**The Horn of Africa Vote in Virginia and Democratic Presidential Coattails**

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Over 50,000 Virginians from the Horn of Africa (HoA) will vote in the 2012 election. During the last Presidential election, nearly all the votes went for President Obama in Northern Virginia and gave the President a convincing victory in the State of Virginia. The momentum President Obama had and the margins he led by was reasonable predictor that the President will do well and he did. The 2012 election polls in the other hand are very close to determine with Governor Romney edging one point ahead of the President with 3-4% 0f the voters undecided. But how will this influence Virginia’s congressional contests?

After the disastrous eight year of Bush Administration, in 2008, President Obama was a welcome change not only for his racially mixed background but for the fresh ideas, messages of hope and change that he professed that people latched on to.

However, President Obama not only continued Bush’s policies in the Horn but he hastened it. President Obama chose to side with minorities of the constituencies from the region that he believed could help him further his regional geopolitical agendas of the region completely ignoring the overwhelming votes he received from these constituencies in 2008. President Obama, like his predecessor embraced Meles Zenawi, a tyrant the Genocide Watch considered to have committed crimes against humanity that reached Stage 7 genocidal massacres against many of its peoples, including the Anuak, Ogadeni, Oromo, and Omo tribes. President Obama also pursued sanctions against Eritrea based on fabrications.

President Obama could sell the unsuspecting and unfamiliar American anything he wants. However the people from the region understand and know how deceiving, malicious and destructive Obama policies are and have been for the people in the region. The very fact that he championed a genocidal tyrant Meles Zenawi was enough to compel many to write and openly campaign for voting Obama out of office.

There are three facets to how people from the Horn region can influence the 2012 presidential and congressional races. A) In 2008, President Obama managed to energize families, kids and the youth in a manner and enthusiasm unseen in recent US presidential races. These groups campaigned for Obama like he is a member of their family. B) The overwhelming support for Obama meant that he not only received the votes of the energized electorate; the energy of the campaign brought in new voters into the process that normally would not participate. C) The overwhelming support for Obama from these groups meant that Republican ticket will not enjoy the support of these groups.

Fast forward to 2012; A) the energy and enthusiasm is not there. People are not campaigning the way they did in 2008, and those that are campaigning for Obama are receiving serious resistance based on the President’s track record. B) This is damaging in two fronts; firstly, when they withhold their votes they take votes away from the president. Most significantly, the lack of enthusiasm will weaken the get-out to vote campaign that could directly influence the cattails like the highly contested senatorial race between Tim Kaine and George Allen amongst the other congressional races. When they sit-out the election, the Democratic Party loses. This assertion assumes the votes for Obama translate into votes for the Democratic Party. C) The most damaging is the protest vote against Obama by voting for Romney.

These scenarios present a net loss for President Obama’s reelection bid in Virginia. Until recently, the President was oblivious to these constituencies when he brought genocidal tyrant Meles Zenawi to Washington DC to talk about food security and, when he sent Ambassador Susan Rice to make a mockery of the traditions and customs of the region during the funeral services of agent Meles Zenawi.

Moreover, the democrat congressmen and senators competing for office face similar fate as the president because they have heard the complaints of these constituencies and benefited from fund raising activities these groups offered. Congressman Jim Moran and Gerry Connolly represent a great example.

Conclusion

President Obama’s influence on the Democratic Party in Virginia will be significant. Mainstream media is oblivious to these critical constituencies. They have failed to investigate, understand the intricacies of these constituencies and failed to educate the public about the issues. All they did was parrot the Administrations claims at face value.

As it stands now, the Obama campaign is telling these constituencies that their votes are too insignificant to matter while at the same time, coveting their votes by telling these very groups that when it comes for the bread and butter issues Obama is better than Romney. In a sense, he is selling fear.

The number of votes Virginians from the Horn wield is significant. The way the Obama Administration pursued his policies in the region managed to bring a new voting bloc into the US election process as magnified in Virginia. It managed to bring these constituencies together. For example, there exists cooperation between various Ethiopian constituencies, Eritreans and Somalis in unprecedented fashion. This voting bloc, while not as big in size like the Hispanic, Women’s or Black voting blocs can play a decisive role in select states such as in Virginia. This is what the Obama campaign overlooked over the last four years.

This raises the ante for the coattails because small numbers can determine the hotly contested Virginia election. And how sympathetic the Democratic Party was to these constituencies will largely determine the energy, enthusiasm and commitment to get out and vote for them.

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