

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

July 27, 2015

Prime Minister Hailemariam. Members of the press, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to once again welcome His Excellency, the President of the United States of America, to Ethiopia. We are honored to receive a sitting U.S. President for the first time in the history of our century-long diplomatic relations. But again, we believe it's fitting and appropriate in the light of the fact that Ethiopia is the cradle of mankind, the beacon light for African independence, and an inspiration for all the Black people's struggles and the political capital of Africa.

Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee—[laughter]—and with so many firsts to its name, and as such, a first and historic visit by the first U.S. President of African origin, I believe it's a well-deserved one. His visit comes at a time when both Africa and Ethiopia are registering impressive growth, making important strides. For Ethiopia's economy has registered double-digits growth for the last 12 years, uninterruptedly.

His visit also comes at a time when we're working hard in improving governance and fighting insecurity, conflicts, and terrorism. His visit could not have come at a better time, as the leader of the most powerful nation on Earth, diplomatically, economically, and more importantly, in science and technology and education—the very things Africa and Ethiopia need in abundance if they are to sustain their growth—President Obama's visit represents a new height in our bilateral relations.

This morning we have had extensive bilateral discussions with President Obama on a range of topics. We have discussed on ways of further deepening our bilateral relations and our cooperation on a number of issues. Among the areas we have discussed, we talked at length about the U.S. support in helping expand trade and investment in Ethiopia.

As you know, the U.S. is Ethiopia's strategic partner in many fields. And the steady flow of quality investment from the United States, as much as we crave it, though the recent beginning is so encouraging, has often been in a short supply. We have discussed, among other things, how to encourage U.S. investors to come to Ethiopia in large numbers, where there are numerous competitive and comparative advantages they can benefit from.

We have discussed how best we can take advantage of President Obama's signature Power Africa initiative, which is, in our case, has already seen significant progress made with a thousand-megawatts geothermal deal—contract to be signed this afternoon.

We have also discussed ways of scaling up the successful projects and that President Obama launched 4 years ago in his flagship Alliance for Food Security program and launching of similar initiatives.

We have also discussed and reached an understanding on coordinating our efforts in the global effort to fight climate change and to work together for the success of the COP 21st negotiations in Paris. Likewise, we have exchanged ideas on ways the U.S. can champion the Addis Ababa action agenda during the negotiations of the sustainable development goals in New York next September. We have also agreed to work on global health epidemics.

We have raised a number of issues on how the U.S. can support the strengthening of Ethiopia's democratization process. My Government has expressed its commitment to deepen the democratic process already underway in the country and work towards respect of human rights and improving governance.

We have reiterated once again that our commitment to democracy is real, not skin deep. We have both noted that we need to step up efforts to strengthen our institutions and build our capacity in various areas. We believe that U.S. support in this regard as age-old democracy will contribute to ensuring that our system becomes robust. We have agreed to continue our engagement despite minor differences here and there with regard mainly to the speed with which our democratization process is moving.

Finally, we have discussed a range of issues related to cooperation on security and peace-building in the region and on the pivotal role the U.S. can and does play. We have agreed to work closely on South Sudan to bring lasting peace to the conflict-ridden country. We have both agreed to work together in building peace in Somalia by helping create state institutions and by strengthening the Somali security forces in their quest to be in charge of the peace of their own country.

We have agreed to intensify the campaign against terrorism in the region, and we both noted with satisfaction the progress AMISOM forces and Somali National Army are making, with the support of the U.S. and other partners, in their fight against al-Shabaab.

We have agreed to deepen our intelligence cooperation both bilaterally as well as regionally. We have both noted and underscored that this cooperation is essential to curb the menace posed by terrorism. The terrorist attack that was launched in Mogadishu yesterday is a stark reminder that we need to work even more in this respect.

In conclusion, we have agreed to continue working together for better results in all aspects of our cooperation.

Mr. President, I now call upon you to give your remarks.

President Obama. Well, thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. Good afternoon. *Dehna walachu.* [Laughter] Prime Minister Hailemariam, we appreciate your kind words and for the welcome that you've extended to our delegation.

