

Could the Current Somali Crisis Affect Passage of H.R.5680?

Possible Strategies for the Home Stretch

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July 31, 2006



Prowling and Skulking

Several weeks ago, an alliance of Somali Islamist militia leaders calling itself the Supreme Islamic Courts Council (SICC), (Majilis al-shura Council) captured the Somali capital Mogadishu, and the nearby towns of Jowhar and Balad. The SICC is suspected of having ties to *al-Qaeda* and other terrorist organizations.

The “word on the street” is that for the past couple of weeks the Ethiopian regime’s lobbyists and officials have been prowling the halls of Congress and skulking about particular members’ offices sounding the alarm of an Islamic-Jihadist-terrorist takeover of the Horn of Africa. A delegation of certain Ethiopian parliamentarians is said to be en route to Washington, D.C. to reinforce the regime’s powerful lobbying brigade already laying siege to Congress in a desperate last ditch effort defeat of H.R.5680.

The Somali Factor

Somalia has been without any central government since the downfall of President Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991. For a decade and half, the country has been rendered a “virtual state” as a result of clan warfare among shifting alliances of warlords, armed thugs and bandits. These marauding and murderous warlords have left tens of thousands of innocent victims in their wake.

Over the past decade, various “independent” territories claiming sovereignty have been carved out of Somalia. A transitional government, the Somalia Transitional Government (STG) seated in Baidoa, consisting of a patchwork of disparate warlords, was established a couple of years ago with U.N. and U.S. support; but that government has been toothless and totally ineffective. It lacks a military or police force; and has been incapable of establishing a political structure, or developing consensus among its contentious members to administer the country.

The SICC, having routed the various warlords from the capital and other important towns, is gunning for the STG which barely lingers on as a government under the

guardianship of expeditionary Ethiopian forces. The SICC is said to have come into possession of large caches of weapons from fleeing warlords, raising concerns about its predominance in Somali politics for some time to come.

There is concern among American policy makers that the SICC, in its past formation (Al-Ittihad al-Islami) and current configuration, is linked to *al-Qaeda*, and providing protection to some of the terrorists who bombed the two U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998. There is also some apprehension that the ascendancy of the SICC in Somalia could complicate the U.S. war on terrorism in the Horn and engender regional instability.

Concern Among H.R.5680 Supporters

The Somali crisis has caused palpable anxiety among some supporters of H.R.5680; and there is concern that SICC's victory in Somalia could breath new life into the Ethiopian regime's efforts to neutralize and defeat the legislation. This concern is based on anecdotal, but cumulatively substantial evidence of a massive renewed lobbying effort by regime officials and paid lobbyists using the specter of a Somali Talibanic-Islamist-cum-Jihadist "Bogeyman" rampaging throughout the Horn of Africa to defeat H.R.5680.

The regime's reformulated argument to defeat H.R.5680 is based on the fanciful, deceptive and somewhat comical view that passage of H.R.5680 will undermine and nullify the U.S.-Ethiopian partnership to combat terrorism in the Horn, and render Ethiopia vulnerable to terrorism. Concerned H.R.5680 supporters suspect that the regime will use the SICC victory in Somalia to cause alarm and anxiety among American policy makers -- particularly members of Congress -- that the Horn is about to fall prey to al-Qaeda proxies.

The regime's Somalia-cum-terrorism argument is neither persuasive, analytically sound or logically tenable, but it goes something like this: The SICC is an alliance of die-hard Islamic fundamentalists with a broad regional agenda to 1) transform Somalia into an Islamic fundamentalist state, not unlike Talibanic Afghanistan or fundamentalist Iran, 2) provide a haven and training ground for *al Qaeda* and other terrorists and Islamic militants, 3) support and expand Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism among Ethiopian Moslems, and use other internal armed anti-regime groups to destabilize Ethiopia and the region, and, 4) carve out an Islamic state combining the Islamic populations in the Ogaden, Djibouti and Eritrea in a greater Islamic state or sphere of influence. Passage of H.R.5680 supposedly aids the Somali fundamentalist jihadists achieve their four-pronged regional strategy!

As manifestly absurd as these arguments sound, the concerns among supporters of H.R.5680 could be reduced to two basic questions: 1) Are members of Congress

(House and Senate) likely to evaluate the current situation in Somalia and be frightened by the prospects of a “Talibanic/Islamist/Jihadist” government in Somalia and vote against the bill? 2) What countermeasures can be taken to prevent the hijacking of H.R.5680 by the regime? These questions will be addressed in detail below, but first....

H.R.5680 is ABOUT Human Rights, Stupid!

To paraphrase a popular expression in American politics, H.R.5680 is “about human rights, stupid!”

H.R.5680 is exclusively concerned with support and promotion of human rights and democracy in Ethiopia. Nothing else! Examine the bill, and all you will find is a comprehensive legislative measure that provides funding and technical assistance to Ethiopia to:

- promote human rights and democracy, and secure the immediate release of political prisoners held without trial over the past year,
- facilitate the functioning and operation of a free and independent press, and insure the exercise of free speech and uncensored internet access,
- strengthen U.S. anti-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East by providing Ethiopia military, intelligence and other tactical support,
- accelerate economic development by providing technical assistance programs to improve policies and practices in such areas as budgeting, taxation, debt management, bank supervision, anti-money laundering and private sector development,
- enhance the performance and capabilities of local, regional, and national legislative institutions by providing technical support and training to government personnel, political parties, and civil society groups and government agencies,
- establish mechanisms and systems to enable local and international human rights groups to operate freely, and to regularly monitor and report on human rights conditions, and
- increase the independence of the judiciary and safeguard it from political pressure and interference, and promote and institutionalize the application of due process practices and the rule of law.

<http://www.ethioforum.org/News/article/sid=1348.html>

Deconstructing the Regime's Arguments Against H.R.5680

Smoke, Mirrors and the Specter of the "Somali Talibanic-Jihadist Bogeyman"

Circus magicians and stage conjurers often use smoke and mirrors to hoodwink the audience.

Not unlike the sleight-of-hand employed by circus magicians, the regime's Somalia-cum-terrorism argument and other miscellaneous contentions intended to defeat H.R.5680 are principally based on a **strategy of diversion**.

The regime's discernable diversionary strategy is to re-focus and re-direct public, and most importantly, congressional dialogue, debate and attention from the real issues -- **suppression of democracy, massive violation of human rights, ongoing illegal arrests and detentions of political opponents and leaders, denial of due process to political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, stonewalling of independent and credible investigations of election fraud and irregularities** -- to that of Somali Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in a cynical attempt to defeat H.R.5680.

For this purpose, the regime is desperately attempting to use this Somali "Bogeyman" to bundle and stitch together a number of asymmetrical and nonsensical arguments, and persuade -- and if that is not possible, confuse and confound -- members of Congress and Ethiopians in the Diaspora.

Regime Bogeyman Arguments:

- **"The Somali Jihadists are coming! The Somali Talibans are coming! The Somali Islamists are coming! The sky is falling!"**

H.R.5680 undermines America's global anti-terrorism efforts, and will pave the way for the resurgence of *al-Qaeda*-inspired terrorism in Somalia and the Horn region. The bill will effectively thwart Ethiopia's efforts to combat terrorism which is now "mushrooming in the region."

- **The Islamists in Somalia are *al-Qaeda* fanatics and supporters who are willing, able and ready to provide a haven to terrorists and Islamic militants from around the world, and support terrorist groups (armed anti-regime groups) in southeastern Ethiopia, particularly in the Ogaden region.**

H.R.5680 will undermine Ethiopia's ability to fight terrorism in its border areas and limit its ability to eliminate it from its source in Somalia.

• Unless militarily challenged by Ethiopia, the Islamists in Somalia will take control of the southern flank of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aden) and control the coastal areas of the Indian Ocean providing a beachhead for Islamic terrorists.

H.R.5680 should be defeated because it will diminish, if not altogether extinguish, Ethiopia's enthusiasm and commitment to counter regional Islamic terrorism and aggressively eradicate the breeding ground for al-Qaeda terrorists in Somalia.

• Without the active support and participation of the Meles regime, U.S. anti-terrorism strategy in the Horn, and possibly even in the southwestern Arabian Peninsula, is doomed to failure.

H.R.5680 will sever the existing partnership between Ethiopia and the U.S., and could force Ethiopia to seek assistance from other hostile countries.

Smoke and Mirror Arguments:

Diaspora Conspiracy

• H.R.5680 is a “concoction” of a few “elites” in the Ethiopian Diaspora in North America.

The bill's true authors are malevolent elite “Amharas” and Derg officials, “fringe elements,” and other “criminals” and “extremists” who lost power and privilege when EPDRF seized power. Former Derg officials supporting this bill had emptied the bank vaults just before the EPDRF takeover of power and fled the country, and are now they are using the loot to lobby against the regime. If H.R.5680 is enacted, it would be a victory for these criminal conspirators and a loss for ordinary Ethiopians.

• Supporters of H.R.5680 are privileged individuals who live a life of luxury in America and Europe, and have little understanding of the of the realities in Ethiopia, or the dazzling economic progress that has been achieved in the country due to regime policies that have created a favorable economic climate for internal and external investment.

Passage of H.R.5680 will derail and reverse the explosive economic growth in the country.

