through the critiques of opponents. This is also surprising in view of the CUD leader’s statement to the BBC’s HardTalk programme on the weird behavior of Ethiopians under different political circumstances (4).

Thirdly, and may be the most crucial one, the bill did not attempt to continuously, repeatedly, and hierarchically discuss about deteriorating situations in Ethiopia with all stakeholders including the Ethiopian government before embarking on taking such action. In this regard the bill seriously suffers from lack of a comprehensive, sequential and time trend assessment and evaluation of the situation in Ethiopia. At one time Congressman Payne revealed that he knew Ethiopia 40 years ago and only during the reign of this regime, a regime he strongly hates, that he convinced of major human rights breach and decided to co-sponsor a strong and punitive legislation (2). Would

he dare to tell us that during those 40 years of knowing Ethiopia, he never came across a major breach of human rights that deserved a punitive legislation?

Fourthly, the above drivers of legitimating a bill were also apparently supported by the unprecedented pressure made by the vocal Ethiopian Diaspora who firmly stand against the principles of advancing democracy and justice systems in Ethiopia. The support of these hate mongering vocals to the bill has also been driven by hate and emotions in that the majority of them were excluded from the political dynamics of the country and they had no way of knowing it from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. They increasingly focused on parameterizing the support given to Ethiopia and a key variable they miscalculated was the fact that Ethiopia desperately needs democracy and social justice not because it is a means of *channelling western aid*, but rather democracy has been a cause and consequence of extended and intense struggle of its own people. The quality of life and liberty these vocals are enjoying now in the US resulted neither from immigrating to Europe/Australia nor demanding a European/Australian made bill and these vocals failed to learn from the experience of such great nation. As educated citizens and supposedly 'good thinkers' for the Ethiopian people, their contribution to strengthen, as opposed to weaken, the infant democratic system was tremendous. Unfortunately, these vocal Diaspora are devoid of any long-term vision for the nation, and their role is at most destructive. Productive citizens and champions of human rights do not work against an infant democratization process but rather try to strengthen it by providing their professional and academic skills while tolerating minor obstacles.

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References:

^{1,2}http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa26910.000/hfa26910_0f.htm

³http://inhofe.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressRoom.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=afc9b1c1-802a-23ad-4b98-1a6bbe23992b&Region_id=&Issue_id=

⁴<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/hardtalk/4653325.stm>