

DUCKWORTH on this issue and is our ranking Democrat on the Senate Rules Committee. AMY put in a lot of hours and good humor, and I thank her from the bottom of my heart for helping our colleague. And special thanks to Senator ROY BLUNT, the Republican chairman of the Senate Rules Committee. ROY BLUNT told me from the start: I support this resolution. It will come right out of the Rules Committee to the floor so we can move on it quickly. When TAMMY DUCKWORTH returns from maternity leave, we will be able to accommodate her little girl and, if it becomes necessary, to bring her to the floor during the course of a vote.

Let me close by saying that today we officially say to Maile Pearl Bowsbey: Welcome to the world and welcome to the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, let me, first of all, join my friend from Illinois in this tribute he is making to TAMMY and the baby. I do have to correct him on one thing, however. He talked about diaper bags. They don't use diaper bags anymore. They are disposable diapers. I know because I have 20 kids and grandkids. But I agree with the Senator's remarks wholeheartedly.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I know there is a lot of competition for the time right now, and I feel badly that I finally got to the point where, in order to get the message out—it is a message many people think is not significant, but I assure you that this is of grave importance not just to a country but to the entire continent of Africa.

The House of Representatives, just last week, passed H. Res. 128 to chastise one of our closest allies on the African continent, Ethiopia. Although the legislation claims to support Ethiopia, the reality is that the resolution is outdated. It was written years ago and was blindly passed without consideration for the current situation in Ethiopia. It was also passed under a voice vote so that no one member of Congress would have to carry the stigma of being on the record voting for it.

I know the House passed it because most of them have never been to Ethiopia and don't really know the miracle we have seen in that country. I know the transformation Ethiopia has made in economic and social development alongside their ongoing commitment to establishing security in the Horn of Africa.

Since 2005, I have visited Ethiopia 18 different times, engaging and developing relationships with Prime Ministers, with Cabinet Ministers, legislators, businessmen, aid workers, and everyone else in between. There isn't another Member of Congress who has traveled in Ethiopia, engaged with the Ethiopian Government and the Ethiopian people more than I have.

I say this for a reason. It is to show that I know something about Ethiopia. I know we have been here before. What happened last week has happened before. People don't even know it. So they passed a negative resolution on Ethiopia by voice vote. The resolution fails to understand the history of Ethiopia. I want to talk about that.

Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in all of Africa, but one that is newly democratic. It is all new to them.

There is also a Christian history to the nation, which nobody else has on the continent of Africa. Ethiopia is featured in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the New Testament, we hear about Philip. This is in Acts 8. Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Damascus. We find out later that the eunuch was actually the treasurer of the country of Ethiopia at that time. Philip told the eunuch about Jesus. He talked about the Old Testament and the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. There are over 50 of these mentions in the Bible. They had long conversations about Jesus.

Philip was making these comments. Before the conversation was over, he baptized the eunuch. The eunuch went off to Ethiopia and took the first word of Jesus to Ethiopia. That is very significant.

Coincidentally, while Addis Ababa is the capital of Ethiopia, there was a time when Aksum was the capital. That was many years ago. During the time of the Queen of Sheba, that was the capital of Ethiopia.

Coincidentally, I happened to be in Ethiopia when a farmer in a field ran into some old relics, and they started excavating. They found out that was the palace of the Queen of Sheba. There had been discussion as to whether or not the Queen of Sheba was from Yemen or Ethiopia, but that was concrete proof they had discovered that it was the case. The story goes on and on.

We all know about the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. Solomon had all the wealth in the world, and she wanted to meet Solomon. She went down to the Red Sea to see Solomon. Well, she got to Israel and she met Solomon. They were engaged very closely together. I think we all know that they ended up having a son who went back to his country.

By the way, the part of the Old Testament I am quoting right now is in 1 Kings 10:1. That is about the trip between Israel and Ethiopia. Sheba and Solomon had a boy. The boy was Menelik. He was a very smart person. As he was growing up in years, before returning to their home country in Ethiopia, he actually took the Ark of the Covenant back to Ethiopia, where it is today in Aksum.

