



Tedla Asfaw

The number 555 is a number which has to be seen closely after Eng. Hailu Shawel's now famous handshake with the tyrant of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi about which many things have been said including the angle of bow. However, President Obama might have beaten Eng. Hailu on that battle on his famous handshake with the Japanese Royal by few degrees angle of bow.

When it comes to the substance of the handshake that cemented the "Code of Conduct" for the coming "election" let me say that only the gesture by Meles Zenawi for his hated adversary has changed our politics for good or bad back home and here in the diaspora.

Moreover, the battle in the diaspora that was sparked by this famous handshake is now raging on Internet and pal talk rooms. Ethiopian websites and pal talks are now the battleground pitting former friends against each other added with die hard TPLF worshippers who seem elated beyond control. One thing for sure is that forgetting the angle of bow the picture of Meles with Hailu handshaking has changed our politics here dramatically.

On this battle, all the combatants wanted to score a point. The now famous, "it is 5/five days noise" by Eng. Hailu is quoted widely as a rallying cry to separate him and his party from his diaspora supporters. TPLF or Woyane supporters publicly are rooting for Eng. Hailu's led party, AEUP as they were rooting for Lidetu's party after he surrendered on the crackdown of May 2005 to save his life and enter parliament, finishing his term for being a polite listener on most of Meles Zenawi's lectures for the last five years..

The next Five Months/5 is going to be critical for the coming "election" if AEUP can reach to its constituencies freely as was promised on the agreement with TPLF. As we heard on the weekend on AEUP radio, its organizers from Tigray, Illubabor, Afar are ready to establish the broken contact with their constituencies using the handshake as a cover. If that succeeded, the five months window of opportunity will change the political landscape of Ethiopia for the next Five Years/5 and maybe as a milestone for Ethiopian politics to be remembered for future..

The Medrek party leaders back home will also be on the bandwagon very soon if outsiders/Fernjis help them find face saving formula. Some of their leaders in North America are fund raising, of course, to participate on the "election" as they have done for the last two decades. The current stalemate with the ruling party is not about substance but positioning and selling themselves as better and strong party to "challenge" TPLF for public.

TPLF knows and worked with most of the current leaders of Medrek. The separate negotiation they requested after it was rejected by TPLF, their supporters in the diaspora, however, have found a new enemy called "Enjerawe Hailu" and the insult and vilification is now at full speed and asking many of us what could be the motive behind all this ?

In any case if Medrek follows its "supporters" call here and go on attacking AEUP and its leaders

as sell out, the first question they will get from the public is where they have been for the last nineteen years ? Were not they working for the same policy of TPLF they seem now new and why do the Ethiopian people believe them that they are different than Meles Zenawi's TPLF led EPRDF ?

It is also true most of noise against Eng. Hailu's AEUP is coming from Ginbot7 supporters even if their leaders do not attack AEUP and its leader directly. They know that is not going to help them here in the diaspora because Ginbot7 is not believing TPLF will give power peacefully except armed rebellion then they should not make alliance of any kind with Medrek, the born again peaceful movement that will give excuse for TPLF to lock them up.

The victory news which Ginbot7 promised are now heard from east, the ONLF scoring victory over TPLF/Ethiopian soldiers and EPPF fighters annihilation of TPLF on the northern front. No doubt, this kind of real or make believe battle will be with us for the coming five months and Gibot7 has to focus participating, than reporting, on the joint military attack with OLF, ONLF, EPPF and guaranteeing another liberation, similar to the TPLF victory in 1991.

What our people can not and should not do is to be bystanders and let armed rulers or oppositions decide their future. The May 2005 verdict is still fresh in our peoples mind that people power can defeat armed thugs. The power of people is still a force that will send shiver to TPLF and all armed groups who care less for public opinion and in fact afraid of it very much.

The choice our people have is from two devils, the known armed tyrants and the future liberators. AEUP has chosen to play with the known. Ethiopians know from the recent local election experience that the ruling party is not only with guns but also with sacks of money to buy and coerce voters. Farmers are under the mercy of TPLF cadres so do workers.

We remember also the TPLF "supporters" rally on the eve of the May 2005 election. The thousands they come out coerced as supporters of TPLF/EPRDF in fact voted for Kinijit and no buying of vote will make our people vote for the current regime this time too in a fair and free election because the majority of our people lives have getting much worst than it was five years ago.

Will TPLF cheat the voting ? Surely, Will it win ? Not in a free and fair election ? Can we be idle ? Hell no !!! That is the message of Five Days, Five Months and Five Years, 555, Give me Five !!!