

Editorial: Opposing H. R. 2003 [1]

By Tecola W. Hagos

“The Coalition for H.R. 2003 is pleased to announce that HR 2003 (‘Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007’), introduced by Chairman Donald Payne of the Subcommittee on Africa on April 20, 2007, has been scheduled for final action by the House of Representatives on October 2, 2007. Consideration of items on the suspension calendar will begin at 10:00 a.m.”

The “Coalition” mentioned in the quotation above is made up of Ethiopian-Americans who are professionals and who are concerned about the ongoing violations of democratic and human rights of Ethiopians in Ethiopia. The statement of purpose of the “Coalition” is fully stated in their Website, <http://www.hr5680.org/>, [2] as retrieved on Sep 29, 2007. I have no problem with their motivation and goals to bring about a degree of respect to the civil and human rights of Ethiopians living in Ethiopia or elsewhere in the World. However, what I find to be most objectionable is the venue they chose to safeguard the democratic and human rights of Ethiopians. [I wish the group has similar concerns about the numerous civil and human rights violations Ethiopians suffer here in the United States.]

At any rate, events surrounding and leading to H. R. 2003 reminds me the classic Ethiopian fable of a she-ass or donkey showing up at the den of Hyenas to mourn the death of the son of the Hyena Chief. The United States is increasingly resorting to the use of force in order to bring about political solutions to complex problems arising from the relentless exploitation by Western nations, in collaboration with local brutal national dictators, the riches and natural resources of defenseless poor nations around the world. The United States Government is involved in military support of such repressive regimes or is directly engaged in brutalizing local populations in the name of its own national interest. It does not require much research to confirm what I am alleging. In fact, the 2008 Presidential election is going to focus on that same issue of the use of force in international relations.

It is absurd to appeal to the Congress of the United States to protect the rights of Ethiopians when that same institution has enacted with enthusiasm in 2001 the Patriot Act (Oct 26, 2001) curtailing and violating the rights of United States Citizens and persons living in the United States where *Habeas Corpus* is suspended, First Amendment rights of free speech, expression, and association is brutally suppressed, Fourth Amendment rights against “unreasonable” search and seizure is routinely violated under that Act. The violations under the Patriot Act is not limited to the United States, but is expansive against anyone in the World even citizens of other Sovereign Countries in disregard of international law including the violation of well established humanitarian laws dealing with the treatment of prisoners of war and the treatment of civilians during international conflicts under the Geneva Conventions and protocols.

We must understand who the players are who promote H.R. 2003. Our first attention must be directed toward Congressman Donald Payne. Who is Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ)? Payne is “a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, where he serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health and as a member of the

Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight.” If it were not for his misguided approach on the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, I would have applauded him on several points. He is not a stranger to political issues involving Ethiopia.

- First and foremost we must not forget the fact that Payne has been promoting the illegal land locking of Ethiopia for a long time trying to legislate some kind of censor and coercion against Ethiopia. He had drafted legislation against Ethiopia because Ethiopia rightfully rejected the final demarcation of boundaries pursuant to an illegal decision by a corrupt Commission whose Chairman was in conflict of interest situation retained because he was retained as council by the Government of the United States in other cases [*Avena and Other Mexican Nationals (Mexico v. U.S.)* 2003], one of the “interested parties” of the 2000 Algiers Agreement that led to the creation of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Commission and subsequent illegal decision.

- Second, in 2003, in collaboration with another misguided Congressman (Tom Lantos (D-CA), Payne tried to have a resolution against Ethiopia and Eritrea, **the intended target being Ethiopia**, the “Resolution of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Dispute Act of 2003” (HR 2760), in an effort to “limit United States assistance for Ethiopia and Eritrea if those countries are not in compliance with the terms and conditions of agreements entered into by the two countries to end hostilities and provide for a demarcation of the border between the two countries.”

Payne failed in his mission because events on the ground caught up with him due to the positive and supportive role played by the Ethiopian Government in promoting the interest of the United States in its fight against “terrorism” and because of the Eritrean Government chameleon behavior that was identified increasingly with terrorist groups by the State Department to the point of threatening the Eritrean Government being listed as a terrorist government. Payne could not continue to promote his silly anti-Ethiopia propaganda for he would have lost his seat in Congress for his anti-Ethiopia activities would have been interpreted by challenging candidates in his own backyard as a support for terrorism. Now Payne is singing a different tune about democracy, freedom et cetera in trying to destroy through other means Ethiopia, which effort sadly seems to be endorsed through the physical visit of the Delegates of *Kinijit*, who have not as yet expressed their position about that Bill. It seems the Delegates were herded by their unscrupulous handlers and organizers of events into such a visit, without clearly understanding the ramification of an official visit of a Congressman long identified for his anti-Ethiopia position. Tragically, several other gullible Ethiopian opposition supporters and the formidable Prof. Al Mariam are set to see such folly through.