We've had very productive meetings here today. And after our bilateral, I had a chance to see the famous lions that live on the grounds. I'm considering getting some for the White House. [Laughter] Although, I'll have to make sure that my dogs are safe. [Laughter]

To the people of Ethiopia, thank you for the warmth and enthusiasm of your welcome and the spirit of friendship that you've shown me since I've been in Addis. I am proud to be the first U.S. President to visit Ethiopia and, tomorrow, the first U.S. President to address the African Union. So my visit reflects the importance the United States places on our relationship with Ethiopia and all the nations and peoples of Africa.

As you noted, Ethiopia and the United States share a long friendship. Our people have worked together, traded with each other, and stood alongside one another for more than 100 years. The United States is strengthened by the contributions of Ethiopian Americans every day, and that's particularly true in our Nation's capital, Washington, DC, which has the largest Ethiopian community outside of Ethiopia and—or at least outside of Africa.

And we welcome Ethiopian students to study in the United States. Through our Young African Leaders Initiative, we are helping to empower dynamic young Ethiopians with the tools that they need to make a difference in their communities. Ethiopia also hosts one of the largest Peace Corps programs in the world and has welcomed thousands of young Americans over the years.

So the connections between our peoples are both deep and enduring. And today the Prime Minister and I spoke about how we can strengthen the cooperation between our nations.

First, we're going to continue working together to advance Ethiopia's economic progress. Ethiopia has one of the fastest growing economies in the world and one of the largest economies in Africa. And we want to sustain that momentum, because a growing and inclusive economy in Ethiopia means more opportunities for the Ethiopian people and more trade and investment between our nations, which, in turn, helps to create American jobs.

With the renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, we'll work to further open American markets to Ethiopian products and help expand private sector investment in Ethiopia. Through our Power Africa initiative, we're working to unlock Ethiopia's potential for geothermal energy with the nation's first private sector energy agreement. And this will help the Government meet its ambitious goal of significantly increasing access to electricity across Ethiopia and help open the market to developing Ethiopia's other vast renewable energy sources.

Second, we're stepping up our cooperation on development, where Ethiopia has proven itself a global leader. To many people around the world, their image of Ethiopia remains stuck in the past, remembering drought and famine. But in the past 15 years, Ethiopia has lifted millions of people out of poverty. We're working closely together to improve food security, to help farmers plant drought-resistant and higher yield crops. We're building resilience to climate change. Fewer people are suffering needlessly from preventable diseases like malaria. More children are getting an education. Of course, there are still too many people, particularly in the rural areas, living in deprivation, so we have to keep moving on the progress that's been made.

Prime Minister Hailemariam has demonstrated his commitment to eliminating extreme poverty. Ethiopia recently hosted the International Conference on Financing for Development, which secured a global consensus about how the nations of the world will deliver on our promises, especially to those most in need. Your Prime Minister played a vital role in forging that consensus, and Ethiopia is now helping to shape a new set of sustainable development goals for the world.

Third, our security cooperation is pushing back against violent extremism. Ethiopia faces serious threats, and its contribution to the African Union mission in Somalia have reduced areas under al-Shabaab control. But, as the Prime Minister noted, yesterday's bombing in Mogadishu reminds us that terrorist groups like al-Shabaab offer nothing but death and destruction and have to be stopped. We've got more work to do. This past week, Ethiopian troops have helped retake two major al-Shabaab strongholds. We have to now keep the pressure on.

Ethiopia is a major contributor as well to U.N. peacekeeping efforts; it contributes more troops than any other country in Africa. And we're working together to improve the ability of Ethiopian peacekeepers to respond rapidly to emerging crises, before they spiral into widespread violence.

Ethiopia has also been a key partner as we seek to resolve the ongoing crisis in South Sudan. Later today the Prime Minister and I will meet with leaders from across the region to discuss ways we can encourage the Government and opposition in South Sudan to end the violence and move toward a peace agreement. I want to thank Ethiopia for the sanctuary it provides hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled South Sudan and conflicts throughout the region.