- **H.R.5680 is a diabolical tool devised by recalcitrant Diaspora elites and their counterparts in Ethiopia, who lost the election of 2005.**

The malicious regime opponents are uninterested in meaningful “dialogue,” to resolve political differences, and remain spiteful because they were rejected by Ethiopians in the rural areas who voted en masse for the regime. These elites are hell bent to use H.R.5680 to push their agenda of destabilization of the country and violent seizure of political power. Passage of H.R.5680 will embolden these stubborn and contumacious Diaspora elites to undermine economic development and the democratic process in Ethiopia.

- **H.R.5680 is a product of an “unholy alliance” between Diaspora elites and Eritrea and other wealthy individuals who have the ability to hire lobbyists to destabilize and change the direction of Ethiopian democracy.** Passage of H.R.5680 will provide the groundwork for the long-term destabilization of the country.

Hardship on the Ethiopian People

- **H.R.5680 will bring “calamity” on the millions of Ethiopian peasants and cause a deterioration of the current political and economic situation.** Passage of H.R.5680 will deny economic benefits to the masses of ordinary Ethiopians.

Unduly Punitive Against the Regime

- **H.R.5680 is wrong-minded because it is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the Ethiopian people and culture. (Implicit in this argument is the suggestion that the bill disfavors the dominant ethnic group in power.)** Passage of H.R.5680 will facilitate the resurgence and recrudescence of Amhara, Derg and other anti-regime groups, and enable them to destabilize and violently take over power in Ethiopia.

- **H.R.5680 is unfair to P.M. Meles and maligns and defames his stellar international reputation and prestige.**

Meles has been recognized as one of the most progressive African leaders and entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing African economic development by Tony Blair. He has been internationally acknowledged for his outstanding political leadership and skilful economic planning, which has resulted in quantum economic growth in Ethiopia. Passage of 5680 will affix a badge of infamy on Meles as a major African and world leader.

● **Meles' regime is America's best possible partner in the global war against terrorism in the Horn. Meles is a loyal and dutiful friend of America, and willing to remain as part of the "coalition of the willing" in the global and regional war on terror.**

H.R.5680 will sever the current counter-terrorism partnership with the U.S. and result in Meles' disassociation with the U.S.

Undermine a Truly Democratic Regime

● **H.R.5680 will undermine a truly democratic regime.**

The recent visit of World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz, the favorable statements he made about the regime and his decision to release hundreds of millions of dollars in loans to Ethiopia certifies that Meles' regime is truly democratic. (The implied suggestion is that the World Bank would have withheld approving such a large loan had it been convinced that Ethiopia was undemocratic or the regime tyrannical). H.R.5680 will thwart and undermine not only economic development in Ethiopia, but also the development of democratic institutions and practices in Ethiopia.

H.R.5680 is an Exercise in Futility, and Will Fail in Its Ultimate Objectives

● **There is really no real support for H.R.5680.**

The advocacy base for this bill reflects a "marriage of convenience" among splinter groups, and a motley collection of former Derg officials, Amharas and other disgruntled groups and individuals who are merely putting on a "dog and pony" show for uninformed American policy makers. Passage of H.R.5680 is a futile legislative exercise by the U.S. Congress.

● **H.R.5680 will not make a significant impact on the thinking of regime leaders or actions.**

Regime leaders will not be pushed around by the U.S. H.R.5680 and is a counterproductive legislative act by Congress.

● **Supporters of H.R.5680 are only interested in "temporary publicity."**

H.R. 5680 supporters have no real or long-term interest in political events in Ethiopia, and are only interested in the bill as a "publicity stunt." Passage of H.R.5680 is a waste of time.

● **H.R.5680 will fail in its objectives because it will not result in the release of political prisoners, BECAUSE THERE ARE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ETHIOPIA.**

The only persons jailed in Ethiopia are only street criminals and other criminals who are detained for calling illegal acts of civil disobedience that have resulted in deaths and injuries. H.R.5680 is an improper act of legislative interference by the U.S. Congress in the criminal justice system of Ethiopia.

It would be a waste of time to refute the regime's bogus, absurd, mismatched and non-sequitur arguments (i.e. arguments lacking a logical connection between the claim and its reason), but I would like to challenge the regime on the terrorism issue directly.

“H.R.5680 is NOT about Terrorism, Meles!”

H.R.5680 has very little to do with terrorism. The ONLY reference to “terrorism” in the entire bill appears in section 6 (A) (1) (B). **Contrary to the regime's claims that the bill undermines the fight against terrorism in the Horn, this section enhances joint anti-terrorism efforts by carving out a massive exception for counter-terrorism and peacekeeping assistance to Ethiopia.**

Note well: The bill does impose **one major prohibition:** Any counter-terrorism assistance provided by the U.S. can not be used against the Ethiopian civilian population.

But, pray tell, what is wrong with that?!!

Terrorism? Who Wants to Talk About Terrorism?

Do they want to talk about terrorism? Fine, let's start with **state terrorism.**

What is state terrorism? It is state behavior -- specific acts by national governments -- characterized by, among other things, the use of systematic and indiscriminate acts of violence, torture and/or repression against one's own civilian population. Common practices of state terrorism include extrajudicial killings, extreme censorship, suppression of political dissent and opposition political parties and use of torture. In countries practicing state terrorism, there are no constitutional safeguards for individual liberties, no independent judiciary, and dissenters and peaceful opponents are victimized as criminals. State terrorism is often carried out by security forces, state supported militia and/or paramilitary organizations and death squads.

What is the evidence on state terrorism by the Meles regime?

Following is corroborated evidence on state terrorism in Ethiopia for the reader's independent and objective review. The evidence speaks for itself, but you be the judge!

U.S. Dep't of State- Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2000

“The [Ethiopian] Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces committed a number of extrajudicial killings and at times beat and mistreated detainees. Prison conditions are poor. Arbitrary arrest and detention and prolonged pretrial detention remained problems. The Government continued to detain persons suspected of sympathizing with or being involved with the OLF. The Government continued to detain and deport without due process Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin... The Government infringed on citizen's privacy rights, and the law regarding search warrants was ignored widely.... The Government restricts freedom of the press and continued to detain or imprison members of the press; however, fewer journalists were detained than in previous years. Most were accused or convicted of inciting ethnic hatred, committing libel, or publishing false information in violation of the 1992 Press Law. Journalists continued to practice self-censorship. The Government at times restricted freedom of assembly.” <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/789.htm>

Dep't of State- Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2001

“The [Ethiopian] Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces committed a number of extrajudicial killings and at times beat and mistreated detainees. Prison conditions are poor. Arbitrary arrest and detention and prolonged pretrial detention remained problems. The Government continued to detain persons suspected of sympathizing with or being members of the OLF. The Government did not continue to detain and deport without due process Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin; however, approximately 1,800 prisoners of war (POW's) remained in internment camps at Dedesa at year's end.... Thousands of suspects remained in detention without charge, and lengthy pretrial detention was a consistent problem. The judiciary continued to show some signs of growing independence; however, the Judicial Administration Council took disciplinary action against a judge after he released suspects on bail on habeas corpus grounds. The Government infringed on citizen's privacy rights, and the law regarding search warrants was ignored widely. The Government restricted freedom of the press and continued to detain or imprison members of the press. Journalists continued to practice self-censorship. The Government at times restricted freedom of assembly; security forces used excessive force to disperse demonstrations...” <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8372.htm>

Amnesty International, Annual Report on Ethiopia, 2002

“At least 31 people were killed and over 3,000 arrested during rioting in April. Armed conflict continued within Ethiopia between government forces and Oromo and Somali opponents; many human rights violations by government troops were reported. Suspected rebel supporters were detained, tortured and extrajudicially executed. Several thousand remained in detention; some had been held for years without charge or trial. Journalists, human rights activists, demonstrators and other critics of the government were arrested. Most were held without trial, although some received unfair trials. During local elections in March, April and December scores of opposition party supporters were subjected to intimidation, beatings and arbitrary arrest. The trials of officials of the former military government on charges including genocide and extrajudicial executions proceeded slowly. Several death sentences were imposed; no executions were reported.”

<http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/afr/ethiopia!Open>

U.S. Dep’t of State- Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2003

“The [Ethiopian] Government’s human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces committed a number of unlawful killings and at times beat, tortured, and mistreated detainees. Prison conditions remained poor. The Government continued to arrest and detain persons arbitrarily, particularly those suspected of sympathizing with or being members of the OLF. Thousands of suspects remained in detention without charge, and lengthy pretrial detention continued to be a problem. The Government sometimes infringed on citizens’ privacy rights, and the law regarding search warrants was often ignored. The Government restricted freedom of the press and continued to detain or imprison members of the press. Journalists continued to practice self-censorship. The Government at times restricted freedom of assembly, particularly of opposition party members; security forces at times used excessive force to disperse demonstrations....” <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27727.htm>

Amnesty International, Annual Report on Ethiopia, 2004

“Widespread arbitrary detentions, torture and excessive use of force by police and soldiers were reported. A new media law, which would put journalists in the private media at risk of arrest, was proposed. Several thousand people remained in long-term detention without charge or trial; most were accused of supporting armed opposition groups. Prison conditions were harsh. Some prisoners “disappeared”. A parliamentary inquiry into killings of members of the Anuak (Anywaa) ethnic group in Gambela town in December 2003 reported that 65 people had been killed; other reports put the number of dead in the hundreds. Trials continued of over 2,000 members of the former Dergue government

detained since 1991 on charges including genocide. Several death sentences were imposed; no executions were reported....”

