

DOUBLE TALK FROM WASHINGTON

By Hama Tuma

Strange as it may seem, there are times when I sympathize with official America, like one feels sorry for a mother of serial killers. After all, they are criminals of the worst kind but still her children and mothers' love knows no bounds. America is a messed up mother who has given birth and succor to murderous dictators in many African countries. At the same time, it pretends to be the fountain of democracy and the disparity is tearing her apart, making her hypocritical, killing her not softly. Or making her issue press releases that pass the realm of the bizarre, go to newspeak and double talk and ridicule her to no end in the eyes of the world.

The recent State Department statement on the crude joke of an election in Ethiopia (the ruling party won by 100%) is a case in point.

The United States commends the people of Ethiopia for their civic participation in generally peaceful parliamentary and regional elections on May 24, said the press release. In real talk this is supposed to say we did note that the participation was low and the soldiers and security forces out on the streets surpassed the number of the voters. A country with no independent civic organizations or rights is what Ethiopia is as Washington very well knows.

The PR went on to state: *We acknowledge the National Electoral Board's organizational efforts and the African Union's role as the only international observer mission on the ground.* In other words, we regret the fact that the regime refused to allow foreign observers to come in and blocked local observers from doing the task. And the PR goes on to praise the election process in a country where the election law favors the ruling party and the electoral board is one hundred per cent controlled by the regime. What is

funny (and sad) about the official statement is the fact that its second paragraph contradicts the first one and makes it clear that not only a real and fair election did not take place but could not ever take place under the given circumstances. The US State Department does know the regime in Addis Abeba is dictatorial and repressive down to its core but as the officials like to say it is their vassal and needed in the troubled region to fulfill US interests. And, in the concluding sentences, the PR goes on to prattle about democratic institutions in Ethiopia and other such ghost stories. Pathetic.

Back when Orwell (who was according to one report a government informant himself) wrote of Newspeak the world was surprised and also shocked by the 1984 story. Actually, 1984 and Newspeak arrived long before that date and we are now in 2015 when double talk/newspeak is flourishing. I had tried to call it Afrispeak too in reference to African dictators and their unfunny double talk . Torture has become enhanced interrogation, preemptive strike has replaced unprovoked attack. Killing a human being is now a takedown, ethnic cleansing replaces outright genocide and weird is covered up as unique. Double talk can be used to avoid being rude and obnoxious or sometimes to be politically correct. American double talk is often to cover up the truth and delude and dupe people. Firing workers comes out softly as downsizing, a shoddy good passes as pre-owned.

Some dictionaries define double talk as follows:

1. *Meaningless speech that consists of nonsense syllables mixed with intelligible words; gibberish.*
2. *Deliberately ambiguous or evasive language. Also called doublespeak.*

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1. *rapid speech with a mixture of nonsense syllables and real words; gibberish*
2. *empty, deceptive, or ambiguous talk, esp. by politicians*

It would be giving honor to the US Press Release if we were to call it gibberish.

Bush was worse but then he had problems of capacity but Obama is no exception in double talk. Collateral damage is still covering up the killing of innocent civilians, regime change is overthrowing a regime that does not accept American diktat, a freedom fighter is a terrorist serving American interests and a terrorist anyone opposed to it. Moderate forms are fanatics that do not call America an enemy. The same double talk defined a communist during the Cold War. In Ethiopia, we have wax and gold but it is not the same thing really as double talk. It came out of hiding one's message and meaning, often out of fear of repression--the wax being the obvious meaning and the gold being the real one. America's statement is not wax and gold as its attempt to hide its unabashed and condemnable support for the regime in Ethiopia is hardly covered up by its feeble attempt at criticism (itself diluted and contradicted by the concluding statement of support for the regime and its non-existent democratic institutions). Let us say America is being held back to avoid saying it has failed miserably, ill advised instead of very, very bad and plain robber capitalist. In Israel , settlements are called facts on the ground and as Nabeel Abraham said *demographic factors is the latest Israeli newspeak for keeping the Arabs from outnumbering Israeli Jews."*

The tyrannical regime in Ethiopia and its late dictator were adepts of double talk. The street smart thug called Meles Zenawi wove words to sound intelligent without saying anything--vintage gibberish. When he let his forces loose and invaded Somalia (to serve western interests we must add) he denied doing that only admitting "we did cross the border with our soldiers", no invasion please. A bankrupt economy with more than 80% of the people below the poverty level and starving was named a double digit growth miracle. People shot by the police were fools who intercepted the bullets. Ethnic discrimination is self determination in practice, corruption comes out as an exaggeration and any dissent is terrorism or being anti peace. It has worked for the regime as those swallowing its lies line hook and all want to be deceived. It serves their purpose. Lies are always believed when the listeners want to be fooled or duped. Double talk is disastrous when used to cover up crimes. Democracy in Ethiopia is a cruel joke on the vast majority of Ethiopians. Obama opened up the White House to a number of African dictators and tried to salvage his conscience by keeping Mugabe away from the US-Africa conference. Who were invited? the Mass murderer Obiang, the despot Jammeh of Gambia, the kleptocrat Paul Biya, the Angolan dictator, the Ethiopian stooge, and more. Obama's speech was a mitigated disaster. He claimed he supports gay rights and embraced the dictators who would

cut off any gay head with joy like the blood thirsty US ally Saudi Arabia. Jammeh has poisoned to death around 1000 people accused of witchcraft. Blaise Compaore, an Obama guest, has now been overthrown much to the joy of the people of Burkina Faso. American double talk and double standards needs many books. As someone put it Kerry is just kerrying-on along the anti-African treacherous path hobnobbing with dictators from Djibouti-Ethiopia to West and central Africa.