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***Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)***

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**ON DR. CONDOLEEZA RICE'S COMING VISIT TO ETHIOPIA**

Dr. Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of State, is going to Addis Ababa on December 5 to discuss with certain African leaders the grave situation in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions. This is for sure a rare visit but skepticism expressed on its outcome by many observers is shared by the EPRP too.

The situation in the Great Lakes region and especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is very much linked to the 'curse' on this fraternal African country: its wealth and riches from gold to diamond, from uranium to coltan and more. The ongoing war in Eastern Congo has cost the lives of more than 4 million people with not much protest being heard from Western capitals that have, on the other hand, expressed so much concern on what is going on in Darfur. The warlords and militia are backed or employed by mining companies like the AngloGold Ashanti corporation accused by Human Rights Watch in 2005 of backing rebels that have committed rape and atrocities. If the cruel plunder of the riches of the Congo is stopped then the war will have come a long way on the path of its cessation. Madam Rice is going to talk with Congolese president Kabila jr. but it is a confirmed fact that his corrupt and repressive regime, along with that of Museveni and Kagame, is responsible for the havoc in the Congo. The Great Lakes problem and that of Congo in particular cannot find a meaningful solution by conferring with the aggravators of the crisis and strife.

In the Horn of Africa, the repressive regime in Addis Ababa and its adventurous forays into Somalia have aggravated the troubles of the Horn. The invasion of Somalia, reportedly by the order of Washington, was and is a big mistake, an act undertaken by the Meles regime to curry favor from Washington. The outcome was predictable as the EPRP had pointed out at the time. The claims of fast and lightning victory by the Meles regime was but an illusion on the part of an irresponsible regime that was desperately trying to come out of its own internal political disaster by getting the full backing of America. In Ethiopia, the regime in power is illegal, it had flagrantly and bloodily suppressed the people to steal an election in 2005. It is an isolated and minority regime relying on violence and terror to stay in power. The Meles regime owes its stay in power to no other country but primarily to the USA that has indulged it and given it all round (including military) support on the grounds that it is "an ally in the war against terrorism". In actual fact and as Madam Rice must have realized by now, the politics of backing the Meles regime and using it as an ally has backfired. The Horn is in a far worse situation than before, Somalia is bleeding more than ever before, the war against Eritrea seems to be approaching and the carnage in the Ogaden has just begun.

**Surely, a review and a bold policy change is called for on the part of the American administration represented by Madam Rice.**

**Conferring with the dictators that are part of the problem is not bound to lead a durable and lasting solution. The problem of the Horn cannot be resolved by Meles, Gelleh or colonel Abdullahi Yusuf who are all discredited in the eyes of their peoples. The US policy of supporting these dictators is a big part of the problem facing the Horn of Africa. The reports from Addis Ababa that Washington has given Meles the green light to invade Eritrea and oust Isayas Afewerki will not, if undertaken, lead to any meaningful change. It just promises more bloodshed and instability and that is why the EPRP has raised its voice against such a war that will surely prove disastrous for the two peoples and the region as a whole. Hence, the skepticism on the results of Dr. Rice's coming visit to Ethiopia.**

**Will the US Secretary of State demand the respect of human rights in Ethiopia? Will she call for an end to the invasion of Somalia? Will she call for democratic change in Ethiopia, Djibouti, etc..? There is no indication that Dr. Rice would. On its part, the Meles regime will profit from the visit and the talk and will try to project a 'respectable' image as opposed to its real roguish one. The EPRP continues to call on the USA to rethink and change its policy vis a vis Ethiopia so that its actions are in tune with the respect of human rights and the exigencies of democratic governance.**

**EPRP**  
P.O.Box 73337  
Washington D.C. 20056  
U.S.A  
Tel. : (202) 291-4217  
Fax : (202) 291-7645

**E-mail [ESPIC@aol.com](mailto:ESPIC@aol.com)**

**EPRP**  
BP 22  
Bois Colombes 92270  
France

**Website: <http://www.EPRP.com>**