And finally, I would note that everything I've mentioned—sustained and inclusive growth, development, security gains—also depends on good governance. We had a frank discussion. In a global economy that's increasingly driven by technology and the Internet, continued growth in Ethiopia depends on the free flow of information and open exchanges of ideas. I believe that when all voices are being heard, when people know that they're included in the political process, that makes a country stronger and more successful and more innovative. So we discussed steps that Ethiopia can take to show progress on promoting good governance, protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and strengthening democracy. And this is an area where we intend to deepen our conversations and consultation, because we strongly believe in Ethiopia's promise and its people.

Ethiopia is a strong partner with the United States and a leader on so many vital issues in the region. And it has the opportunity now to extend its leadership in ways that benefit all of Ethiopia's people and that sets a positive example for the region. It's hard work, but my message today to the people of Ethiopia is that, as you take steps moving your country forward, the United States will be standing by you the entire way.

So, Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality and for the important work that our nations do together. *Ameseginalehu*. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Hailemariam. *Ameseginalehu*. [Laughter]

Moderator. Now we'll have some time for questions. Okay, first from Ethiopian local journalists.

Ethiopia-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation/President Obama's African Aid Policies

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister. My name is—*[inaudible]*. I am from Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. Mr. President, you mentioned earlier that combating terrorism is one of the areas in which Ethiopia and the U.S. is—are partnering. However, organizations based in the U.S. and Eritrea are also acting—*[inaudible]*—in Ethiopia's antiterrorism efforts. How will your Government assist Ethiopia in this regard?

And secondly, in regards to trade and investment cooperation, how committed is your Government to transform the aid-based Ethiopia-U.S. relations to a mutually beneficial trade and investment cooperation? Thank you very much.

President Obama. Good. Well, on the first issue, this was part of our conversation both with respect to security, but also with respect to good governance and human rights issues. Our policy is that we oppose terrorism wherever it may occur. And we are opposed to any group that is promoting the violent overthrow of a government, including the Government of Ethiopia, that has been democratically elected.

I also shared with the Prime Minister our interest in deepening intelligence cooperation. And we've had some fruitful discussions about ending the flow of foreign financing for terrorism. Our cooperation regionally is excellent. I know that there are certain groups that

have been active in Ethiopia that, from the Ethiopian Government's perspective, pose a significant threat. Our intelligence indicates that while they may oppose the Government, they have not tipped into terrorism. And we have some very clear standards in terms of how we evaluate that.

But what I indicated to the Prime Minister is, is that in our consultations and deepening intelligence cooperation, we will look and see what evidence we have, where there are real problems, and where we see genuine terrorist activity. That's something that we are going to want to cooperate with and stop.

So a lot of this has to do with how we define a particular group's activities. If they are just talking about issues and are in opposition and are operating as political organizations, we tend to be protective of them even if we don't agree with them. That's true in the United States; that's true everywhere. And we think that's part of what's necessary for a democracy. If they tip into activities that are violent and are undermining a properly constituted government, then we have a concern. And so this will be a matter of facts—what are the facts with respect to this issue—in determining how we can work together.

On shifting development models, part of what I've been preaching ever since I came into office and what we've been putting into practice as I travel across the continent of Africa, but this is also true in Latin America, it's true in Asia: In this modern world, it is not enough just to provide aid. Sometimes, aid is critical. I mean, we're very proud of the work that we've done to provide health aid that has saved millions of lives with respect to HIV/AIDS. We are very proud of our ability to mobilize humanitarian assistance when there's a drought and the potential for starvation. Those are still necessary. But what we also believe is that we are your best partners and your best friends when we are building capacity.

So instead of just giving a fish, we teach you how to fish. And whether it's the work we're doing in agriculture or on energy, our goal is not to simply provide something and then we go away and then later on we need to give you something more. Our goal is to help you advance your development agenda so that it's Ethiopian businesses and Ethiopian technical experts and Ethiopian scientists and Ethiopian agricultural workers who are continually building capacity and increasing development inside the country.

