



## Oromo Studies Association Newsletter

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### ***Message from the President***

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Greetings to you all!

In this issue, we focus on the 2009 OSA Midyear Conference, scheduled to take place on **April 4, 2009 at Howard University, Washington, DC**. The theme of the conference is “US Policy in the Horn of Africa: Opportunities and Prospects for Change under the Obama Administration and Implications for the Oromo”. With the new US Administration, there is a great deal of hope—and opportunity—to change the US Policy toward the Horn and toward the Oromo. But a key question is what should the main elements of such change look like and why. The OSA mid-year conference intends to promote exchange of ideas and discussion on this timely topic.

The conference will last one full day. Confirmed speakers include Terrence Lyons, Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution at George Mason University; David Shinn, Adjunct Professor at George Washington University and former US Ambassador to Ethiopia; Ezekiel Gebissa, Associate Professor of History at Kettering University; Asafa Jalata, Professor of Global Studies at Tennessee University-Knoxville; and, Leonardo Arriola, Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. The talks will be organized into two panels of three speakers — one panel in the morning and another in the afternoon. We expect that each panel will last about 90 minutes, which will be followed by ample time for questions and answers from the audience. In view of the timeliness of the topic, we expect that conference will generate a lot of discussion. I invite all Oromos, particularly those in and around Washington, DC, to come and participate in the discussions.

Further details about the Midyear Conference are provided below. If you have any questions or concerns, or if I may be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Abebe Adugna, Ph.D.  
OSA President

## ***OSA 2009 Midyear Conference is on April 4, 2009!***

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### **US Policy in the Horn of Africa: Opportunities and Prospects for Change under the Obama Administration**

**A Midyear Conference  
Organized by  
The Oromo Studies Association**

**4 April 2009**

The Horn of Africa is a troubled region. At least one conflict – and frequently more – has raged in the region continuously since 1960. While each country’s circumstance is different, a hallmark of the region is poor governance, epitomized by winner-take-all politics, authoritarian one-party systems, and violent regime change.

The United States has been a leader both on the diplomatic front and in humanitarian and economic assistance to the region. Nairobi hosts the largest U.S. diplomatic mission in Sub-Saharan Africa. Over the last three years US aid to the Horn of Africa was about \$1 billion per year, of which Kenya received about 50%, Ethiopia about 40%, and Somalia and Sudan together about 10%.<sup>1</sup> Ethiopia is an important strategic partner for the United States, particularly in respect to “efforts to promote regional stability and address threats by transnational extremist groups”.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, many feel that US policy in the Horn has exacerbated, rather than helped reduce, regional instability. In Ethiopia, for example, the US policy has been predominantly focused on counter-terrorism, often at the expense of democracy, domestic accountability, and respect for human rights. Despite the autocratic politics, narrow representation (e.g. the Oromo people representing roughly half of the population are practically shut out of the political process), and massive human rights violations by the Ethiopian government, it has continued to enjoy considerable external support from the US government in the name of alliance against terrorism.

#### **Objectives**

If the US were to play a more effective role in stabilizing the region, its policy in the Horn would have to be revisited – and indeed must change. With the incoming Obama Administration in the United States, there is a great deal of hope—and opportunity--that this change could happen. But a key question is: what should the main elements of such change look like and why? The OSA mid-year conference is intended to promote exchange of ideas and discussion on the following issues:

- What is driving the inter- and intra-state conflicts and how do they relate to one another? Do they have a regional character?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2009/101438.pdf>. Eritrea data are not available.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- Has US policy towards the Horn been effective, and if not, why not? What are its main shortcomings?
- What key areas of the US policy need to change under the new administration: Diplomacy? Military policy and Counter-terrorism? Human rights and humanitarian aid? Development policy and assistance?

The conference will last one full day. Invited talks will be organized into two panels of three speakers — one panel in the morning and another in the afternoon. We expect that each panel will last about 90 minutes, which will be followed by ample time for questions and answers from the audience. In view of the timeliness of the topic, we expect that conference will generate a lot of discussion.

**Venue/ Location:**

500 Howard Place  
 Founders Library, Browsing Room  
 Howard University  
 Washington, DC

**Schedule/ Agenda**

**Saturday, April 4, 2009**

<b>08:30</b>	<b>Registration</b>
	<b>OPENING</b>
9:00	Abebe Adugna, President, Oromo Studies Association Welcome Address
	<b>SESSION 1: US POLICY TOWARD THE HORN: WHY AND HOW IT SHOULD CHANGE</b>
	<b>Chair: Bonnie Holcomb</b> , Chairperson, OSA Board of Directors
9:30	<b>Terrence Lyons</b> , Associate Professor, George Mason University Topic: Tbd
10:00	<b>David Shinn</b> , Professor at George Washington University, and Former US Ambassador to Ethiopia Topic: Tbd
10:30	<b>Ezekiel Gebissa</b> , Associate Professor, Kettering University
11:00	Discussion
13:00	Lunch Break
	<b>SESSION 2: THE CASE OF OROMIA AND ETHIOPIA: HOW CAN THE US BALANCE SUPPORT FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM WITH DOMESTIC ACCOUNTABILITY?</b>
	<b>Chair: Haile Hirpa</b> , President-elect, Oromo Studies Association
14:15	<b>Asafa Jalata</b> , Professor of Global Studies, Tennessee University-Knoxville Topic: Tbd
14:45	<b>Leonardo R. Arriola</b> , Assistant Professor, University of California, Berkeley Topic: Tbd
15:15	Moderator: <b>Lahra Smith</b> , Assistant Professor, Georgetown University
15:45	Discussion
	<b>CLOSING REMARKS</b>
17:00	<b>Bonnie Holcomb</b> , Chairperson, OSA Board of Directors