<http://web.amnesty.org/report2005/eth-summary-eng>

Amnesty International, Annual Report on Ethiopia, 2005

“Opposition candidates and supporters were arrested, beaten and intimidated in the run-up to elections. Some 9,000 opposition supporters were detained in June for several weeks following protests at alleged fraud in elections in which soldiers killed at least 36 people. In November, police killed at least 42 people after peaceful protests turned violent. Over 10,000 opposition supporters and demonstrators were detained. Ten new members of parliament, 15 journalists, several human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience were among 86 detainees later charged with treason, genocide and other offences. Civilians were killed and arbitrarily detained in the context of armed conflicts in the Oromia and Somali regions, with thousands remaining in detention without charge or trial. Several Oromo community activists were prisoners of conscience. Journalists and human rights defenders were detained and threatened with prosecution for criticizing the government. Death sentences were passed but no executions carried out....” <http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/eth-summary-eng>

Genocide Watch, 2005-Ethiopia

“Government defense forces, called the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), have killed as many as 2,500 ethnic Anuak in the Gambella region since December 2003. Many more, including most Anuak leaders, have been imprisoned without charge. Hundreds of Anuaks have been tortured and raped. The Ethiopian authorities have attempted to justify these actions as a campaign against a “terrorist” insurgency. In fact, most of the army’s victims have been civilians and many Anuaks are Christians dedicated to non-violence.”

<http://www.genocidewatch.org/ETHIOPIAchiefcollaboratorinanuakmassacre26Jan.htm>

Human Rights Watch World Report 2006 - Ethiopia

“The aftermath of Ethiopia’s landmark May 2005 parliamentary elections has laid bare the deeply entrenched patterns of political repression, human rights abuse and impunity that characterize the day-to-day reality of governance in much of the country. This dispiriting reality has come as a shock to many international observers who had viewed the electoral process with a great deal of optimism. The run-up to the May elections witnessed displays of openness and genuine political competition unprecedented in Ethiopia’s long history. But many Ethiopians experienced these limited openings in a context still dominated by heavy-handed government efforts to suppress and punish any form of political dissent. Worse, the aftermath of the May elections has been marred by seemingly intractable

controversy and displays of government brutality that threaten to reverse the gains yielded by the electoral process.” <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.htm?tbl=RSDCOI&page=research&id=43cfae9f28>

The prosecution rests!!!

A Comparative Perspective on State Terrorism Argentina

Beginning in the late 1970s, the Argentine military junta conducted a Dirty War (Guerra Sucia) on its opposition, dissidents and innocent citizens suspected of subversion, disloyalty and/or threatening the stability of the country. Opposition leaders, journalists, teachers, unionists, students and ordinary citizens were illegally arrested and detained without trial, tortured, liquidated, or “disappeared” (desaparecidos). The number of Dirty War victims in Argentina exceeded 30,000 persons. Through the use of state terrorism, the Argentine junta was able to intimidate the entire civilian population into submission.

What is the difference between the Argentina of the late 1970s and today’s Ethiopia?

Chile

In 1973, the Chilean military, led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet overthrew the elected government of Salvador Allende. A junta headed by Pinochet was established, which immediately suspended the constitution, imposed strict censorship, prohibited opposition parties, halted all political activity and embarked on a campaign of terror against opponents and opposition leaders in the country. During Pinochet’s rule thousands were illegally arrested, tortured and subjected to extrajudicial killings, and an estimated 50,000 people “disappeared.” Through the use of state terrorism, the Pinochet regime was able to intimidate the entire civilian population into submission. Pinochet, in his late 80s, narrowly escaped prosecution for his crimes raising the defense of mental incompetence.

What is the difference between Pinochet’s Chile and Meles’ Ethiopia?

Myanmar (Burma)

In 1988, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, a Gandhian, founded the National League for Democracy in Myanmar and was placed under house arrest (where she still remains to the present day) by the military junta. In 1990, the military junta called general elections, and Kiy’s National League for Democracy won decisively. Although Kiy had legitimate claim to the country’s leadership, the junta nullified the elections and entrenched itself in power against massive

international criticism. The civilian population today manages a precarious existence in a state of terror.

What is the difference between present day Myanmar and today's Ethiopia?

Eritrea

Amnesty International Report (2005) for Eritrea finds: "Hundreds of people were arrested for the peaceful expression of their opinions or religious beliefs. Political prisoners were held indefinitely without charge or trial, many incommunicado and in secret detention places. Thousands had been held since a major crackdown on dissent in 2001. Torture was reported, including of people fleeing or evading military conscription."

Ethiopia/Eritrea, flip sides of the same coin?

The Regime's Congressional Game Plan

Although I have no crystal ball or oracular powers to predict the future, I will attempt to provide a reasoned analysis of the regime's likely game plan to scare -- "terrorize" (no pun intended) -- members of Congress to vote against H.R.5680.

I expect the regime will follow a two-pronged strategy in its efforts to defeat H.R.5680. First, regime officials and lobbyists will attempt to divert Congressional attention from the issues of human rights, democracy and the illegal detention of opposition leaders and opponents to the bogus issue of the onslaught of Somali Taliban/ Islamist/ Jihadists.

Second, the regime and its supporters will mount a concerted effort to neutralize and demoralize H.R.5680 supporters, and distract them from focusing their energies and efforts to passage of H.R.5680.

Diverting Congressional Attention From the Issues of Human Rights and Democracy to the Alleged Onslaught of Somali Taliban/ Islamist/ Jihadists

Question: Are members of Congress (House and Senate) Likely to Evaluate the Current Situation in Somalia and be Frightened by the Prospects of a "Jihadist" Government in Somalia and Vote Against the Bill?

House and Senate Action

It is critical to understand the "legislative waters" H.R.5680 needs to navigate before becoming law. As is the case with most legislation in the U.S. Congress, H.R.5680 requires bicameral action (both houses pass the identical bill) before it

becomes law with presidential signature. At this writing, the bill has passed the House International Relations Committee with unanimous and bi-partisan support, but further inquiry has not revealed any subsequent action. As of this writing Congress has begun its month-long summer recess after taking action on various domestic issues, but to my knowledge H.R. 5680 was not part of the last minute floor debate.

Traditionally, once a bill is reported out of a House committee favorably, it is referred to the Rules Committee. Unlike the Senate where floor debate is freewheeling and pretty much unlimited for the 100 senators, the House with 435 members tightly manages its floor time. Consequently, before a bill reaches the House floor, the Rules Committee attaches appropriate rules for floor consideration, debate and vote. Specifically, the Rules Committee determines the amount of time a bill will be debated, the number of amendments that would be allowed, and other special rules that could increase or undermine the chances of success for the legislation on the floor.

I hazard to guess that H.R.5680 -- whenever it is reported out to the floor -- will not take the traditional Rules Committee route for two reasons: 1) in the grand congressional scheme of things, H.R.5680 is a relatively minor non-controversial bill, and 2) because H.R.5680 was passed with unanimous and bipartisan support in committee, it would be unnecessary for the Rules Committee to review it. In other words, by virtue of the unanimous and bipartisan support for the bill, there really is not much to debate on the floor, obviating the need for referral to the Rules committee. Moreover, there are no manifest disagreements among members of the International Relations Committee, or evidence of a broader disagreement on the bill among House members, and therefore formal rules of debate will be unnecessary.

The likely path for H.R.5680 floor consideration will be via a procedure called "suspension of the rules" (House Rule XXVII). This rule is used to pass non-controversial bills on the first two days of each week (often bundling disparate non-controversial bills) and the last week of a session of Congress. Under this rule, a bill is reported to the floor directly bypassing the Rules Committee subject to certain conditions: 1) maximum time of 40 minutes for floor debate, no floor amendments and a favorable vote by a two-thirds majority to pass the bill.

If my supposition is correct, Chairman Hyde of the International Relations Committee will bring the bill to the floor as a "suspension" in early September when Congress returns from its recess. I seriously doubt Chairman Hyde will send a non-controversial bill in the congressional scheme of things (certainly, not non-controversial of the Ethiopian community) to the Rules Committee, or alternatively bring it to the floor under suspension of the rules unless he is

confident that he has the two-thirds votes required to pass it. But, I could be wrong....

Danger Signs!

The analysis above should not be misinterpreted, and supporters of H.R.5680 should clearly understand the potential dangers that exist for the bill both in the House and Senate, and increase their vigilance and efforts to insure bicameral support for the legislation.

One potential danger to H.R.5680 is the prospect of regime lobbyists together with their congressional supporters, and possibly some administration representatives, persuading Chairman Hyde of the International Relations Committee or Chairman Smith, the chief sponsor of the bill, to withdraw or delay reporting of the bill to the floor, or to get them to agree to make certain changes or modifications before sending the bill to the floor. While this may not appear reasonably likely at the present moment, the dynamics of the Somali crisis could bring such an eventuality within the realm of possibility.

Consequently, it is absolutely critical for H.R.5680 supporters to amplify, intensify and expand their grassroots congressional advocacy efforts, and maximize their vigilance until the bill passes both houses.

Supporters of H.R.5680: Beware of What Could Happen in the Senate!