Even for a first year international law student, the problem of passing H.R. 2003 as a statute is obvious. It is a challenge to the very sovereign rights of the State of Ethiopia that is the target of H. R. 2003 coercive and insulting provisions, which imposes onerous obligations and limitations on the sovereign rights of an independent Member State of the United Nations, and a founding Member at that. Can you imagine an Ethiopian

Parliament passing similar law (as H.R. 2003) in order to censor the violations of civil and human rights of American Citizens and to set standard of behavior for the United States President, the Congress, and the Supreme Court? H.R. 2003 may even be considered to be a hostile act that violated the United Nations Charter Article 2 (4) and several other articles and provisions in several Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. It is tragic that learned Ethiopians are unable to distinguish between their hate of Meles Zenawi from the vital interest of Ethiopia. Leaders come and go, only Ethiopia endures; thus, any effort by anyone to set a standard of commitment to Ethiopia, on the basis of how citizens relate to particular leaders at any particular time in our long history, is truly illustrative of immaturity.

The very fact of allowing another nation to dictate terms and conditions without reciprocity and negotiated settlement of disputes (duties and responsibilities) equally adhesive to both is abhorrent to those of us who value our dignity as free and independent people. If we have problems with our leaders, it is our sole reasonability to solve such problems with our own devices. [Opposition supporters and those for personal reasons against me personally, I want to remind every single one of you that my opposition to H.R. 2003 is not any kind of support to Meles Zenawi or his Government. I hate Meles Zenawi, but I love Ethiopia even more, thus will always consider the interest of Ethiopia first before anything else and least of all my hate for some one.] Look with wide-open eyes at this bill introduced in the House which is titled as “Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007.” May I remind every one that Ethiopia is not the “Fifty First” State of the United States. I cannot fathom the arrogance of this upstart Congress of the United States to have the temerity to title its local legislation “*Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007*” aimed to dictate to a nation that just celebrated its “Third” Millennium of existence, as an independent and sovereign nation. The United States and its arrogant Congress are barely two hundred years old.

President Bush, to his great credit, and his Executive Branch of the Government of the United States are completely opposed to H.R. 2003. It is the Democratic Congress that is a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia. President Clinton and his Democrat Government had done much damage collaboratively with Meles and the Eritrean Government before 2001 to Ethiopia’s vital interest. It is to be recalled that the Clinton White House was extremely hostile to patriotic Ethiopians who did not want their Country landlocked and the coastal territories of Ethiopia illegally occupied by an “Eritrea” that was given unprecedented free ride into membership to the United Nations in 1993 with the collaboration of Meles Zenawi and the United States Government. During the time Gail Smith and John Prendergast were lording it at the Clinton White House, there was no crack to be found on the stone-faced White House to insert Ethiopia’s legitimate interest of territorial integrity and national sovereignty, past those Cerberian watchdogs of the interest of Eritrea and that of Meles Zenawi that was one and the same at that time. We must re evaluate the type of protection or friendship we are getting from Democrats as opposed to Republicans. During Mrs. Clinton’s run for the Senate, Ethiopians shelled out close to half a million dollars to her campaign and the Democratic Party. I have not seen so far any benefit for all our effort from the Democratic Party.

Friendly relationship between two nations should be based on mutual respect. Read to that end the provisions of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2625 (xxv) of 1970: Declaration on Principles of International Law Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. For example the provision dealing with “non-intervention or non-interference” holds among other things the following principle of friendly relations of nations: “No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. Consequently, armed intervention and all other forms of interference or attempted threats against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements, are in violation of international law.” [3] In addition, giving forum or support that may amount to material support to so called liberation fronts in any form engaged in terrorist activities attacking both civilians and government forces in Ethiopia can be considered as a violation of the norms of international law embedded in several international instruments including the United Nations Charter. The activities of the Congress of the United States, in its pursuit of H.R. 2003, violate such principles and norms of international law.