A lot of people don't know that. If anyone questions what I am saying right now, there is a book written that was called "The Sign and the Seal," by Graham Hancock. It is very well-docu-

mented. When you read that, you come to the conclusion that this is where the Ark of the Covenant is. I have been to the Ark of the Covenant with many Members of the Senate here—certainly, Senator BOOZMAN from Arkansas, Senator MIKE ENZI from Wyoming, Senator MIKE ROUNDS from South Dakota, and many others. We have been up there and we have actually seen where this has taken place.

I say this because there is that very rich history. It is all documented in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The current controversy, and why we are here today, started back in the 1970s with a man named Mengistu. From 1974 to 1991, Mengistu was the leader of the communist Derg. This was the controlling party at that time. It is a communist party. They ran Ethiopia. It was a terrible time for Ethiopia. That was during one of the worst famines they had, which killed over a million people—perhaps the most significant famine in history in terms of deaths.

Many Ethiopians fled during that time and relocated in the United States. That is understandable. The communists were booted out. A lot of the people, during the time they were still in, came to the United States.

It is interesting because the Ethiopians are very outstanding people. They are the kind that get things done when other people don't. That makes them different from all the other countries in Africa.

So a lot of these Ethiopians came to America, and they have made great, really remarkable contributions to America, building organizations and getting involved. Rightfully so, they were outspoken against the brutal regime, but they haven't changed their outspokenness to reflect the changing conditions in Ethiopia.

At the time that this took place, one person who was responsible, to a large extent, for getting rid of the communists and the communist threat in Ethiopia was a guy named Meles. He ran, he came from the bush, and he won. He ended up as Prime Minister. This is really the election that a lot of people don't like, and they forget about the fact that he was the Prime Minister who actually got rid of the communists in Ethiopia.

So he became a Prime Minister. He started to build democracy. He died in 2012. I got to know him quite well during that timeframe, and I saw the progress that he made and the advances they made.

He was then replaced by another Prime Minister, whose name is Hailemariam. Now, he became Prime Minister, and he continued to push for democracy. Hailemariam worked diligently to improve things.

Under his tenure, Ethiopia established the independent Ethiopian Human Rights Committee to report on violence and human rights problems and abuses. They didn't just establish

it; they acted on it. They came out with a report and acted on it to hold perpetrators accountable and to make the improvements that were being made. Our relationship wasn't just government to government; it was brother to brother.

In February of 2017, Prime Minister Hailemariam suggested that, since the provinces were all fighting at that time—there were nine provinces in Ethiopia. Each province has a Governor. We suggested on the phone, with the Members of the Senate here and the House at a Prayer Breakfast, that what we ought to do is that we ought to follow the recommendation of Eisenhower. He said—in fact, this is right after World War II: The problems of this world are so great that we will never resolve the problems until we learn to sit down and pray together. So we decided: Let's get all the Governors, the Prime Minister, the Members of the House, the Senate, and the rest together, and we will pray for them.

We did this. In fact, I had five Senators with me at that time, and we went over. The problem was only two Governors showed up. So 8 months later, we came back and put together the same thing and talked to them to let them know what this is all about. And it happened 8 months later. We were just talking about it just recently.

We had nine Governors who had been fighting. Hailemariam and we all prayed together.

Now, at the same time, there was a Congressman, RANDY HULTGREN, over at the House, who happened to be president of the House Prayer Breakfast. The time change worked perfectly. At the time we were praying there, if you took the 7-hour differential, they were meeting at the House Prayer Breakfast here in Washington. So he joined in. Now, I am not smart enough to figure out how they do this. It is some kind of thing called Skype, where you can get on TV and communicate. So they were praying over there with all of these House Members at the same time that we were praying. On top of that, we had a bunch of great pages, like the pages sitting right in front of me today, all praying at the same time. This was going on all over America.

So they all got together, and it worked—the same group of people who had just hated each other, who had never been in the same room before. The Prime Minister and all of us—Members of the Senate and others who were there—were all rejoicing and embracing each other.

That's really significant. The 9 governors had never been together before. The majority of Americans can't easily grasp this, but is different in Ethiopia. Most of the people don't live in cities, and that made this effort that much more difficult. That is the reverse of the rest of the world. The vast majority of people who live there are in rural communities, and that made this widespread change and development a longer and more difficult path.