The dynamics of the legislative process in the Senate is much different than the House. I hazard to guess that H.R.5680 will not be sent to Senate in the traditional way to begin a new and long journey through Senate subcommittee, committee and floor consideration. As a non-controversial House bill, I suspect it will be presented for Senate floor action in an expedited way as a unanimous consent item.

It is worth noting that the Senate with its 100 members operates under very different rules. Unlike the strict House rules, Senate rules are very accommodating of their members, and much of the floor work there is done using a procedure called "unanimous consent." This procedure expedites Senate business considerably, and routine and non-controversial matters and bills are swiftly dispatched under unanimous consent procedure.

The downside of the unanimous consent procedure is that it can be used not only to pass motions and expedite floor consideration, **but also to delay proceedings and floor consideration of bills.** For instance, it is possible for a senator to delay a bill under the unanimous consent procedure, and remain anonymous. In other

words, one anonymous senator could use the unanimous consent procedure to delay consideration of H.R.5680, and thereby kill it procedurally! **Don't push the panic buttons yet!** There are other procedures and methods to reveal the identity of the anonymous senator and bring the bill to a vote despite the objection of one or more such senators. (Umm, I bet this idea has not crossed the thoughts of the fearsome lobbying firm of Piper Rudnick Gray Cary.) We must be prepared for this possibility!!!

While I do not wish to cause undue alarm for H.R. 5680 supporters by suggesting such a drastic contingency in the Senate, it is important for them to be fully aware of the possibility, however remote it may or may not be. Perhaps, of more urgent concern is possibility that the regime may be using a “rope-a-dope” strategy in the House (that is, pretending to be lobbying and losing in the House and diverting supporters’ attention) while its lobbyists and supporters are working feverishly below the radar to deliver the coup de grace (death blow) to H.R. 5680 in the Senate.

H.R.5680 supporters, beware of the Trojan Horse in the House: The decisive battle could be in the Senate. Intensify, concentrate, reinforce and strengthen your efforts with senators from your state.

A. Regime’s Somali Talibanic/Islamist/Jihadist Bogeyman Strategy U.S. Policy in Somalia

The Somali situation is at best murky for U.S. policy.

Craig Timberg, Johannesburg bureau chief for the Washington Post, in an interview in the highly respected Foreign Policy magazine (July 26, 2006) provided an unconventional analysis of the Somali situation. Timberg explained that U.S. policy in Somalia is likely to have problems because of past “U.S. support for secular warlords. When it was discovered that the United States was backing warlords who were widely hated, support for the Islamic militants increased.” Timberg further explained that “[b]usinessmen, civil-society activists, and ordinary people in Mogadishu are grateful for the law and order that the Islamists have imposed. The tribunals that the Supreme Islamic Courts Council has established enforce the law and punish people who commit crimes. That ability to provide even a low level of order has made them very popular.”

Timberg added that “For the Americans to have associated with and supported these guys [secular warlords]... it made Somalis angry and frustrated with the U.S. government. But in the rallies at the mosques in Mogadishu, they’re not burning American flags; they’re burning Ethiopian flags. That’s where the real, powerful

public anger is directed.” (See FP magazine web edition http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3536)

According to a July 22nd Reuter’s report, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer told journalists: “We have told them [Ethiopians] not to get drawn into this [Somali] provocation.” In a congressional briefing several weeks ago, Ms. Fraser noted that the U.S. government remains “deeply troubled by the foreign-born terrorists who have found safe haven in Somalia in recent years.” She added: “While terrorism is an important issue, it is not the only issue.” She explained that the U.S. is equally concerned about governance and institution building, humanitarian assistance for the Somali people and improving regional stability and security.

Tom Casey, U.S. State Department, Deputy Spokesman stated on July 26, 2006 that the U.S. “calls for both the Islamic Courts Union and the Somalia Transitional Federal Institutions to move forward and recommit to a process of dialogue and discussion to resolve the issues between them, and to work to build and establish a legitimate government for that country.... [I]t’s important that Somalia’s neighbors avoid any kind of actions that would prevent these groups from getting together and being able to talk through their differences. We certainly don’t want to see, whether it’s Eritrea or Ethiopia or Kazakhstan, or any other country engage or get involved in efforts to support any violence in that country....”

Recently, the senior United Nations envoy to Somalia, Francois Fall, following his visit with opposing factions, called on foreign powers “to exercise maximum restraint and not to interfere at this particular moment in Somalia.”

Ethiopian Intervention in Somalia

The regime’s intervention in the current Somali crisis on behalf of the STG is not without precedent. In 1993 and 1996, Ethiopian troops crossed into Somalia to crush the ascendancy of fundamentalist warlords. However, in light of the current military facts on the ground -- that is, SICC control of the capital and other strategic towns and a large swath of land almost up to the border with Ethiopia -- the regime’s third adventure in support of the STG could easily backfire and plunge Ethiopia and the neighboring countries into a regional war.

There are obvious issues that could complicate Ethiopia’s current intervention in Somalia on behalf of the STG. Perhaps the most critical issue could be the effect of intervention on the Somali population’s support for SICC. Could the intervention stir whatever vestigial sense of nationalism may exists among Somalis, at least those sympathetic to SICC, and provide them a basis to wage a conventional or guerilla war of “national liberation” against Ethiopia? If the STG

is perceived as an Ethiopia puppet government, could it possibly aspire to gain legitimacy and acceptance of the Somali people regardless of their political persuasion? Could there be ramifications from intervention by “Christian” Ethiopia in Muslim Somalia? There are many unknowns.

Nonetheless, according to recent news accounts, the SICC has vowed to fight Ethiopia. Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, head of the 90-member SICC and a hardline cleric with links to al-Qaeda, was recently reported threatening a holy war against Ethiopia: “The Somali people have to fight against Ethiopia, this is a holy war in which we are defending our country... The Ethiopians have invaded our country and we must force them out of the country and this will be a holy war of Jihad.” To counter this threat, the Ethiopian regime is said to be moving troops and materiel into the border areas and inside friendly Somali territory. There is clear consensus among the U.S., the U.N and the A.U. that the Somali crises could be resolved only through negotiation and a multilateral approach among members of the international community. Escalation and intervention is likely to lead to a new outbreak of fighting in the Horn region bringing with it more insecurity and extremism.

Anyway, What Does Islamic Fundamentalism in Somalia Have to Do With H.R.5680?

While the prospects for long-term U.S. policy in Somalia are likely to remain in a state of flux, the relevant question is: What does Islamic fundamentalism in Somalia have to do with H.R.5680?

The problem for regime lobbyists and supporters, as I perceive it, will be how to package the Somali Taliban/ Islamist/ Jihadists bogeyman argument for sale to members of Congress to defeat H.R.5680. To succeed with the bogeyman argument, they would have to demonstrate a direct and logical connection between the legislative elements of the bill and the spread of Islamic terrorism and militancy in Somalia and the region, and adverse impact on joint U.S.-Ethiopia counter-terrorism efforts. In doing so, they must answer the following questions:

- How does releasing political prisoners held without trial over the past year undermine U.S.-Ethiopian counter-terrorism efforts, or Ethiopia’s ability to fight terrorism within or outside its borders?
- Are the political prisoners, including opposition leaders and winners of parliamentary seats in the last election, terrorists? If so, are they being held on terrorism charges?

- Assuming all of the political prisoners are terrorists, how would H.R.5680 promote terrorism among political prisoners who are rotting in overcrowded, squalid and stinking corrals that pass off for jails?
- How does restoration of the right of free speech, reinstatement of a free and independent media and free internet access cause terrorism or undermine the regional or global war on terrorism?
- How does strengthening U.S. anti-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East by providing material support to and sharing intelligence with Ethiopia undermine Ethiopia's ability to participate in the regional or global war on terrorism?
- How does accelerating Ethiopia's economic development by providing technical assistance programs to improve policies and practices in such areas as budgeting, taxation, debt management, bank supervision, anti-money laundering and private sector development limit, impair or diminish Ethiopia's ability to fight terrorism internally, regionally, or its anti-terrorism partnership with the U.S.?
- How does enhancing the performance and capabilities of local, regional, and national legislative institutions in Ethiopia by providing technical support and training to government personnel, political parties, and civil society groups and government agencies affect Ethiopia's vulnerability to terrorism or diminish its ability to participate in its anti-terrorism partnership with the U.S.?
- How does establishing mechanisms to enable human rights groups to operate freely, and to regularly monitor and report on human rights conditions in Ethiopia affect Ethiopia's ability to fight internal or regional terrorism?
- How does increasing the independence of the Ethiopian judiciary and safeguarding it from political pressure and interference, promoting the application of due process practices and impartial application of the rule of law restrict, impair or obstruct Ethiopia's ability to fight terrorism within its borders or regionally in partnership with the with the U.S.?
- What legal exception is the regime relying upon to justify its intervention in Somalia in violation of Article 2 (4) of the U.N. charter which prohibits the "threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state," or Article III (2), (3) of the African Union charter which requires members to practice "non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and for its inalienable right to independent existence"?

- Will the Ethiopian military limit its intervention to the defensive protection of the STG in Baidoa (the seat of the STG) and fend off an SICC assault, or does it plan to take other preemptive actions against the SICC?
- Having set up a defensive perimeter around Baidoa, how will the Ethiopian regime respond should the SICC Islamists gobble up the rest of the country as it appears likely given their military advances? Does the Ethiopian regime expect to use its military to occupy all or part of Somalia to dislodge the SICC Islamists as it attempted to do in 1993 and 1996?
- How will the Ethiopian regime respond to possible repercussions from its own large Islamic population arising from its intervention? Does it anticipate potential fraternal alliance between the SICC and ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden region? If it does anticipate such an alliance, will the Ethiopian regime commit to using negotiations, to avoid a regional war, to resolve disputes?