Allowing the passage of H.R. 2003 is such gross violation of the Sovereignty of the State of Ethiopia in its own internal affairs, which will set bad precedent and deform our international relations for generations to come. We, Ethiopians, must be able to look far into the future and not be disabled by current difficulties from dreaming freely about our destiny. No one nation can willy-nilly dictate to us what to do with our own lives. The likes of Donald Payne must first and foremost clean their own backyard of poverty, degradation, and discrimination etcetera before trying to clean our mess. No! Thank you; we will do our own cleaning ourselves.

Just because one nation is poor or lean or starving and the other rich and bloated or overstuffed, does not mean one has to suffer through some disrespectful relationship. It is simply unacceptable. After all it is the people of Ethiopia who are suffering, thus how is it legal or moral for the Congress of the United States to behave as if Ethiopia is some Ghetto within United States that they end up drafting such insulting resolution and legislation. Wealth neither undermines nor exaggerates the humanity of an individual anywhere. Just because your belly is full, it does not mean that you can go around pushing and insulting poor people in Ethiopia or elsewhere in the World. I challenge the Congress of the United States to withdraw this insulting draft bill, HR 2003, from its list and apologize to the people of Ethiopia. **Ω**

Tecola W. Hagos
Washington DC
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Attachment

1. H.R.2003

Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2007 (Introduced in House)

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to--

- (1) Support the advancement of human rights, democracy, independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press, peacekeeping capacity building, and economic development in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;
- (2) Seek the unconditional release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia;
- (3) Foster stability, democracy, and economic development in the region;
- (4) Collaborate with Ethiopia in the Global War on Terror; and
- (5) Strengthen United States-Ethiopian relations based on the policy objectives specified in paragraphs (1) through (4).

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

- (1) The people of Ethiopia have suffered for decades due to military conflicts, natural disasters, poverty and diseases, regional instability, and the brutal dictatorship of the military junta under Mengistu Haile Mariam. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were brutally murdered by the Mengistu regime, including women and children. Many more sacrificed their lives fighting for freedom, respect for human rights, and to bring an end to the brutal dictatorship of the Mengistu regime. Members of that murderous regime are currently living in Europe, the United States, and Africa.
- (2) In May 1991, the brutal dictatorship of the Mengistu regime came to an abrupt end when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) defeated the Mengistu army. In July 1991, the EPRDF and a coalition of other political groups established a transitional government in Ethiopia. A number of liberation movements joined the transitional government in a spirit of a new start and the building of a democratic Ethiopia. These groups included the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and many others.
- (3) Since the ouster of the Mengistu regime in 1991, the EPRDF-led government instituted a multiparty system and organized 3 regional and national elections and a number of local elections. The 1995 and 2000 elections were largely boycotted and judged to be neither free nor fair. Some opposition groups participated in the 2000 elections, giving such groups 12 seats in the 546-seat parliament.
- (4) The May 2005 pre-election period and the conduct of the elections in Ethiopia were seen by observers to be transparent, competitive, and relatively free and fair, although there were a number of problems

reported. More than 90 percent of registered voters participated and dozens of political parties took part in the elections. Moreover, some international groups observed the elections, unprecedented access to the mass media was given to the opposition, and there were televised debates between the government and the opposition. Some political parties and armed political groups boycotted the 2005 elections. However, trained local groups were barred from observing the elections.

(5) Despite apparent improvement in the electoral process, preliminary election results announced by the Government of Ethiopia shortly after the May 15, 2005, elections were seen by observers as questionable. The opposition accused the Government of Ethiopia of stealing the elections and called for civil disobedience, which resulted in the killing of demonstrators and detention of opposition leaders and thousands of their followers, including 11 elected members of parliament and the elected mayor of Addis Ababa.

(6) The Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), the United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF), and the ruling EPRDF reached an agreement to resolve disputed election results peacefully with the help of the National Electoral Board (NEB). The NEB investigated more than 299 complaints and later agreed to hold reruns in 31 constituencies. In late August 2005, the NEB held reruns in the 31 constituencies as well as in all 23 constituencies in the Somali region, where elections had been postponed due to insecurity.

(7) Election results show that opposition parties won 170 seats in the national parliament, a significant increase from the 12 seats they won in the last elections. Opposition parties also won the city council in Addis Ababa, giving them control over the capital. An estimated 150 of the 170 opposition members of parliament have taken their seats. In early May 2006, the Government of Ethiopia appointed a caretaker government in the capital. Members of parliament from the CUD walked out of parliament in protest. The CUD won the city, but the designated mayor has been in detention since November 2005.