In Ethiopia, the tribal factions also play a greater role. Anyone who has been there understands this. If you go from Province to Province, that used to be from tribe to tribe, and they historically have not gotten along until this time. So it made it more difficult because of the factions and all of that, but it worked. We unified them together, and that was unlike anything that has ever happened.

Earlier this month, Ethiopia took another step to showing their commitment to a free and fair democracy by selecting a new Prime Minister. And who is this? His name is Abiy Ahmed, a doctor.

In fact, it is kind of interesting, if you think about his credentials. Just listen to this. Abiy received his first degree, a bachelor's degree, in computer engineering from the Microlink Information Technology College in Addis. That was in 2001.

In 2005, Abiy earned a postgraduate certificate in cryptography in South Africa. He holds a master of arts in transformational leadership and change with merit, earned at the Business School in Greenwich University in London, in collaboration with the International Leadership Institute in Addis, in 2011. He holds a master of business administration from the Leadstar College of Management and Leadership in Addis, in partnership with Ashland University in Ohio.

In 2017, Abiy was awarded a Ph.D. from the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University.

Now, we haven't studied it all the way through, but what we did is we took a cursory look at that, and we believe he is the most highly educated Prime Minister in the history of the continent.

Here we are with this Dr. Abiy, who has been specially selected for his commitment to democracy, good governance, and the rule of law. I met Abiy for the first time in February of 2016 at a leader's breakfast, where he told the story of his journey of faith in Jesus. He is very, very articulate, someone who no one would forget about.

We met a year later, when we prayed and talked about how to unify the country in peace, not conflict. It is from these meetings that I know that Abiy is committed to democracy and the future of Ethiopia. He is showing that with his actions as well.

Last week, he specifically sought to engage the opposition party and its leaders. He said:

We want to work hand in hand with you. What we say and do must match.

Since his inauguration, he has also restored the internet service all across the country, and he has released 11 high-profile dissidents. This is what we need to be encouraging, not delegitimizing his authority with a heavy handed resolution. After his first week in office, the first week in office, they passed this resolution—this hateful resolution over at the House.

He is also the youngest head of state in all of Africa. Abiy is just 41 years old. He shows an optimistic and engaged future for Ethiopia—a country where 70 percent of the population is less than 35 years old. He deserves a chance to enact the democratic reforms he called for during his inaugural address, before being slapped with a condemnation of his government by a House of Representatives resolution.

They have quite an opportunity. Ethiopia is one of the fastest growing economies in the region, and it has made great strides in lowering the poverty rate. But the resolution that passed last week wasn't about this. They didn't talk about everything that I just articulated.

Ethiopia is also an important partner for us in promoting regional peace and security. We have all recently seen how Islamic terrorists are pushing from the Middle East and regrouping and establishing themselves across Africa. This is the thing that he has inherited. That is what he is in right now.

Ethiopia has been an important partner for the United States in combating the spread of terrorism from Somalia and al-Qaida. He is our closest partner in this effort.

As terrorism grows through Djibouti and the Horn of Africa into northeastern Africa, this is a threat to global security. Ethiopia has been a critical partner for the United States in combating that spread of terrorism.

Ethiopia is the top African contributor to U.N. peacekeeping troops and supplies about 8 percent of the global peacekeeping force. It is not the second or among the first. He was No. 1—the first one to be a contributor to the U.N. peacekeeping effort. Those are contributions they have made. Other countries have not done that, but they have.

More than that, Ethiopia's professional and capable military has also been a positive force in regional stability. When we had problems in parts of Africa—and Somalia comes to mind right now—when we call upon them to send troops, they are the first ones who respond, and they are the ones who send the most of their capable troops.

Ethiopia was a regional stabilizer during the crisis with Sudan and South Sudan. I think we all remember when Sudan was one unified country, and they had not always gotten along with South Sudan. South Sudan had been trying to get their independence for years and years, and, finally, they were successful, and right after that, it looked like it wasn't going to work.

But the resolution last week didn't consider any of the progress Ethiopia has made and the leadership they have provided.