And on that, we can be a very effective partner. And that, then, allows us also to trade and engage the private sector in this process.

So on Power Africa, for example, we are providing billions of dollars from the U.S. Government, and we're leveraging the Swedish Government and World Bank to create a fund that helps to facilitate transactions. But what we're also doing is, is working with the Ethiopian Government to leverage that money so that the private sector says, "We'd like to invest in Ethiopia as well," and helping advise the Ethiopian Energy Ministry and technical experts on what may be the best models for reaching rural areas, for example, which may not always involve big power plants, but might involve off-grid, smaller models of development that are sustainable and are not dependent on constant financial flows from the West, but instead build up local capacity and are best suited for the particular environment where electricity is needed.

So that, I think, is going to be true in health, energy, agriculture. The more that Ethiopians are able to grow rapidly on their own, then our relationship becomes one of mutual interest, mutual respect. And Ethiopia then becomes a leader, and it can then help other countries that are not as advanced on the development scales. And then, we can partner with you to help a Somalia as it's rebuilding after decades of failed governance. Okay?

White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest. Our next question will come from Kevin Corke with FOX News.

Human Rights/Al-Shabaab Terrorist Organization/Africa-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you about balance. And you often speak about the importance of rewarding good governance, and so I'm wondering how do you balance your obvious concerns about human rights here in Ethiopia with a desire for increased economic partnership and strengthening regional security cooperation? And if I could follow up: Have you ruled out, or would you consider, increased military involvement by the United States in East Africa to battle al-Shabaab? And if so, what lessons could be learned from the battle against ISIS, for example, that might be relevant here?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your great hospitality in your beautiful country. I'd like to ask you about perception. For all the incredible things that are happening here in Ethiopia—a strengthening economy, a great investment right now in renewable energy infrastructure—there is still a perception, sir, that human rights abuses are tolerated here, and that could really be affecting international investment in your economy. Are you concerned about that? If so, how concerned, and what might you be doing, sir, to change that perception? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, as I said in our—my opening remarks, this was a significant topic of conversation. We are very mindful of Ethiopia's history, the hardships that this country has gone through. It has been relatively recently in which the Constitution that was formed and the elections put forward a democratically elected government. And as I indicated when I was in Kenya, there is still more work to do, and I think the Prime Minister is the first to acknowledge that there's more work to do.

The way we think about these issues is, we want to engage with governments on areas of mutual concern and interest, the same way, by the way, that we deal with China and deal with a range of other countries where the democratic practices or issues around freedom of the press and assembly are not ones that align with how we are thinking about it, but we continually bring it up, and we indicate that this is part of our core interest and concern in our foreign policy. That's true here as well.

My observation to the Prime Minister has been that the governing party has significant breadth and popularity. And as a consequence, making sure to open additional space for journalists, for media, for opposition voices, will strengthen rather than inhibit the agenda that the Prime Minister and the ruling party has put forward.

And I think our goal here is to make sure that we are a constructive partner, recognizing that Ethiopia has its own culture and it's not going to be identical to what we do, but there are certain principles that we think have to be upheld.

The one thing that I've tried to be consistent on, though, is to make sure that we don't operate with big countries in one fashion and small countries in another. Nobody questions our need to engage with large countries that—where we may have differences on these issues. That's true with Africa as well. We don't improve cooperation and advance the very interests that you talk about by staying away. So we have to be in a conversation. And I think Prime Minister will indicate that I don't bite my tongue too much when it comes to these issues, but I do so from a position of respect and regard for the Ethiopian people and recognizing their history and the challenges that they continue to face.

With respect to the—our military assistance, keep in mind that we have been active in the fight against al-Shabaab for a long time now. And we've been partnering with Ethiopia and Kenya and Uganda and the African Union and AMISOM. And that's something that I think those other countries would agree has been a very effective partnership. Part of the reason that we've seen the shrinkage of al-Shabaab's activities in East Africa is because we have our military teams in consultation with regional forces and local forces, and there are certain capacities that we have that some of these militaries may not, and I think there's been complementarity in the work that we've done together.