## **Speaker Bios**

**Terrence Lyons** is currently Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution at George Mason University, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR). Lyons's research has focused on the relationships between protracted civil wars and processes of political development and sustainable peace, with a particular focus on Africa and on policy issues. Lyons has published widely and continues to teach a range of courses on conflict analysis, theories of conflict, and seminars on civil wars. Lyons has participated in talks to resolve conflicts in Ethiopia and served as Senior Program Advisor to the Carter Center's project on postconflict elections in Liberia (1997) and Ethiopia (2005). He has served as an international election observer in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana, Bangladesh, Benin, and Liberia. He has worked as a consultant for the United States Agency for International Development and the World Bank on issues relating to democracy and conflict. He holds a PhD from The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

**David Shinn** is currently Adjunct Professor of International Affairs at George Washington University. Prior to his current position, Shinn had served for thirty-seven years in the US Foreign Service with assignments at embassies in Lebanon, Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritania, Cameroon, Sudan and as ambassador to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. He is the co-author of *An Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* and has authored numerous articles and book chapters. He is working on a book concerning China-Africa relations. His research interests include China-Africa relations, East Africa and the Horn, terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, conflict situations, U.S. policy in Africa, and the African brain drain. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the George Washington University.

**Ezekiel Gebissa** is currently Associate Professor of History at Kettering University. He is the author of *Leaf of Allah: Khat & Agricultural Transformation in Harerge, Ethiopia, 1875-1991* (James Currey and Ohio University Press, 2004). He has published several articles in refereed journals, and edited most recently *Contested Terrain: Essays on Oromo Studies, Ethiopianist Discourse, and Politically Engage Scholarship* (The Red Sea Press, 2009). He is past president of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA) and currently editor of the *Journal of Oromo Studies*. He holds a PhD in history from Michigan State University.

**Asafa Jalata** is currently Professor of Global Studies at Tennessee University-Knoxville. Jalata's research agenda has focused on investigating and understanding the dynamic interplay between the exploitative global and regional economic structures and the human agencies of the colonized/ indigenous peoples. He has been identifying and explaining the chains of historical and political economic forces shaping racial/ ethnonational inequality, development and underdevelopment, and national and social movements on global, regional, and local levels. Specifically, for the last twenty years, he has researched the relationship between the colonization and incorporation of Oromia, the Oromo country, into the Ethiopian Empire and the global capitalist system and the development of the Oromo national movement. He has authored several books and published several articles in refereed journals. He is past president of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA). He holds a PhD from State University of New York at Binghamton.

**Leonardo R. Arriola** is currently Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Arriola's research has focused on ethnic politics, party systems, political economy, and the formation of multiethnic electoral coalitions among opposition parties in Africa. He has conducted field research in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Senegal. He has previously been a

Fulbright scholar at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University, a visiting researcher at the West African Research Center in Dakar, Senegal, and a predoctoral fellow at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University. He holds a PhD in political science from Stanford University.

**Lahra Smith** is currently Assistant Professor at Georgetown University. Smith is a Political Scientist with a particular interest in African politics. She teaches a variety of courses, including African Politics & Government, Peace and Conflict in East Africa and Civil Society & Democracy in Africa. Her recent research focused on the role of political institutions in addressing conflict based largely on ethnic and language identities in Ethiopia. In addition to study in Ethiopia, Smith has worked and studied in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Djibouti and Zimbabwe. Previously, she worked for USAID in Nairobi, Kenya and Oxfam America, and she served as an election observer in Ethiopia (The Carter Center) and Kenya (USAID/US Embassy). Smith holds a PhD in political science from the University of California, Los Angeles.

## ***Your OSA Membership Renewal***

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### **Membership Benefits**

If you have not already done so, it's time to renew your OSA Membership for 2009. To ensure you take full advantage of OSA membership publications and privileges, please remember to renew your membership now. By renewing your membership now, you can ensure your access to all OSA member benefits including:

- Subscription to Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS)
- Voting rights for election of officers and members of the OSA Executive Committee and Board of Directors
- Ability to serve on OSA committees
- Ability to nominate individuals for the Annual OSA Award

Annual dues help OSA pay for costs associated with midyear and annual conferences, the publication of the Journal of Oromo Studies, and programming and outreach activities including OSA newsletters, website and email service.

### **2009 Membership Rates**

Membership for Working Individuals = \$75

Membership for Retirees, Students with Valid ID = \$25

### **Mailing Address**

A membership renewal form is available at [oromostudies.org](http://oromostudies.org), under the "membership" link. Please send your completed membership form alongside with your membership fee, payable to Oromo Studies Association, at the following address:

Oromo Studies Association  
 P.O. Box 32391  
 Fridley, MN 55432  
 USA

***If you would like to contribute to OSA Newsletter...***

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Do you have any story or news that you think will be of interest (publications, events, etc.) to OSA members? Please send them to Abebe Adugna at [aadugna@verizon.net](mailto:aadugna@verizon.net). We welcome your participation in getting important news to our members.