(8) Human rights conditions deteriorated significantly after the May 15, 2005, elections in Ethiopia and overall human rights conditions in the country remain poor. The Department of State, in its 2005 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, noted a myriad of human rights abuses by the Government of Ethiopia. Moreover, journalists and editors of the independent press have been and continue to face harassment and prosecution for alleged violations of press laws in Ethiopia. Dozens of journalists have fled the country, and some are currently in exile fearing prosecution or harassment.

(9) In June 2005, Ethiopian Government security personnel killed more than 35 demonstrators and in November 2005 an estimated 53 people were killed, including 7 policemen, according to Human Rights Watch and several other reports. The violence against these victims occurred after pro-opposition groups went to the streets of the capital to protest

government actions in handling the elections results of May 2005. Tens of thousands of people suspected of being opposition supporters were detained over the past months, although many of these detainees were released. Nonetheless, government security forces continue to abuse opposition leaders, supporters, and family members.

(10) An estimated 112 political leaders, human rights activists, community leaders, and journalists, including the chairman of the CUD (Hailu Shawel), the newly elected Mayor of Addis Ababa (Berhanu Nega), and the founder of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (Professor Mesfin Wolde Mariam), were imprisoned and charged with treason and genocide. These measures were deliberately taken to stifle and criminalize opposition party activity in the country. The measures also were intended to intimidate and silence independent press and civil society, raising serious question about the Ethiopian Government's commitment to democracy and good governance.

(11) According to Department of State's 2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 'human rights abuses [in Ethiopia] reported during the year included: limitation on citizens' right to change their government during the most recent elections; unlawful killings, and beating, abuse, and mistreatment of detainees and opposition supporters by security forces; poor prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention . . .'

(12) Whereas the Ethiopian Parliament established an 11-member Commission of Inquiry to 'investigate the disorder and report to the House of People's Representatives in order to take the necessary measure'. The Commission was tasked to investigate whether government security forces used excessive force, caused damage to life and property, or showed a lack of respect for human rights. The Commission was mandated to investigate the June 8, 2005, and November 1-10, 2005, violence in different parts of the country.

(13) Whereas members of the Commission of Inquiry visited several regions, reviewed police reports, met with prisoners and government officials, made 122 radio and TV announcements to the public, examined 16,990 documents, and took testimonies from 1,300 people.

(14) Whereas the Commission of Inquiry concluded that 763 civilians were injured and 193 killed. The Commission also reported that 71 police officers were injured and 6 killed. Damage to property was estimated at \$512,588. The Commission also reported that more than 30,000 civilians were detained, some were tortured, and prisoners in Kaliti were killed.

(15) Whereas the Commission of Inquiry reported that security forces fired 1,500 bullets at prisoners, killing 17 and injuring 53. The Commission stated that civilians did not use weapons and reported bank robberies by demonstrators did not take place. The Commission's deliberations were videotaped and votes were taken on key findings on July 3, 2006.

(16) Whereas shortly after the Commission of Inquiry reached its decision, the Ethiopian Government reportedly began to put pressure on

Commission members to change their report. The Chairman of the Commission, a former Supreme Court President of the Southern Region of Ethiopia, was told by a senior advisor of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to call for an emergency meeting of the Commission in order to change the Commission's report.

(17) Whereas the Commission of Inquiry was scheduled to give its report to the Ethiopian Parliament on July 7, 2006, but the Parliament was adjourned a day early. Several Commission members, including the Chairman and the Deputy Chair, left the country with the final report, other documents relevant to the investigation, and several videotapes of the Commission deliberations.

(18) Whereas in November 2006, the Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry and another Commission member presented the Commission's report and briefed Members of the United State Congress.

(19) Whereas in November 2006, at a congressional briefing with members of the Commission of Inquiry, a young woman named Alemzuria submitted her testimony about what happened to her mother, Etenesh Yemam. Alemzuria's father was elected in May 2005 as Council Member of in Addis Ababa. Subsequently security personnel came to arrest him at his home and then shot Etenesh Yemam as she pleaded for her husband's release.

(20) Whereas the Commission of Inquiry investigated the killing of Etenesh Yemam and confirmed beyond doubt what happened on that dreadful day. Etenesh Yemam's husband still languishes in prison while Alemzuria remains a refugee in another African country.