Beyond just the government, more good things are happening in Ethiopia than I have ever seen. The people are not just like other people. There is not time, but I could give so many examples. I will single out just one family

who is really typical of what is going on in Ethiopia.

We have longtime friends there—Marta Gabre-Tsadick and her husband Demeke Tekle-Wold. I will refer to them as Marta and Demeke. They founded an organization called Project Mercy. This is kind of interesting. This wasn't government. This is what they have done and are trying to do in their country.

It is kind of interesting because Marta, as a very young girl, went to work for Haile Selassie. We all know Haile Selassie and what a hero he was before the communists came in in 1974 and murdered him and took over the country. Marta actually had worked for him at one time.

They received political asylum in the United States in the early 1970s, after the communist takeover in Ethiopia, only to return to the country to care for, as they say, the "least of these." That is what they have been doing.

Marta wrote a book that should be required reading so people would know the sacrifices that people make to escape communism. The name of her book is "Sheltered by the King."

In fact, if any of you want a copy of it, I will give it to you.

It tells the story about the communist takeover when Haile Selassie was murdered. It was about their escape from the communists.

Throughout the years, I have partnered with Marta and Demeke on several occasions. In 2008, I worked with the USAID. At that time, we had a guy, who, unfortunately, wasn't able to stay there very long. He was head of the USAID. At that time, they prioritized the shipment of 43 containers of Atmit. This is during the time of starvation. Atmit is a nutritional supplement that was sent to young children, to those in the most severe stages of starvation.

Ethiopia was hit especially hard in the global economic crisis, and these containers equaled 600 tons of food to feed 27,000 severely malnourished children.

The story of Marta and Demeke is kind of interesting because they started out in Addis, the capital. They started out in a small house, getting three or four young men—boys—uneducated and taught them the Scriptures, taught them how to read and write, taught them all of these things, and then how to put together an economy and get these people so that they can go out on their own. They were successful.

That grew from 3 people to 6 people to 100 people. Then they went down to a part of Africa, a part of Ethiopia, that is really interesting. It is called Yetabon. Yetabon is interesting because that is an area where there wasn't any civilization. It was in the bush, on the side of a mountain.

I went down to Yetabon to see. This is some time ago. I was thrilled that Raj Shah, the Administrator of USAID, accepted my invitation to go down

there to see Yetabon and to see what they have done down there. When you stopped and looked in that remote area, with the two of them alone, it is not just a matter of 10, 12, or 100 kids, but 1,700 kids were all lined up, K through 12, smiling with big smiles. Their lives had been changed, and all of that took place down there.

I remember that there was a terrible storm down there as we were leaving, and it was all muddy. I told Raj: Anyone under age 70, get out and push. I was the only one exempted, of course. Anyway, he saw the significance of the resource of the Ethiopian people and the progress the country had made in furthering democracy and stabilizing the region.

USAID is now headed up by another person who loves Africa, Mark Green. I remember Mark Green. He used to be the Ambassador to Tanzania. He is a close friend of mine. I actually served with him at one time back at the House.

Raj recognized the genius of the Ethiopian people. We are privileged to deliver another program they put together, where they would crossbreed cows and start dairy farms in the area close to Addis. It has been a very successful program. Keep in mind that this is all as a result of one family.

I could give examples of this all over the country in Ethiopia. The technical assistance and training to improve the products that they have were done all by one family. All that was largely from Demeke.

There is another person who is set aside from other countries in Africa, and that is a doctor named Hamlin. She actually started the Hamlin Fistula Hospital. Fistula is a disease that people who are pregnant could have. It is fatal in many cases. It is very unique to that part of Africa. So they have an organization working alongside the Ethiopian Government to provide sustainable solutions to the Hamlin Fistula Hospital. It has been a haven for the care of women.

All of this one person started. This is the character of the people. They started treating women in Ethiopia's busy capital city of Addis since 1959. It has now grown to an additional five regional hospitals, a midwifery college, and a rehabilitation center for long-term patients.

I and my wife Kay visited the hospital along with Senator ENZI's wife, Diana, and Senator BOOZMAN's wife, Cathy. We saw the miracle that is taking place there—all because of one woman. It is typical of the people you find in Ethiopia.