So we don't need to send our own Marines, for example, in to do the fighting. The Ethiopians are tough fighters. *[Laughter]* And the Kenyans and Ugandans have been serious about putting troops on the ground, at significant sacrifice, because they recognize the importance of stabilizing the region.

That's why, in the past, I've said, for example, that the work that we're doing in Somalia is a model. Some in the press have noted that al-Shabaab is still here, and they say, well, how can that be a model if you still have bombs going on? The point that I was making at that time is not that defeating any of these terrorist networks is easy or that the problems in Somalia are completely solved. The point I was making was that a model in which we are partnering with other countries and they are providing outstanding troops on the ground—we're working with, in this case, the Somali Government, which is still very much in its infancy, to develop its national security capacity—so that we're doing things that we can do uniquely, but does not require us putting boots on the ground, that's the model that we're talking about.

And Ethiopia is an outstanding partner in that process. They have one of the most effective militaries on the continent. And as I noted in my earlier remarks, they are also one of the biggest contributors to peacekeeping. And so they're averting a lot of bloodshed and a lot of conflict because of the effectiveness of their military, and we want to make sure that we're supporting that. Okay?

Prime Minister Hailemariam. Yes, we fully understand that the perception and the reality does not, in many cases, match as far as Ethiopia is concerned. Therefore, we want to work on this issue; it's our concern. And—but something has to be understood: that this is a fledgling democracy and we are coming out of centuries of undemocratic practices and culture in this country. And it's not easy within a few decades—in our case, only two decades of democratization—that we can get rid of all this attitudinal problems and some challenges we face. But we feel that we are on the right track, and there is a constitutional democracy which we all are obliged to observe for the sake of our own people and prosperity.

So I think this is a way that we have to work on. That's why I said in my speech that we have to learn the best practices of United States and age-old democracies, because this is a process of learning and doing, and I think we fully understand that. And of course, we also know our limitations, and we have to work on our limitations to make ultimately to the betterment of our own people. So I think that is a concern that we have to work on.

Moderator. Second question. Ethiopia.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa/South Sudan

Q. Thank you. I'm—*[inaudible]*—from EBC Radio 104.7, and my question for you, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn is, what do you expect from the United States and the rest of the international community in terms of supporting the peace and security efforts in the Horn

of Africa, as well as, how successful was your bilateral discussion with President Obama, specifically in regards to economics ties?

And, President Obama, my question for you is, what are your thoughts specifically on the IGAD-Plus peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan?

Prime Minister Hailemariam. As far as the economic cooperation is concerned, I mentioned that Ethiopia is one of the vibrant economies, which is rising. And we need—you know, we don't want to put all our eggs in one basket. We need a comprehensive, quality investment from every corner of the globe. And specifically, at this time, we agreed that the President is going to support us, his Government is going to support us in bringing quality investment to Ethiopia.

We have a longstanding relations, diplomatic relations, but the investment flow doesn't match that long history of cooperation between Ethiopia and United States. So I think there is a room. Recently, we have a number of renowned companies from United States showing up to invest in my country. But we also understand that we have to improve our investment climate and environment; where there are stifling issues here and there, bureaucratic bottlenecks, that has to be addressed. And we are on top of them, and we can address them. I think by doing so, we can attract more foreign direct investment from the United States.

As far as the security cooperation in concerned, I think we believe that Africans should take our own responsibility by our own hand. We need support from United States, but it doesn't mean that United States is going to replace us in taking our own agenda in Africa.

That's why Ethiopia is contributing peacekeeping force, a number which the President has mentioned. And we're also working on increasing the capability of our troops in peacekeeping. But the most important thing is, we have to engage the people of Africa and their respective countries to make peace and the governance system that helps the people to engage.

So I think we are on the right track. And we can make changes in Somalia and, I am hopeful, also in South Sudan. And I think, in many cases, this shouldn't mar the picture of Africa where, in large, Africa is now rising, and Africa is showing—becoming next frontier for economic development and cooperation. So I think we are on the right track in this cooperation.

