

"Oh, the wolves are of another mind". It is very strange and downright sad how some of the best pieces of good legislation can be hijacked and used against the very people it is supposed to be benefiting. Not only that, those who think they are representing a certain group of people are the ones who actually pull the "trigger" or drop the "lever" upside their head.

Such is the case with the so called "Africa Growth and Opportunity Act". It could have been such a beautiful event but it went the way of greed and advantage for China and those who do business with China. There was a loophole in this legislation that allowed for "third countries" to be used as substitutes for African countries when it came to textile production. China and sometimes India jumped right in with their processed cotton. As a result, you may buy clothes that say Made in Kenya or Made in Nigeria but the reality is the cotton was grown and processed in China. The textile industry in nations such as Nigeria and the cotton farmers from Kenya and other nations have been devastated. This nation through its so called conscience has, in effect, laid the environment to bring economic devastation to villages and towns throughout Africa.

This third party exemption was supposed to stop at the end of 2006. But, you know what, the same people who caused it to be, some members of the Congressional Black Caucus included, have surfaced again in an attempt to extend it. Why? As the great poet P Diddy once proclaimed, "It's all about the Benjamins". Lobbyists representing China and companies that do business with China are slinging cash up on Capitol Hill and causing certain congressmen to do the craziest things. AGOA is supposed to be about Africa doing business with the United States and no third country interference or exploitation. Sadly that hasn't happen.

In addition to doing the whammy on Africa again, the greedy have enlarged its appetite for Haiti. CAFTA, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, like AGOA was to open the doors for economic development between the United States and Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. This time they got it right in that no third country substitutions can be allowed. But the wolves thought hard and came up with an even sinister scheme. They are proposing to extend the exemption clause in AGOA but also make it applicable to Haiti.

Why Haiti? It's simple. They can cram China cotton into Haiti and block any textile business in the CAFTA nations. Keep in mind that millions of people of African descent live and work in

CAFTA nations. More than any place else, the Dominican Republic is 60% Black. It is quickly developing textiles under CAFTA via business with the United States. It also employs many Haitians who border the nation. When China gets its hooks into Haiti there won't be anymore textile activity in the Dominican Republic or anywhere else in CAFTA. Like AGOA and Africa they are going to devastate people of color. Meanwhile, Haiti will get some menial jobs but no business ownership or wealth creation. The clients of the lobbyists will continue to make big time profits at the expense of Americans and workers in the Diaspora. Haiti is getting set up and doesn't see it coming.

This week we are going to Capitol Hill with the Kenya Chamber of Commerce to expose the sad history on these actions and to express our dismay. We need to let those who want to hear the truth understand just what damage is being done and how real Black folk deserve a better deal. If it weren't for the love of money, quick sinister money, we would not have to do this. Sometimes I want to scream and cry at the same time. We have to go and find white folk who will be fair minded and step up to do the right thing. Black folks who should be on the vanguard and at the forefront become the opposition. Associations that claim to be focused on Africa are actually brain dead when it comes to economic empowerment and financial freedom. We will win this fight but it is going to take some serious calling out and unfortunate confrontation with people of my own color.

Ignorance is not bliss and someday we will be able to school our own to do the right thing. Please remember - there is nothing slier than for hire Negro lobbyists selling out their own people for a few crumbs off the table (or under it).

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