They saw the impact that the hospital is making to the lives of women throughout the country to be able to deliver their baby safely and be treated with dignity for childbirth injuries.

So much of this development and progress is due to the emergence of past and present African leaders such as the recently sworn in Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, who are invest-

ing in the lives of their people, and the realization by the United States of the strategic importance to Africa.

They are important. They have joined us in every effort—every military effort—that we have had, more than any other country. None of that was considered by the House last week when they passed this shortsighted resolution.

I tried to work with key sponsors of the resolution to make needed changes to reflect the fact of Ethiopia's progress, but my efforts were unsuccessful. They wouldn't listen to me. I still can't figure out why it is that a handful of people who probably have never, ever been to Ethiopia were doing this to that country. The resolution made a lot of claims that said that "democratic space in Ethiopia has steadily diminished since the general elections of 2005" and that the ruling party "claimed 100 percent of the parliamentary seats" in the 2015 elections—continued insults to our closest friends in Africa. But the democratic space in Ethiopia has never been more vibrant, as the numbers speak for themselves. There were more opposition candidates in the 2015 election than there have ever been in any election in the history of Ethiopia.

In 2015, the African Union observers—they were the ones who were observing the election, and they concluded that the elections had been free, peaceful, and credible and had provided an opportunity for the Ethiopian people to express their choices at the polls. Overall, the AU observers offered conclusions and recommendations to the government, the electoral board, the political parties, and to the media to strengthen that process, and that has been successful.

The resolution inaccurately stated that the ruling party claimed to have won 100 percent of the parliamentary seats. That is not true at all. There is no truth at all in that. In fact, that is not a ruling party. The EPRDF is not one party; it is a coalition of four major political parties with proportional representation from four regions; namely, from Oromia, Amhara, and some of the other southern nations.

The resolution also claimed that peaceful protests were often hijacked by violent events.

Last year, there were protests and demonstrations in part of Oromia and Amhara, in that region, and it did grow violent.

Ethiopia has a duty to ensure law and order like any other country, and that is exactly what they did. They openly acknowledged that people have legitimate grievances and expressed their willingness to address those. They are making strides. The second National Human Rights Action Plan—the current ruling party has embarked on a dialogue with 222 opposition parties. The United States should allow this dialogue to continue free of interference.

This resolution wasn't new. The House of Representatives did this in 2007 also. By the way, they also did this by voice vote then because no one wanted to be tied to something that they had to vote on without really knowing what it was all about. So they did it in 2007. I don't think the outcome of that was ever discussed, so I am going to tell the story now.

The 2007 resolution claimed that its purpose was to "encourage and facilitate the consolidation of peace and security in Ethiopia," but in reality, it focused only on the shortcomings while blatantly ignoring the unprecedented progress the country had made.

I went to Ethiopia 3 weeks after the House voted in 2007. The resolution was reported widely for weeks in the Ethiopian press as the United States sharply criticizing Ethiopians, the same as they did last week. It caused great confusion and anger with the Ethiopian people, who were emerging from Communist rule. You could argue that at the time this happened, the people were protesting the administration under Prime Minister Meles. Probably they were saying that they prefer the Communists because this is something he was responsible for changing at that time.

So they had that resolution. It was reported that it hurt them and hurt their reputation around the world, caused great confusion and anger with the Ethiopian people, who were emerging from a Communist rule and working with democracy.

I met with Prime Minister Meles on that trip, and he said that the House vote really hurt our relationship with Ethiopia. I remember exactly what he said to me. He said: Our survival depends on democratization.

He was also open and honest about the problems they had in the 2005 election. He acknowledged the riots and that better training could have prevented the deaths of some seven policemen. That is not the story we hear. We hear about hundreds of people dying, but that is simply not the case.

Prime Minister Meles also noted that they were being singled out for criticism and sanctions when Eritrea—an autocratic government that openly gave refuge to terrorists—faced no such condemnation. He stated that he felt insulted by the bill, as well he should have.

