

Introduction

Election is the only instrument left to hold political power in Ethiopia. Here too, an important point to note is, never to be forgotten, that, time would continue to be the function of political, economic and social struggle in Ethiopia, including the election process itself, until the regime is replaced and the society is empowered to chart its destiny to eradicate poverty. Therefore, time has to be factored in when preparing for the election and the processes to go through up to its final phase. Here, the argument is, not to give the regime another chance to rule again. If the election went through the process of free and fair election, and if the regime is elected through this process, then, there is nothing one can do. However, to force it to go through the election process and then to force it to form a coalition government would be major achievement by itself. Let us enter the zone of hope and optimism, for the potential for skilled human and the potential for untapped natural resources are adequately there. Target and build on these potentials by rigorously and properly handling contradictory political situations.

I will repeat here what I said in my article of May 18, 2013, "**LESSON FROM MAY 15, 2005 ELECTION.**" For the opposition political parties in the field one of its lethal weapons for replacing the regime to eradicate poverty is the use of ballots. Ballots symbolize guns and bullets in the hands of the army, the society. Further more, the current article, unlike my previous article, "**ELECTION THE INSTRUMENT OF STRUGGLE,**" of Sept. 22, 2009, is very specific. In the current article election is pointed out as the only instrument, in addition, it emphasized election to hold political power, consistent with what is described in the article "THE RIVER THE DAM," of May 9, 2014. It is not an open ended process as in "**Election the Instrument of Struggle**" was.

Unlike in some of my previous articles, in this article, I am not in favor of another type of instrument to hold political power. I will provide the reasons why I am not in favor of the other instruments to be used to hold political power. Here are the reasons. Given the political, the social, as well as the natural environment in Ethiopia, the instrument:

1) Cannot be armed struggle, for it requires determined and decisive as well as intelligent leaders which the current so called armed struggle groups are miserably lacking. In addition armed struggle takes time. A very critical factor,

as I have mentioned it in the beginning of this article, particularly in the case of Ethiopia. It has to become a formidable force to challenge the standing army both in terms of size and weapons, relatively, a position the armed struggle will have to reach a level of power either to force the regime to negotiation or to replace it. This situation will never happen in Ethiopia. For one thing look what is going on inside Ethiopia today. There are many strong opposition political parties who are doing their level best to organize a politically challenging society. Where do you stick the need of the armed struggle? You can't find a room for it. Commonsense. I have suggested a number of times, whenever I got the chance through personal communications, in addition through a couple of my previous articles, for the armed groups to combine armed struggle with uprising. If they had the gut and the intelligence they could have designed the means and the mechanisms to do it. They are already inside Ethiopia. Moving from place to place, as they claimed. They could have travel to any part of Ethiopia clandestinely and organized the society, particularly the Addis Ababa and the surrounding communities. So don't waste your energy, money, and time on these hopeless groups. They are struggle diverters.

2) It cannot be uprising because there is no single opposition political party with a decisive and gutsy leader to lead such powerful enterprise. It is an overwhelming task to undertake even to think about it. It cannot be spontaneous because the society is not pre-prepared to take such overwhelming action spontaneously by latching onto some issues. The last 23 years have clearly shown the built in submissive culture of Ethiopian society. Take for example the Addis Ababa community. All the requirements to initiate an uprising are there inside the soul of the Addis Ababa community. When their political leaders are jailed, when the offices of their political parties are ransacked and banded by the regime, they were never moved to take any action. This culture of submissiveness has to change. Otherwise every regime that comes to rule Ethiopia will trample on them mercilessly. And, of course on Ethiopian society at large. It is a very unfortunate phenomenon. In my opinion Ethiopian people always need and expect some one to lead them. A good example is the election of May 15, 2005. The people knew they have won the election. But the whole Addis Ababa community did not rise up spontaneously. When few who rose up against were immediately crushed, they did not get the very needed support from the whole lot of the community. The issue to be recognized is that the society has to turn revolutionary (radicalized) in the first place to have a spontaneous uprising. To have a revolutionary (radicalized) society there has to be revolutionary (radicalized)

cadres. To have revolutionary (radicalized) cadres there has to be revolutionary (radicalized) opposition political parties, or any group of opposition forces. But once this environment is created, and let us say the event took place, and there is no organized body to take the leadership, then, through a process of Nature led random selection of an individual leader might pop up and take advantage of the spontaneous uprising and complete the process. In my opinion there is a concrete and a very serious national problem. So, think about it.

3) Coup d'état would not be needed because the political environment in the field is changing since the death of Meles Zenawi. Before the death of Meles I was in favor of coup d'état. Because then I said Meles has to be removed by any means. To that effect I have shared an article titled "Meles Must be Removed by Any Decisive Means" 05/27/2006. Meles Zenawi was an extremely dangerous individual.

