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12 february 1990

Dear Mr. Henze,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the final two chapters of your book "Prerequisites for peace in the Horn of Africa." I read it with much interest and would like to make a few comments and suggestions:

1. As you rightly point out the key to peace and stability in the Horn could be a constructive change in Ethiopia. This is not only because Ethiopia is the most populous and important country in the Horn. Your assertion would have more weight if you mention the fact that the present government in Ethiopia is directly or indirectly involved in ALL the conflicts in the Horn. This would mean that a democratic government in Addis Abeba would not only bring peace to the country itself. It could also contribute to stability in the region by putting an end to involvement in affairs of neighbouring states.

2. As you point out in your attached letter, the proposals may seem idealistic to many people. But I am of the opinion that there could be no solution to our country's problems without a concerted effort to translate into practice what you call the 'six principles' for future governments in the Horn. Almost all opposition forces in Ethiopia - except the hard line TPLF/EPDM coalition - have come out in support of multiparty democracy. Ethiopia's problems and the deadlock that prevails in the country come from a combination of two factors: The government and the forces which constitute the most serious challenge to its hold on power are against such solutions. On the other hand what you call 'constructive opposition forces' are too weak and divided among themselves to positively influence developments in the country.

If there is to be a 'combination of idealism and realism' your book should address the crucial question of the setting up of a national, democratic and above all credible alternative. This does not exist for the moment. Without bold political initiatives aimed at creating such an alternative force I do not see how the 'six principles' that you present as prerequisites for peace in the Horn could be applied in Ethiopia.

3. This brings me to a major suggestion that I would like to make. The prerequisites for peace and the six principles deal with the post-Dergue period. I would suggest that you devote some pages to the problem of 'prerequisites for change' This could include a critical analysis of democratic opposition forces, the obstacles hindering the emergence of a united opposition to the present regime, the transitional arrangements and what the international community should do to encourage such developments.

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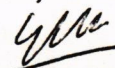
4. Your draft does not contain policy proposals concerning democratic opposition forces but instead gives much place to pressure that should be put on the government, to arms embargo, to promises of international assistance in exchange for more open and democratic policies. There is some hint about what the international community should do concerning opposition forces. But this does not go far enough. You say that there should be "encouragement of constructive reform forces, with assurance that they will not be left helpless by the international community when abrupt political changes occur, ie. when oppressive regimes are overthrown or collapse."

We know that post-Dergue democratic Ethiopia will be able to draw sympathy and assistance from almost all quarters in the international community to solve the tremendous problems that it would have to face. Therefore the question is not so much what policies are to be followed by the international community after the 'abrupt collapse' of the regime. The important thing now is what the international community could do to encourage a peaceful and smooth transition towards democracy.

This is an important point. The problem that worries almost all Ethiopians today is how to avoid being caught in another spiral of chaos, anarchy and terror which can follow an unprepared explosion and which may perhaps lead to another decade of turmoil. This could be avoided only if democratic opposition forces come together today and work not only for constructive change in the country but also define transitional arrangements that could lead to the establishment of a democratically elected government in the country. I think your book should contain some proposals to define what the international community could do to encourage such developments.

With my best wishes for a good 1990 and hoping to meet you if and when you come to Europe;

Very sincerely



Negede Gobezie