When I was visiting with Azeb, Meles's wife—by the way, Azeb and Meles fought together in the feud that took over the country from communism, in the bush. When she asked me how the United States could attack our friends in this way, I didn't have an answer for that. Remember, we are friends. Ethiopia has been a partner on the global War on Terror and has contributed troops to peacekeeping missions and supports regional security efforts.

We also met with a group of Ethiopian citizens in Addis who had returned to Ethiopia to rebuild the nation. They

had returned in the mid-2000s because it was the first time they had confidence in the government to return. They were very frustrated and disappointed by the resolution.

Today I am sure that Prime Minister Abiy and the Ethiopian people are also confused and frustrated by this resolution. I want to speak now to our friends in Ethiopia who may be feeling abandoned by the United States and questioning our partnership and friendship in such a critical part of the world.

This resolution, while offensive to you, does not change your friendship with the United States.

I want to repeat that. I want to make sure people know that the resolution, while it is offensive to you, doesn't change your friendship with the United States.

We have a long history of economic and military cooperation that will continue, and Ethiopia is only gaining momentum as a nation. This is apparent when you look at Ethiopia's economy, their military, and the U.S.-Ethiopia trade relationship that they are now building with our country. Ethiopia ranks among the fastest growing economies in the world. This is significant: Despite the recent drought, the IMF estimates that Ethiopia will have an average GDP growth rate of 7.4 percent from 2017 to 2020.

This is what I would have said yesterday, but something happened yesterday that I didn't know was going to happen. Yesterday, in the latest World Economic Outlook, the IMF announced that Ghana had lost its position as the fastest growing economy in Africa, and they lost it to Ethiopia. Ethiopia now has the fastest growth—8.5 percent. We in the United States would love to have an 8.5-percent economic growth rate.

Total U.S. direct investment, including partnerships, stands at more than \$567 million, with more than \$65 million originating solely from the United States.

The United States has a positive trade balance with Ethiopia, particularly in manufacturing, energy, and agricultural processing.

Over the past 70 years, Ethiopian Airlines has purchased more than 100 U.S.-origin aircraft.

In 2016 alone, Ethiopia utilized over \$149 million worth of U.S. agricultural products, including wheat, coffee, and oil seeds.

The United States continues to provide assistance to support Ethiopia's agricultural development. Through the USDA, the 3-year, \$13 million Food for Progress Program—known as the FEED project—helps to improve yields of milk, meat, eggs, and other products by increasing the availability and quality of livestock feed.

The U.S. International Military Education and Training Program—by the way, that is called IMET—the IMET Program was put together many years ago so that when our troops go into other areas, they mingle with the troops there, and then we invite the

troops from the various countries to come into the United States and get their training here. We found out that once the training takes place in this country, we have their allegiance for the rest of the time they are there. They have been working to train future leaders here in the United States and create a rapport between the United States and the Ethiopian military. They had over 600 members from 2010 to 2015—one of our most successful IMET programs, working military to military.

Along with their own successes, Ethiopia has established itself as a world player. Ethiopia and the United States belong to a number of the same organizations, including the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. The nation is an observer to the World Trade Organization and is currently serving on the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member.

So I say to my colleagues in the Senate, I would like to remind you that with the passing of resolution 128, we are repeating the past. That is exactly what they did a few years ago. That doesn't mean we have to do it again in the future. Ethiopia is a key friend, and Prime Minister Abiy—just keep in mind, here is a guy who is the highest educated Prime Minister we think in the entire history of the entire continent of Africa. He deserves a chance for a strong start.

I will continue to fight for that strong friendship in Congress, and I urge the United States to give them the chance they have rightly earned. Clearly, resolution 128 does not reflect America's relationship with Ethiopia, one of our most valued allies in all of Africa.

"Are you listening?" I asked my brother. Prime Minister Abiy, America is with you. America is with you.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING BARBARA BUSH

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, tonight I want to talk about the passing of an extraordinary woman—a woman who captured the hearts of Americans across every spectrum.

Barbara Bush was one of the most popular people in America—and for good reason. One of only two women in the history of our country to be both the First Lady of the United States and also the mother of a President, she consistently used those platforms that, as she would say, God graced her with, for good causes.