Therefore, the only instrument left for holding political power is election. For one thing it is peaceful. The activities being undertaken by the opposition political parties, given well organized in the sense of preparing the society to participate in the coming election, it appears there is hope for the society to come out in great numbers and beat EPRDF as it did in the past elections.

In the final analysis the main purpose of having election is to empower the society in order to have a say and to be heard in the administrative process of the country. It is also to liberate and unleash the potential of the society as well as to harness the natural resources the country is endowed with targeting the eradication of poverty through time

Forming a Coalition

The main objective for forming a coalition is simply to identify a party from among the coalition capable of beating the regime in a given election site or sites. It is a one time shot. It is not a complicated process to handle. After the election, depending upon the result of the election each would go its own way either to form a coalition government if the election were won in their favor, or, simply join the parliament without being part of the ruling party if the election is not won. Or, assuming the election process took place with free and fair election process by even forming a coalition government with the ruling party. It is not a big deal. One cannot go against the natural process. Our fathers say, MUYA BELIB NEW. The process and the completion of the election of May 15, 2005 can provide the blue print to be copied in the coming election of

2015. It is not late at all, particularly for the three opposition parties, namely, UDJ, AEUP and Semayawi Party, or by even inducing the other non-ethnic opposition political parties to form a coalition. The essential factors that indicate adequate preparedness such as, a) the provision of leadership, b) the operation of dedicated and well disciplined cadres, and c) the penetration into the society appears to have already taken place. Once these qualities are satisfied and are in existence, what determines the effectiveness of the coalition and the time when to form it is the preparedness and readiness of each individual opposition political party that would form the coalition. Therefore, given the strength of the preparation of each party, the coalition can be formed within a short period of time. There is ample time to go through the process of formation and the process of the implementation phase. For example, just as the May 15, 2005 Kinijit (Coalition) did, UDJ can become UDJ/Kinijit, AEUP can become AEUP/Kinijit, and Semayawi Party can become Semaya Party/Kinijit. The name Kinijit cannot be specific to any group, nor should it be takes as a license to the group of May 15, 2005 only. It is a universal word, whose English meaning is coalition. It can be used repeatedly by any group at any time.

The Question of Merging

I would like to humbly present my opinion regarding the “Merging” (Wuhidet) process that is being undertaken between Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) and All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP). I will point out four important points to be noted.

The first one is, at this critical time Merging (Wuhidet) is a non-strategic move. At this critical time what should have been encouraged should have been the formation of Coalition. In my opinion there cannot be any productive alternative to coalition. Particularly AEUP, that defeated Meles and his regime by a knockout in the election of May 15, 2005, mind you, after forming a four political party coalition, not to encourage coalition instead of merging is simply an evasion to cover up what they did first against the people of Ethiopia and secondly against those disciplined and courageous cadres who sacrificed their life and their existence. The spirit and the enthusiasm engine that are pushing them to merge, on the part of these prominent political parties, can be put effectively into a very valuable move by forming the Coalition. It is never too late.

The second one is that in Ethiopia where there are over eighty ethnic groups

and where the population is over 90 million, multiethnic parties should not fold down but expand and multiply. In my opinion the number of nationalities and the size of the population should have to determine the number of multiethnic parties. If and when this trend would be allowed to take place in Ethiopia there would come a time when ethnic parties would weather away and replaced by multiethnic political parties. What should be noted is, by folding down what already existed, one is denying the society to have multiple parties to choose from and join. The greater the number of the multinationality parties the more and the greater the possibility to starve the ethnic political parties. Hence the more and the greater progress for unity of Ethiopian society. I strongly suggest to UDJ and AEUP to think deeper and critically. If they have already formed then break it apart. I do not think it is a visionary move in the first place. It appears merging for the sake of merging. I have listened to the very latest interview of the two leaders defending their positions very carefully.

The third point that I would like to raise is what political, economic and social or cultural advantages would be achieved by merging these strong political parties, each capable of forming a coalition government when winning greater number of seats that could be achieved by forming the coalition, that they could not achieve by forming a coalition? Practically nothing. By forming the coalition they will win in the coming election. But, by merging they will lose in the coming election. For the weak and perhaps for the hopeless political parties merging would make a good option. It would make sense too.

The fourth important point to note is what these two strong political parties are doing by merging is that: a) one of the two strong political leaderships with well accumulated political experiences, and, b) one of the two strong and disciplined political parties with high chance to win the coming election, are becoming extinct. Self imposed extinction. Whether these two parties agree or disagree this is what is going to take place. Number matters.