SEC. 4. SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA.

The Secretary of State shall--

(1) Establish a mechanism to provide financial support to local and national human rights groups and other relevant civil society organizations to help strengthen human rights monitoring and regular reporting on human rights conditions in Ethiopia;

(2) Establish a victims support network to provide legal support for political prisoners and prisoners of conscience and to assist local groups or groups from outside Ethiopia that are active in monitoring the status of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia;

(3) Seek to increase the independence of the Ethiopian judiciary through facilitation of joint discussions for court personnel, officials from the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice, relevant members of the legislature, and civil society representatives on international human rights standards;

(4) Create and support a judicial monitoring process, consisting of local and international groups, to monitor judicial proceedings throughout Ethiopia, with special focus on unwarranted government intervention on strictly judicial matters, and to investigate and report on actions to strengthen an independent judiciary;

(5) Establish a program to strengthen private media in Ethiopia, provide support for training purposes, offer technical and other types of support as necessary, and expand programming by the Voice of America to Ethiopia; and

(6) Establish a mechanism to identify and extradite members of the Mengistu Haile Mariam regime and the current government residing in the United States who were engaged in gross human rights violations and work with other governments to identify and extradite such persons, including Mengistu Haile Mariam.

SEC. 5. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIZATION IN ETHIOPIA.

(a) Strengthening Local, Regional, and National Democratic Processes- The Secretary of State shall--

(1) Provide assistance to strengthen local, regional, and national parliaments and governments in Ethiopia through training in consultation with government authorities, political parties, and civil society groups;

(2) Establish 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;

(3) Strengthen training for political parties in Ethiopia in areas such as organization building and campaign management; and

(4) Provide training for civil society groups in election monitoring in Ethiopia.

(b) Democracy Enhancement-

(1) ASSISTANCE- United States technical assistance for democracy promotion in Ethiopia should be made available to the ruling party as well as opposition parties in Ethiopia.

(2) RESTRICTION-

(A) IN GENERAL- Nonessential United States assistance shall not be made available to the Government of Ethiopia if the Government of Ethiopia acts to obstruct United States technical assistance to advance human rights, democracy, independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press, economic development and economic freedom in Ethiopia.

(B) DEFINITION- In this paragraph, the term 'nonessential United States assistance' means assistance under any provision of law, other than humanitarian assistance, assistance under emergency food programs, assistance to combat HIV/AIDS, and other health care assistance.

SEC. 6. ENSURING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA.

(a) Limitation on Security Assistance; Travel Restrictions-

(1) LIMITATION ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE-

(A) IN GENERAL- Except as provided in subparagraph (B), security assistance shall not be provided to Ethiopia until such time as the certification described in paragraph (3) is made in accordance with such paragraph.

(B) EXCEPTION- Subparagraph (A) shall not apply with respect to peacekeeping or counter-terrorism assistance. Peacekeeping or counter-terrorism assistance provided to Ethiopia shall not be used for any other security-related purpose or to provide training to security personnel or units accused of human rights violations against civilians.

(2) TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS- Beginning on the date that is 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and until such time as the certification described in paragraph (3) is made in accordance with such paragraph, the President shall deny a visa and entry into the United States to--

(A) Any official of the Government of Ethiopia who--

(i) Has been involved in giving orders to use lethal force against peaceful demonstrators in Ethiopia; or

(ii) Has been accused of gross human rights violations;

(B) Security personnel of the Government of Ethiopia who were involved in the June or November 2005 shootings of demonstrators;

(C) Security personnel responsible for murdering Etenesh Yemam, as described in paragraphs (20) and (21) of section 3; and

(D) Security personnel responsible for murdering prisoners at Kaliti prison in the aftermath of the election violence.