I venture to guess that unless the regime and its lobbyist can demonstrate a link between their Somali Talibanic/ Islamist/ Jihadists bogeyman argument and the plain intent and objectives of H.R.5680, their absurd and wild assertions will be self-evident not only to astute members of Congress, but also the average fair-minded person as well.

But really...

H.R.5680 is An Effective Tool in the U.S.-Ethiopian Partnership in the War Against Terrorism and Should be Embraced by the Regime

H.R.5680 is a demonstrably effective tool against terrorism within the framework of the Bush doctrine. President George W. Bush has emphatically stated on numerous occasions that there is a clear link between terrorism and the absence of democracy in countries afflicted by terrorism. He has explained his view that the push for democracy, particularly in the Islamic world, will not only result in spreading American democratic values and ideals, but also enhance U.S. global security and aid the U.S. in its global war against terrorism.

The centrality of promoting democracy as a potent weapon in the war against global terrorism was clearly restated by President Bush in a speech in March, 2005 at the National Defense University:

“Our strategy to keep the peace in the longer term is to help change the conditions that give rise to extremism and terror, especially in the broader Middle East. Parts of that region have been caught for generations in a cycle of tyranny and despair and radicalism. When a dictatorship controls

the political life of a country, responsible opposition cannot develop, and dissent is driven underground and toward the extreme. And to draw attention away from their social and economic failures, dictators place blame on other countries and other races, and stir the hatred that leads to violence. This status quo of despotism and anger cannot be ignored or appeased, kept in a box or bought off.”

He continued:

“It should be clear that the advance of democracy leads to peace, because governments that respect the rights of their people also respect the rights of their neighbors. It should be clear that the best antidote to radicalism and terror is the tolerance and hope kindled in free societies. And our duty is now clear: For the sake of our long-term security, all free nations must stand with the forces of democracy and justice that have begun to transform the Middle East. . . . Pervasive fear is the foundation of every dictatorial regime-- the prop that holds up all power not based on consent. And when the regime of fear is broken, and the people find their courage and find their voice, democracy is their goal, and tyrants, themselves, have reason to fear.

Shortly after this speech, on March 16, 2006, the White House released President Bush's second term national security strategy. Relevant to terrorism, the strategy states:

“Terrorists exploit political alienation. Democracy gives people an ownership stake in society. Terrorists exploit grievances that can be blamed on others. Democracy offers the rule of law, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the habits of advancing interests through compromise. Terrorists exploit sub-cultures of conspiracy and misinformation. Democracy offers freedom of speech, independent media, and the marketplace of ideas.”

This belief in the relationship between terrorism and absence of democratic practices and institutions is shared by both Democrats and Republicans. On numerous occasions, Senator John Kerry in his 2004 presidential bid affirmed his view that the need for greater political reform and democratization in the Islamic world is an integral part of the war on terrorism. Many other respected international scholars have made similarly persuasive arguments over the years.

I argue that the Bush doctrine provides the ultimate justification for passage of H.R.5680.

To be sure, promoting democracy in Ethiopia and the Horn region is not merely a tactical advancement of U.S. security and its global war on terror; rather, it is a

necessary precondition for achieving long term regional stability and security. In short, H.R.5680 fits perfectly within the framework of the Bush anti-terrorism doctrine because it helps Ethiopia not only become a democratic society, but also transform itself as a beacon and bulwark for democracy in the region.

Consistent with the Bush doctrine, H.R.5680 is intended to accomplish the following:

- **The Bush doctrine asserts maximizing mass political participation reduces the likelihood of terrorist attacks because participation offers a way out of “despair and radicalism.”**

H.R.5680 accomplishes the aims of increased political participation by enhancing the performance and capabilities of local, regional, and national legislative institutions in Ethiopia by providing technical support and training to government personnel, political parties, and civil society groups and government agencies.

H.R.5680 also strengthens training for political parties in Ethiopia in areas such as organization building and campaign management, civil society groups in election monitoring, improved and ongoing communications with the to address issues such as election irregularities, delimitation of constituencies, voter registration, political party registration, candidate registration, and related matters to enhance the credibility of future elections.

- **The Bush doctrine asserts that the habits of democracy would ameliorate extremism and terrorism.**

H.R.5680 establishes mechanisms that will help Ethiopia develop “habits” and practices of democracy such as the establishment and free operation of human rights groups and regular monitoring and reporting on human rights conditions in Ethiopia. It also establishes a program focused on reconciliation efforts between the Government of Ethiopia and peaceful political and civil society groups, including in minority communities, in preparation for negotiation and for participation in the political process.

- **The Bush doctrine asserts terrorists exploit sub-cultures of conspiracy and misinformation. Democracy offers freedom of speech, independent media, and the marketplace of ideas.”**

H.R.5680 counters the “culture of conspiracy and misinformation” by strengthening the Ethiopian private media, providing technical journalistic support, eliminating government censorship and repeal of laws that criminalize free speech and licensing of independent radio free internet access.

• The Bush doctrine asserts that as democratic institutions grow and spread in the Arab world, the region will stop generating anti-American terrorism.

H.R.5680 cultivates the growth of democratic institutions in Ethiopia by helping create independent electoral institutions, training of electoral workers and establishment of transparent electoral procedures, increasing the independence of the Ethiopian judiciary and safeguard it from political pressure and interference, and promoting the application of due process practices and impartial application of the rule of law. H.R. 5680 aims to help institutionalize due process and the rule of law reigns so that ordinary Ethiopians are treated with justice and dignity, thereby reducing the need for terrorism as a means of political expression.

• The Bush doctrine asserts that pervasive fear is the foundation of every dictatorial regime, the prop that holds up all power not based on consent.

H.R.5680 aims to eliminate “fear” in Ethiopia by securing the immediate release of political prisoners held without trial over the past year, and by requiring adherence to universal standards of fairness and due process of law so that any citizen can peacefully engage in acts of opposition and dissent.

• The Bush doctrine asserts that terrorism has been able to take root in societies that have been caught for generations in a cycle of poverty, tyranny and despair and radicalism.

H.R.5680 aims to help Ethiopia develop economically and avoid the cycle of tyranny, despair and radicalism. It seeks to accomplish this by providing technical assistance programs to improve policies and practices in such areas as budgeting, taxation, debt management, bank supervision, anti-money laundering and private sector development. It also provides mechanisms for Ethiopia to participate in the United States Millennium Challenge Account, which is a fund “devoted to projects in nations that govern justly, invest in their people and encourage economic freedom.” Additionally, H.R.5680 provides assistance for sustainable development of Ethiopia’s Nile and Awash River resources, including assistance to help Ethiopia with the technology necessary for the construction of irrigation systems and hydroelectric power that might prevent future famine.

• The Bush doctrine asserts that as American democratic values and ideals spread, even if Islamists do come to power, the realities of governance will moderate them or the public will grow disillusioned with them.

H.R.5680 aims to achieve this by facilitating the functioning and operation of independent newspapers and insure the exercise of free speech and uncensored internet access. When people can freely access information and express their

views freely, it is infinitely more difficult for secularists or fundamentalists to hoodwink them.

● **The Bush doctrine asserts that all free nations must stand with the forces of democracy and combat international terrorism.**

H.R.5680 aims to do that by strengthening U.S. anti-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East by providing material support and sharing military intelligence with Ethiopia.

Given the new political configuration in Somalia, Ethiopia is “on the horns of a dilemma” (no pun intended). But for the regime to try and use the SICC Islamist juggernaut — as a force capable of crushing Ethiopia and establishing a greater Islamic Somalia in the region as an argument against H.R.5680 is not only a stretch of the imagination, but pure fantasy! It is equally fantastic to argue that direct intervention in Somalia to prop up the STG in Baidoa offers an effective countermeasure to the Islamic-Jihadist juggernaut in Somalia or permanent security to Ethiopia.

Democratic Ethiopia Antidote to Regional Terrorism

Ultimately, consistent with the Bush doctrine, the best defense against Islamic fundamentalism in the Horn is likely to be the establishment and success of democracy in Ethiopia. If Ethiopia could emerge as a multiparty democracy anchored in the rule of law, with secure civil liberties and human rights, an independent judiciary and clean elections, then a democratic Ethiopia will be the best antidote to a regional Islamist threat and boost the U.S. war on regional and global terrorism.

For Ethiopia alone, in the long run, commitment to democratic principles and practices and the rule of law, as well as economic growth based on the free enterprise system **and private ownership of land** (and government divestment of such powers in the main) may well be her best defense against the prospects of internal armed opposition and aggressive Islamist states or the motley crew of mixed up fanatics and terrorists running about the Horn.

How to Keep the Regime’s Bogeyman Out of Congress

The current Somali crises does offer an opportunity of sorts to the regime to divert the focus of H.R.5680 from human rights and democracy to terrorism (that is, the non-state terrorism type). Whether the crisis will play a decisive role in changing congressional perception and diminution of support by members of Congress remains to be seen.