Joining the Parliament

The Parliament is one of the highest institutions in the Nation. Assuming the Parliament at and after 2015 would be the result of free and fair election, it would be one of the most important instruments where the elected ones should ask themselves, after holding political power, or, even after failing to hold political power but achieve a commanding number of seats after the

election:

- 1.** Would I be one of the tools to move forward the economic policies, with its diversified practices, the education policies, the health policies, the land policies, the natural resources policies, the science and technology policies, the import export policies, as well as the political stability in the country with the ultimate objective of eradicating poverty.
- 2.** Would I be able to change the political environment within the Parliament itself as well as within the society by highlighting the positive and the constructive aspects of what the electorate are endowed with, therefore these behavior to be harnessed to productive effect.
- 3.** Would I be able to impact the release of political prisoners, the democratic rights, the individual rights, and the rule of law issues. This is an honest and ideal place to fight for these issues.

These are some of the prominent points one should contemplate upon to decide whether to join the Parliament or not. It should be taken very seriously. Because it is the instrument of the implementation phase for one who gathered the needs and the interests of the society, in relation to the issues I itemized under number one above, before the election. Given the deep rooted desire and commitment to faithfully and wholeheartedly serve the society on the part of those elected and joined the Parliament it is an institution to crave for, for it is here the voice of the people is heard. Therefore it is not an institution to dismiss outright or to be neglected because of the past experiences particularly during the era of Meles's rule the time when it was the mouth piece of the regime.

Losing the possibility of holding political power is not the end of the game either. Not yet. What determines whether to join the Parliament or not are the three points I pointed out above and the number of seats won during the election. Short of holding political power it is commendable targeting to get high number of seats that will diminish the political power dominated by EPRDF. One should note that it is the only organized institution in favor of the society where the society openly voice its grievances, its economic miseries, its lack of infrastructure, the shortage of drinking water, the shortage of electricity and telephone, the lack of their basic necessities, etc. through its representatives. Therefore, the main purpose of joining the Parliament are these fundamental issues. It should not be for individual political party

interests.

What if the Regime Rejects the Result of the Election

First of all it is very important to accept the reality that the regime in power will try and do its level best to cheat and to bend the rules in its favor beginning from the preparation phase, that is, before the election. On the day of the election as well as immediately after the day of the election there is a good chance that the regime will repeat what it did during the preparation phase. Very unfortunately this corrupt culture, an institutionalized international phenomenon, is true even here in the United States of America. Once one accepts these realities without any frustration and discouragement, one should cool down and design what measures to take to win the election and to vehemently defend it if any discrepancies in the process arose. For the opposition political parties, this is the real time to reap what they sowed in the field in the last four years with untold sacrifices. Therefore, the guiding frame of reference has to be unwaveringly how to win and hold political power. That is it. In the final analysis the engine that is driving forward the opposition political parties in the field is the confidence developed during the interaction between them and the Ethiopian society through public meetings, demonstrations, and through other mechanisms held. By now they should have known, very well, their confidence level. What the regime does or does not do should not enter into the picture at all to do what should be done up to the election day. One can conclude then, given the depth of the aggressiveness of the society in general and the community of Addis Ababa in particular, the election of 2015 ought to be winnable and defendable too.

On May 9, 2005 about three million of Addis Ababa and its surrounding residents came out in support of the opposition political parties. The potential is still there. Intact. There cannot be an iota of rationalization for not participating in the coming election of 2015, with full God given force, and, if needed, defend and protect it. Once the ballots are inside the ballot boxes, consider it as living and breathing matter that has turned into hope: hope for better life; hope to have the basic necessities, food, shelter and clothing; hope to have electric lights and clean water regularly. On the other side, the opposition political parties are expected by those who went through the election process to deliver and fulfill those hopes. If not this what is the purpose of having an election then?

Stay positive. Never think negatively about anything. Never think negatively

about the coming result of the election this far ahead. Never say the regime is going to cheat, bend the rules, and sabotage the election, anyway I am going to try it. This is a self defeating mentality that will shake up the whole political structure built by you the opposition forces with human blood, torture, time, and money sacrifices made, to the core. However, to stay positive does not mean not to expose the regime vehemently what it lacked in: its education policies, its health policies, its industry and technology development policies that includes agricultural policies, its economic policies with its diversified practices, its land policies, the natural resources policies, the science and technology policies, the import export policies, during the campaign, which should include what and how the opposition political parties can do better than the existing regime. Hammer, and hammer, and hammer these issues persistently, specially picking out and focusing more on the issues that the society see, feel, and touch, routinely, in their day to day life up to the election day so that the people will remember what they were informed. Add to these exposures the political tactics of the regime for raising the salaries of the federal government's employees at this time, and the disappearances and the imprisonment of the opposition political leaders. Never hesitate to expose the regime's intentions and designs to deceive the society during the campaign.

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