(3) CERTIFICATION- the certification described in this paragraph is a certification by the President to Congress that the Government of Ethiopia is making credible, quantifiable efforts to ensure that--

(A) All political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Ethiopia have been released, their civil and political rights restored, and their property returned;

(B) Prisoners held without charge or kept in detention without fair trial in violation of the Constitution of Ethiopia are released or receive a fair and speedy trial, and prisoners whose charges have been dismissed or acquitted and are still being held are released without delay;

(C) The Ethiopian judiciary is able to function independently and allowed to uphold the Ethiopian Constitution and international human rights standards;

(D) Security personnel involved in the unlawful killings of demonstrators, Etenesh Yemam, and Kaliti prisoners are punished;

(E) Family members, legal counsel, and others have unfettered access to visit detainees in Ethiopian prisons;

(F) Print and broadcast media in Ethiopia are able to operate free from undue interference and laws restricting media freedom, including sections of the Ethiopian Federal Criminal Code, are revised;

(G) Licensing of independent radio and television in Ethiopia is open and transparent;

(H) Access in Ethiopia is provided to the Internet and the ability of citizens to freely send and receive electronic mail and otherwise obtain information is guaranteed;

(I) The National Election Board (NEB) includes representatives of political parties with seats in the Ethiopian Parliament and guarantees independence for the NEB in its decision-making;

(J) Representatives of international human rights organizations engaged in human rights monitoring work in Ethiopia are admitted to Ethiopia without undue restriction; and

(K) Ethiopian human rights organizations are able to operate in an environment free of harassment, intimidation, and persecution.

(4) WAIVER-

(A) IN GENERAL- The President may waive the application of paragraph (1) or (2) on a case-by-case basis if the President determines that--

(i) The Government of Ethiopia has met the requirements of paragraph (3); and

(ii) Such a waiver is in the national interests of the United States.

(B) NOTIFICATION- Prior to granting a waiver under the authority of subparagraph (A), the President shall transmit to Congress a notification that includes the reasons for the waiver.

(b) Treatment of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of Conscience-

(1) IN GENERAL- The President, the Secretary of State, and other relevant officials of the Government of the United States shall call upon the Government of Ethiopia to immediately release all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, especially prisoners held without charge.

(2) TORTURE VICTIM RELIEF- While it is the responsibility of the Government of Ethiopia to compensate the victims of unlawful imprisonment and torture and their families for their suffering and losses, the President shall provide assistance for the rehabilitation of victims of torture in Ethiopia at centers established for such purposes pursuant to section 130 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C.)

2. The Coalition for H.R.5680/H.R. 2003

The Coalition for H.R.5680 is a grassroots alliance of groups, organizations and individuals who are deeply concerned about events in Ethiopia today, and have committed to work collectively for passage of H.R. 5680, also known as "Ethiopia Freedom, Democracy and Human Rights Advancement Act of 2006". The Coalition for

H.R.5680 was established to empower Ethiopian-Americans to use their constitutional rights to free expression to advocate in favor of democracy and human rights in their motherland.

Why the Coalition Was Established

Over the past year, Ethiopia has faced a number of crises and challenges. The regime of Meles Zenawi unlawfully nullified the decisive electoral victory of opposition parties, and jailed their leaders and thousands of party members, and other dissidents. Large numbers of independent journalists have been jailed or forced to flee the country. Civil liberties continue to be trampled and widespread arbitrary arrests and detentions are common. The rule of Meles Zenawi and his party has replaced the rule of law in Ethiopia.

Today in America, an unprecedented number of Ethiopian-Americans are taking great interest in issues of human rights and democracy in their motherland. The Coalition for H.R. 5680 offers Ethiopian-Americans a vehicle to be actively involved and improving the human rights situation in Ethiopia and help Ethiopia build a stable democratic society.

What is the Mission of the Coalition?

The Coalition for H.R.5680 aims to

- ***Educate*** Ethiopian-Americans on issues of democracy and human rights in Ethiopia.
- ***Organize, mobilize and engage*** Ethiopian-Americans to undertake grassroots advocacy in the U.S Congress to advance human rights and democracy in Ethiopia.
- ***Raise public awareness*** in the United States on the dismal human rights situation in Ethiopia.
- ***Provide a clearinghouse*** for information and materials on H.R. 5680 and related legislative activity, and
- Undertake all other efforts consistent with the foregoing activities.

3. UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 2625 (XXV) 1970. DECLARATION ON PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION AMONG STATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The principle concerning the duty not to intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter

No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. Consequently, armed intervention and all other forms of interference or attempted threats against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements, are in violation of international law.

No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind. Also, no State shall organize, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another State, or interfere in civil strife in another State.

The use of force to deprive peoples of their national identity constitutes a violation of their inalienable rights and of the principle of non-intervention.

Every State has an inalienable right to choose its political, economic, social and cultural systems, without interference in any form by another State.

Nothing in the foregoing paragraphs shall be construed as affecting the relevant provisions of the Charter relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.