Members of Congress are generally exceptionally bright and well-informed individuals, despite media caricatures to the contrary. They have well-qualified staff members who specialize in specific policy areas who can critically analyze complex issues and present policy options. House members also take their cues on issues from their party leadership -- subcommittee, committee chairs, recognized policy specialist members and others in caucus leadership positions.

On the other hand, the inescapable reality is that for a significant segment of congressional members, Horn politics is not at the top of their agenda. They may not be fully informed on the current issues and problems. This means supporters of H.R.5680 must make every effort to educate their congressional members and their staff on the Somali crisis, the Ethiopian government's regional adventurism and the absolute lack of nexus or connection between H.R.5680 and what is happening in Somalia today. Some talking points which could be used in congressional communication -- in person, by telephone, email, letter or fax -- on this topic are provided in the appendix at the end of this analysis.

B. Discredit and Divide the Diaspora, and take Advantage of Diaspora Weaknesses Strategy

Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Reichsminister for Propaganda and National Enlightenment, had an ingenious theory about mass political communication. He explained that political communication must reach the target audience ahead of competing communication or propaganda. The content of the propaganda must label events and people with distinctive phrases or slogans and create an optimum anxiety level in the intended audience. The propaganda message must reinforce anxiety concerning the consequences of defeat or failure to achieve the objects of the intended message. Above all, propaganda must not be used to immediately affect strong countertendencies, rather it should offer some form of action or diversion or both.

One should expect the regime and its supporters will undertake diverse efforts to discredit, divide and exploit weaknesses in the Diaspora in classic Goebbelian-style. First, the regime and its supporters will likely undertake an offensive to discredit opponents in the Diaspora. This could take an overt, covert and/or proxy campaign to discredit individuals, groups and organizations.

I anticipate they will continue and refine their propaganda to label Diaspora leaders, organizations and opponents as "power-hungry Amharas, former Derg officials, extremists and radicals, conspirators, violence-mongers, sore election losers, bankrollers, disgruntled former regime officials", and even "loyalists" of the bygone regime of Haile Selassie. They will attempt to create a false, provocative and denigrating media images of the Diaspora. They will seek to

perpetuate false accusations about the Diaspora as “subversive, unpatriotic and destabilizing forces.” They will attempt to undermine the Diaspora as “disconnected from the Ethiopian reality,” which paradoxically includes both lack of familiarity and empathy with the abject poverty of the people, as well as the allegedly dazzling economic growth and development that has been seen over the past several years. They will portray H.R.5680 supporters as a “disorganized blundering mess of Amhara and Derg criminals.” They will seek to will lump the Diaspora and the opposition as an alliance of antagonistic and factional splinter groups who have managed to “sign a temporary truce” with the singular purpose of staging a “dog and pony” show for uninformed members of Congress and other American officials. And more mudslinging....

Second, I expect the regime and its supporters will make every effort to take advantage of Diaspora weaknesses and lack of effective organizational coalition-building in pushing for H.R.5680 in the Diaspora.

We must face the facts, however unpleasant they may be: One of our glaring weaknesses in the Diaspora has been the lack of consistent coordination and collaboration between organizations, groups and individuals on vital issues affecting our motherland. (This lack of coordination is what has enabled the regime to portray us as a “disorganized” collection of “splinter groups,” etc. I never cease to be amazed by the number of well-intentioned organizations, groups and individuals working very hard on their own to pass H.R.5680. The disadvantages of lack of coordination, inability to pool resources and devise effective strategies as well as speak in one voice on H.R.5680 are monumental. It results in a massive duplication of efforts, unwittingly working at cross-purposes, wasted energy and resources and even, forgive me, meaningless competition for credits. We must unite and work for a common purpose.

Fortunately, there are a substantial number of determined and purpose-driven individuals, groups and organizations that have learned the value of collaborative work, and have been in the forefront of the struggle to push H.R.5680. They deserve top credits for helping bring H.R. 5680 to its current stage. They deserve our highest respect and deepest appreciation not only for the results they have produced, but also for teaching the rest of us the value of coalition-building and commitment to collective action as the most effective means of political expression in a democratic society..

Unfortunately, there are others of us who have yet to learn the value of working together cooperatively, collaboratively and effectively on a single project for an agreed upon outcome. We need to reconsider the value of “go-it-alone” strategy versus a “let’s-do-it-together” strategy, and resolve to create tighter organizational bonds for effective collective grassroots action to pass H.R.5680.

At the risk of sounding trivial, in one of the most famous comic strip quotes of all time, Pogo said: "We have met the enemy, and he is us." Pogo was referring to the way each one of us at the individual, group and organizational level participates in the democratic process. Whether the process works for the supporters of H.R.5680 passes depends largely on what supporters do or fail to do. If we can not organize, cooperate and collaborate to successfully follow through on this single issue, then Pogo may be right! We will have no one to blame, but ourselves.

Nonetheless, I expect the regime will make every effort to take advantage of our apparent inability to create a united grassroots advocacy movement to push for passage of H.R.5680. We must prove them wrong!

Third, I expect the regime and its supporters will try to take advantage of **one of our other major weaknesses**: our tendency to become excitable and reactive instead of calculating and proactive. We need to overcome the tendency to react impulsively -- often in anger and little deliberation -- to every little thing the regime or its supporters do or do not.

We need to be more proactive, that is, anticipate issues and strategies likely to be employed by the regime and its supporters and plan a response accordingly. Impulsive reaction to every statement and action by the regime or its supporters will only divert our attention from the real work that needs to be done. Also, one must never underestimate one's adversary; and one can learn much from one's opponent, which requires a certain amount of deliberation and calculation in the way we respond to real and imaginary challenges.

Fourth, I expect the regime and its supporters will attempt to take advantage of the apparent lack of vigilance, and palpable smugness and complacency among some of H.R.5680 supporters. We must face the facts: there are some among H.R.5680's supporters who believe the "cat's in the bag" and the regime can not do much to change the outcome at this stage. **WRONG, WRONG, WRONG!!!**

Let's not underestimate the regime and its supporters. We have a mighty adversary with unlimited financial resources who has assembled lobbyists of the highest caliber and influence in Washington. If we drop our guard even for a moment, if we stop our grassroots advocacy efforts even for a day, if we stop vigorously defending and promoting H.R.5680 until it is enacted, then the Goliath lobbying firm of Piper Rudnick Gray Cary will dig its claws and tentacles into our fledgling grassroots advocacy activities and lay waste all of our efforts and hard work. Onward, H.R.5680 soldiers!!!

But we shall fear not! As Goliath was felled by David's slingshot, so our grassroots advocacy efforts will in the end prevail over the mighty Piper Rudnick Gray Goliath. **BUT WE MUST ORGANIZE, WORK TOGETHER, COLLABORATE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER, ACT INDIVIDUALLY WHEN APPROPRIATE AND MAINTAIN THE VIGILANCE OF MINUTEMEN UNTIL H.R.5680 IS ENACTED INTO LAW.**

What does non-passage of H.R. 5680 mean?

Could the regime succeed in its efforts? Only if we let it! They will undoubtedly succeed if we fail to form a united front to vigorously advocate, defend and promote H.R.5680. They will succeed if we are unwilling to pay the price for victory, which is unrelenting grassroots advocacy with congressional offices -- House members until floor debate takes place hopefully sometime in early September, and the Senate -- until the bill is enacted into law.

Will Diaspora opposition to the regime dissolve if H.R.5680 were to be defeated? Very unlikely. It will probably make the Diaspora more defiant and energetic in its opposition to the regime's violations of human rights and arbitrary rule. But for the regime, defeat of H.R.5680 would mean ushering in a new era of dictatorial and tyrannical rule, unrestrained and indefinite detention of thousands of new political prisoners, the permanently crippling of emerging democratic institutions, and perpetuation of flagrant violations of human rights of 70 million Ethiopian citizens.

Carpe Diem (Seize the Day) — 2006 Congressional Midterm Elections

Midterm congressional elections (elections that fall between presidential elections) for the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate will be held on November 7, 2006. All of the 435 seats in the House will be up for election and the winners will serve for a two year term in the 110th United States Congress.

The current composition of the House is 231 Republicans, 201 Democrats and 1 Independent. There are 3 vacant seats. Republicans have had a majority since 1995, and now have a 29 member advantage. Political scientists who specialize in congressional politics suggest that based on historical trend analysis it is possible for Democrats to wrest control away from Republicans, but not reasonably likely given the dynamics of congressional district politics and the power of incumbency.

In the U.S. Senate, only 33 of the 100 seats are being contested. This staggered election is required by Art. I, sec. 3 of the U.S. Constitution.

In terms of grassroots congressional advocacy, there is not a much better time for supporters of H.R.5680 than now. This is the time members of Congress want to hear from their constituents in view of the November elections. They want our material and moral support, as much as we need their votes for H.R.5680. This is the time to make appointments preferably in groups and as members and leaders of grassroots organizations to visit with members, particularly House members, and their staff to discuss and secure their commitment to support H.R.5680.

In the end: No excuses!!! **Carpe diem**, and reach out and touch your member of Congress!

Final Word: “Through unity of action we can be a veritable colossus in support of peace [H.R.5680]. No one can defeat us unless we first defeat ourselves. Every one of us must be guided by this truth.” (President Dwight Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States -1953-1961.)

Alemayehu (Al) Mariam, Ph.D., J.D. (Esq.) is professor of political science and a defense attorney in California. Readers are invited to visit and share their comments at:

**<http://almariamforthedefense.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.almariamforthedefense.blogspot.com/>**

APPENDICES

GRASSROOTS

CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY STRATEGY

One of the most effective methods of grassroots advocacy is to provide members of Congress and their staff concise, timely, accurate and relevant information on the subject matter of the advocacy. Whether one communicates in writing, by telephone or in person, it is always useful to provide the member/staffer with documentation which could be reviewed at a later point in time.

The materials provided in this appendix are illustrative, and by no means complete or exhaustive. Each advocate must use his/her diligence and imagination in finding information that is likely to be persuasive to a member of Congress.

The materials and contents below could be incorporated in written communication, or attached electronically or as paper copies.

You can easily find contact information for your member of congress by typing in your zip code at:

<http://www.capwiz.com/now/dbq/officials/>

Appendix

- A. The Bush Doctrine and H.R. 5680**
- B. Evidence of State Terrorism Under the Meles Regime**
- C. Questions for Regime Lobbyist, Officials and Supporters Visiting or Communicating With Congressional Offices**
- D. Amnesty International (May, 2006) Partial List of Prisoners of Conscience**
- E. Somalia Crisis Talking Points**

The Bush Doctrine and H.R. 5680

- **The Bush doctrine asserts maximizing mass political participation reduces the likelihood of terrorist attacks because participation offers a way out of “despair and radicalism.”**

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H.R.5680 aims to eliminate “fear” in Ethiopia by securing the immediate release of political prisoners held without trial over the past year, and by requiring adherence to universal standards of fairness and due process of law so that any citizen can peacefully engage in acts of opposition and dissent.

- **The Bush doctrine asserts that terrorism has been able to take root in societies that have been caught for generations in a cycle of poverty, tyranny and despair and radicalism.**

H.R.5680 aims to help Ethiopia develop economically and avoid the cycle of tyranny, despair and radicalism. It seeks to accomplish this by providing technical assistance programs to improve policies and practices in such areas as budgeting, taxation, debt management, bank supervision, anti-money laundering and private sector development. It also provides mechanisms for Ethiopia to participate in the United States Millennium Challenge Account, which is a fund “devoted to projects in nations that govern justly, invest in their people and encourage economic freedom.” Additionally, H.R.5680 provides assistance for sustainable development of Ethiopia’s Nile and Awash River resources, including assistance to help Ethiopia with the technology necessary for the construction of irrigation systems and hydroelectric power that might prevent future famine.

- **The Bush doctrine asserts that as American democratic values and ideals spread, even if Islamists do come to power, the realities of governance will moderate them or the public will grow disillusioned with them.**

H.R.5680 aims to achieve this by facilitating the functioning and operation of independent newspapers and insure the exercise of free speech and uncensored internet access. When people can freely access information and express their views freely, it is infinitely more difficult for secularists or fundamentalists to hoodwink them.

- **The Bush doctrine asserts that all free nations must stand with the forces of democracy and combat international terrorism.**

H.R.5680 aims to do that by strengthening U.S. anti-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East by providing material support and sharing military intelligence with Ethiopia.

Evidence of State Terrorism Under the Meles Regime

U.S. Dep't of State- Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2000

“The [Ethiopian] Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces committed a number of extrajudicial killings and at times beat and mistreated detainees. Prison conditions are poor. Arbitrary arrest and detention and prolonged pretrial detention remained problems. The Government continued to detain persons suspected of sympathizing with or being involved with the OLF. The Government continued to detain and deport without due process Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin... The Government infringed on citizen's privacy rights, and the law regarding search warrants was ignored widely.... The Government restricts freedom of the press and continued to detain or imprison members of the press; however, fewer journalists were detained than in previous years. Most were accused or convicted of inciting ethnic hatred, committing libel, or publishing false information in violation of the 1992 Press Law. Journalists continued to practice self-censorship. The Government at times restricted freedom of assembly.” <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/789.htm>

U.S. Dep't of State- Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2001

“The [Ethiopian] Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces committed a number of extrajudicial killings and at times beat and mistreated detainees. Prison conditions are poor. Arbitrary arrest and detention and prolonged pretrial detention remained problems. The Government continued to detain persons suspected of sympathizing with or being members of the OLF. The Government did not continue to detain and deport without due process Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin; however, approximately 1,800 prisoners of war (POW's) remained in internment camps at Dedesa at year's end.... Thousands of suspects remained in detention without charge, and lengthy pretrial detention was a consistent problem. The judiciary continued to show some signs of growing independence; however, the Judicial Administration Council took disciplinary action against a judge after he released suspects on bail on habeas corpus grounds. The Government infringed on citizen's privacy rights, and the law regarding search warrants was ignored widely. The Government restricted freedom of the press and continued to detain or imprison members of the press. Journalists continued to practice self-censorship. The Government at times restricted freedom of assembly; security forces used excessive force to disperse demonstrations...”
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8372.htm>

Amnesty International, Annual Report on Ethiopia, 2002

“At least 31 people were killed and over 3,000 arrested during rioting in April. Armed conflict continued within Ethiopia between government forces and Oromo and Somali opponents; many human rights violations by government troops were reported. Suspected rebel supporters were detained, tortured and extrajudicially executed. Several thousand

remained in detention; some had been held for years without charge or trial. Journalists, human rights activists, demonstrators and other critics of the government were arrested. Most were held without trial, although some received unfair trials. During local elections in March, April and December scores of opposition party supporters were subjected to intimidation, beatings and arbitrary arrest. The trials of officials of the former military government on charges including genocide and extrajudicial executions proceeded slowly. Several death sentences were imposed; no executions were reported.”

<http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/afr/ethiopia!Open>

U.S. Dep’t of State- Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2003

“The [Ethiopian] Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces committed a number of unlawful killings and at times beat, tortured, and mistreated detainees. Prison conditions remained poor. The Government continued to arrest and detain persons arbitrarily, particularly those suspected of sympathizing with or being members of the OLF. Thousands of suspects remained in detention without charge, and lengthy pretrial detention continued to be a problem. The Government sometimes infringed on citizens' privacy rights, and the law regarding search warrants was often ignored. The Government restricted freedom of the press and continued to detain or imprison members of the press. Journalists continued to practice self-censorship. The Government at times restricted freedom of assembly, particularly of opposition party members; security forces at times used excessive force to disperse demonstrations....”

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27727.htm>

Amnesty International, Annual Report on Ethiopia, 2004

“Widespread arbitrary detentions, torture and excessive use of force by police and soldiers were reported. A new media law, which would put journalists in the private media at risk of arrest, was proposed. Several thousand people remained in long-term detention without charge or trial; most were accused of supporting armed opposition groups. Prison conditions were harsh. Some prisoners “disappeared”. A parliamentary inquiry into killings of members of the Anuak (Anywaa) ethnic group in Gambela town in December 2003 reported that 65 people had been killed; other reports put the number of dead in the hundreds. Trials continued of over 2,000 members of the former Dergue government detained since 1991 on charges including genocide. Several death sentences were imposed; no executions were reported....” <http://web.amnesty.org/report2005/eth-summary-eng>

Amnesty International, Annual Report on Ethiopia, 2005

“Opposition candidates and supporters were arrested, beaten and intimidated in the run-up to elections. Some 9,000 opposition supporters were detained in June for several weeks following protests at alleged fraud in elections in which soldiers killed at least 36 people. In November, police killed at least 42 people after peaceful protests turned violent. Over 10,000 opposition supporters and demonstrators were detained. Ten new

members of parliament, 15 journalists, several human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience were among 86 detainees later charged with treason, genocide and other offences. Civilians were killed and arbitrarily detained in the context of armed conflicts in the Oromia and Somali regions, with thousands remaining in detention without charge or trial. Several Oromo community activists were prisoners of conscience. Journalists and human rights defenders were detained and threatened with prosecution for criticizing the government. Death sentences were passed but no executions carried out....”

<http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/eth-summary-eng>

Genocide Watch, 2005-Ethiopia

“Government defense forces, called the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), have killed as many as 2,500 ethnic Anuak in the Gambella region since December 2003. Many more, including most Anuak leaders, have been imprisoned without charge. Hundreds of Anuaks have been tortured and raped. The Ethiopian authorities have attempted to justify these actions as a campaign against a “terrorist” insurgency. In fact, most of the army’s victims have been civilians and many Anuaks are Christians dedicated to non-violence.”

<http://www.genocidewatch.org/ETHIOPIAchiefcollaboratorinanuakmassacre26Jan.htm>

Human Rights Watch World Report 2006 - Ethiopia

“The aftermath of Ethiopia's landmark May 2005 parliamentary elections has laid bare the deeply entrenched patterns of political repression, human rights abuse and impunity that characterize the day-to-day reality of governance in much of the country. This dispiriting reality has come as a shock to many international observers who had viewed the electoral process with a great deal of optimism. The run-up to the May elections witnessed displays of openness and genuine political competition unprecedented in Ethiopia's long history. But many Ethiopians experienced these limited openings in a context still dominated by heavy-handed government efforts to suppress and punish any form of political dissent. Worse, the aftermath of the May elections has been marred by seemingly intractable controversy and displays of government brutality that threaten to reverse the gains yielded by the electoral process.” <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.htm?tbl=RSDCOI&page=research&id=43cfae9f28>

Questions for Regime Lobbyist, Officials and Supporters
Visiting or Communicating With Congressional Offices

Provide your congressional members/staffers a list of questions to ask regime lobbyists and officials, and the parliamentary delegation expected to arrive in the U.S. shortly, urging defeat of H.R.5680. Here is a preliminary list:

How does releasing political prisoners held without trial over the past year undermine U.S.-Ethiopian counter-terrorism efforts, or Ethiopia's ability to fight terrorism within or outside its borders?

Are the political prisoners, including opposition leaders and winners of parliamentary seats in the last election, terrorists? If so, are they being held on terrorism charges?

Assuming all of the political prisoners are terrorists, how would H.R.5680 promote terrorism among political prisoners who are rotting in overcrowded, squalid and stinking corrals that pass off for jails?

How does restoration of the right of free speech, reinstatement of a free and independent media and free internet access cause terrorism or undermine the regional or global war on terrorism?

How does strengthening U.S. anti-terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East by providing material support to and sharing intelligence with Ethiopia undermine Ethiopia's ability to participate in the regional or global war on terrorism?

How does accelerating Ethiopia's economic development by providing technical assistance programs to improve policies and practices in such areas as budgeting, taxation, debt management, bank supervision, anti-money laundering and private sector development limit, impair or diminish Ethiopia's ability to fight terrorism internally, regionally, or its anti-terrorism partnership with the U.S.?

How does enhancing the performance and capabilities of local, regional, and national legislative institutions in Ethiopia by providing technical support and training to government personnel, political parties, and civil society groups and government agencies affect Ethiopia's vulnerability to terrorism or diminish its ability to participate in its anti-terrorism partnership with the U.S.?

How does establishing mechanisms to enable human rights groups to operate freely, and to regularly monitor and report on human rights conditions in Ethiopia affect Ethiopia's ability to fight internal or regional terrorism?

How does increasing the independence of the Ethiopian judiciary and safeguarding it from political pressure and interference, promoting the application of due process practices and impartial application of the rule of law restrict, impair or obstruct Ethiopia's

ability to fight terrorism within its borders or regionally in partnership with the with the U.S.?

What legal exception is the regime relying upon to justify its intervention in Somalia in violation of Article 2 (4) of the U.N. charter which prohibits the “threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state,” or Article III (2), (3) of the African Union charter which requires members to practice “non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and for its inalienable right to independent existence”?

Will the Ethiopian military limit its intervention to the defensive protection of the STG in Baidoa (the seat of the STG) and fend off an SICC assault, or does it plan to take other preemptive actions against the SICC?

Having set up a defensive perimeter around Baidoa, how will the Ethiopian regime respond should the SICC Islamists gobble up the rest of the country as it appears likely given their military advances? Does the Ethiopian regime expect to use its military to occupy all or part of Somalia to dislodge the SICC Islamists as it attempted to do in 1993 and 1996?

How will the Ethiopian regime respond to possible repercussions from its own large Islamic population arising from its intervention? Does it anticipate potential fraternal alliance between the SICC and ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden region? If it does anticipate such an alliance, will the Ethiopian regime commit to using negotiations, to avoid a regional war, to resolve disputes?

Somalia Crisis Talking Points

- Somalia has been dubbed as the “planet’s most failed state.” It has been without an effective central government since warlords toppled dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991, and subsequently turned on each other, carving much of the country into armed camps ruled by violence and clan law.
- Somalia is a virtual state. The country has been carved out into three “statelets” by warring factions. There is a Somaliland Republic, which effectively declared independence following a referendum in 2001 and defined its borders along the lines of the old British Somaliland. There is a separate territory of Puntland, which declared its independence from Mogadishu in 1998.
- The Somali Transitional Government established two years ago with the support of the U.N. and the U.S. was intended to serve as a transitional body to help Somalia emerge from anarchy. But its leadership, which includes some warlords linked to the violence of the past, has failed to establish a viable political or administrative structure or develop consensus and legitimacy among the various factions to govern.
- Several weeks ago, an alliance of Somali Islamist militia leaders calling itself the Supreme Islamic Courts Council (SICC), (*Majilis al-shura Council*) captured the Somali capital Mogadishu, and the nearby towns of Jowhar and Balad. The SICC is suspected of having ties to *al-Qaeda* and other terrorist organizations.
- When Paul Wolfowitz, (current president of the World Bank) was the Deputy Secretary of Defense, he asserted that Somalia attracts *Al-Qaeda* “precisely because the government is weak or nonexistent.” American counter-terror “options” there are limited because “by definition you don't have a government you can work with.” Somalia needs to establish a viable government before its involvement and links to *al-Qaeda* and terrorism could be addressed.
- Somalia has fundamental structural and political problems. It lacks any semblance of modern political leadership, it has a traditional clan and patronage system. Its warlord leaders lack modern education or sophistication.
- According to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer, the U.S. does not favor Ethiopia getting drawn into the Somali crisis. Ms. Frazer has noted that the U.S. government remains “deeply troubled by the foreign-born terrorists who have found safe haven in Somalia in recent years.” Mr. Fraser has further stated that “While

terrorism is an important issue, it is not the only issue,” and the U.S. is equally concerned about governance and institution building, humanitarian assistance for the Somali people and improving regional stability and security.

- Ethiopia’s intervention in Somalia will aggravate the crisis and not improve it. Ethiopia’s intervention is untenable over the long term because it can neither provide permanent protection to the Somali Transitional Government from attacks by the Islamic Courts Council or regional security.
- There is clear consensus among the U.S., the U.N and the A.U. that the Somali crises could be resolved only through negotiation and a multilateral approach among members of the international community. Escalation and intervention is likely to lead to a new outbreak of fighting in the Horn region bringing with it more insecurity and extremism.

*****MAKE SURE TO DISCUSS RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE WITH YOUR CONGRESSIONAL MEMBER/STAFFERS, AND PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING LIST WITH ADDITIONAL UPDATES AS AVAILABLE.*****

ASK YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS IF HE/SHE WOULD CONTACT AND REQUEST REP. CHRISTOPHER SMITH (Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations) OR TOM LANTOS (Co-Chair, Congressional Human Rights Caucus) TO HOLD HEARINGS ON THE ETHIOPIAN PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (May 2, 2006)
PARTIAL LIST OF PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE**

**** Some individuals are listed in multiple categories. Includes ONLY names listed in AI.****

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR250132006?open&of=ENG-373>

OPPOSITION LEADERS- CUD

Hailu Shawel (CUD president and All Ethiopia Unity Party leader, civil engineer)
Birtukan Mideksa (f) (CUD vice-president, Rainbow leader, lawyer)
Berhanu Negga (CUD Mayor-elect of Addis Ababa, economics professor)
Muluneh Eyuel (CUD sec. general, Ethiopian Democratic League leader, economist)
Debebe Eshetu (CUD public relations officer, Rainbow member, theatre professional)
Hailu Araya (CUD and Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party leader, former academic and journalist), and others.

JOURNALISTS

Andualem Ayele	Nardos Meaza	Dawit Fasil
Solomon Aregawi	Dawit Kebede	Sileshi Andarge
Dereje Hailewold	Hailu Araya	Eskinder Negga
Zekarias Tesfaye	Fasil Yenealem	Wossenseged Gebrekidan
Feleke Tibebu	Mesfin Tesfaye	Serkalem Fasil
Sisay Agena	Wonakseged Zeleke	Wossenseged Gebrekidan

CIVIL SOCIETY

Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, founder and former chair of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council
Daniel Bekele, policy director of the Ethiopian office of Action Aid, a South Africa-based international non-governmental organization
Netsanet Demissie, chair of the Organization for Social Justice in Ethiopia
Kassahun Kebede, head of the Addis Ababa branch of the Ethiopian Teachers Association

LAWYERS

Anteneh Mulugeta (also a former judge)
Birtukan Mideksa (also a former judge)

Daniel Bekele (international NGO official and human rights lawyer)
Netsanet Demissie (local NGO official, and human and environmental rights lawyer)
Yakob Hailemariam (former UN genocide prosecutor at the Rwanda tribunal and former UN Special Envoy in the Cameroon/Nigeria border dispute)

ACADEMICS/PROFESSORS

Dr. Berhanu Negga
Gizachew Shifferaw
Professor Mesfin Woldemariam
Yakob Hailemariam (also lawyer)
Dr. Hailu Araya

PARLIAMENT MEMBERS-ELECT

Abayneh Berhanu
Befekadu Degifie
Gizachew Shifferaw
Hailu Shawel
Yakob Hailemariam
Bedru Adem
Getachew Mengiste
Hailu Araya
Mamushet Amare

ADDIS ABABA CITY COUNCIL

Dr. Berhanu Negga, Mayor-elect of Addis Ababa
Anteneh Mulugeta

WOMEN PRISONERS

Birtukan Mideksa
Nigist Gebrehiwot (CUD office secretary)
Serkalem Fasil (journalist)
Seblework Tadesse (CUD official)

NGO ACTIVISTS

Daniel Bekele
Netsanet Demissie
Kassahun Kebede (Ethiopian Teachers Association)

OTHERS

Kifle Tigeneh
Berhane Moges
Sintayehu Workneh
Diribi Demissie
Gemechu Fayera
Kifle Tigeneh
Shifferaw Insarmu
Hailu Shawel
Dabassa Wakjira