President Obama. IGAD has been a vital partner to the international community in leading discussions between Mr. Kiir, Mr. Machar, Government, opposition figures in South Sudan. Unfortunately, the situation continues to deteriorate. That's not because IGAD has not tried hard enough. I know that between Prime Minister Hailemariam and the other partners in IGAD, there has been a lot of time and a lot of effort to push the parties together.

Nevertheless, the situation is deteriorating. The humanitarian situation is worsening. The possibilities of renewed conflict in a region that has been torn by conflict for so long and has resulted in so many deaths is something that requires urgent attention from all of us, including the international community.

That's why, after this press conference, we'll be consulting with the leaders from the other countries who have been involved in IGAD to see how the United States, IGAD, and the international community can work to bring a peace agreement and a structure to fruition sometime in the next several weeks. We don't have a lot of time to wait. The conditions on the ground are getting much, much worse. And part of my interest in calling together this meeting was to find out how we can help.

Up until this point, it's been very useful to have the African countries take the lead. As Prime Minister Hailemariam stated, the more that Africans are solving African problems, the better off we're going to be. But we also think that we can be a mechanism for additional leverage on the parties, who, up until this point, have proven very stubborn and have not yet risen to the point where they are looking out for the interests of their nation as opposed to their particular self-interests. And that transition has to take place, and it has to take place now. Okay?

Mr. Earnest. The final question will come from Darlene Superville with the Associated Press.

South Sudan/Multilateral Agreement Regarding Iran's Nuclear Program/2016 Presidential Election/U.S. Political Culture

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to follow up on the Sudan question. As you go into this meeting that you just mentioned, are you expecting any breakthroughs that will get both sides to agree to a peace deal by the August 17 deadline? And if there is no agreement, what further steps would you be willing to take to bring that about?

And if I could ask about Iran. Would you kindly bring us up to date on the administration's lobbying of Congress to get approval for the deal? And would you include your reaction to Republican Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee saying that the deal is the equivalent of marching the Israelis toward "the door of the oven"?

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality. Would you also add your thoughts on the situation in Sudan and how to bring peace over there? The second question I have for you is, the Committee To Protect Journalists ranks your country as the second worst jailer of journalists in Africa. Just before President Obama arrived here, some journalists were released. Many more are still being detained. Would you explain what issues or objections you have to a free press? Thank you.

President Obama. On South Sudan, the goal here is to make sure that the United States and IGAD are aligned on a strategy going into this endgame on peace talks. So my hope is that, as a result of these consultations, that we agree on how urgent it is and what each of us have to do to actually bring a deal about.

I don't want to prejudice what I'll hear from the President of Uganda, for example, until I actually hear from him. But the good news is that all of us recognize that something has got to move, because IGAD has now been involved with consultations for these—with these individuals for a very, very long time, and our Special Envoys that have been involved in this for years now have concluded that now is the time for a breakthrough. And if we don't see a breakthrough by August 17, then we're going to have to consider what other tools we have to apply greater pressure on the parties.

And that's something, I think, the parties will certainly hear from us. Our hope is, is that the message we deliver is similar to the message that they get from the IGAD countries and others who are interested in the issue.

With respect to Iran, I won't give a grade to our lobbying efforts. In fact, I'm not even sure I'd characterize it as lobbying. What we're doing is presenting facts about an international agreement that 99 percent of the world thinks solves a vital problem in a way that will prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon and does so diplomatically.

And essentially, what we've been seeing is Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz—who is an expert on nuclear issues—just providing the facts, laying out exactly what the deal is, explaining how it cuts off all the pathways for Iran to get a nuclear weapon; explaining how it puts in place unprecedented verification and inspection mechanisms; explaining how we have snapback provisions so that if they cheat, we immediately reimpose sanctions; explaining also how we will continue to address other aspects of Iranian behavior that are of deep concern to us and our allies, like providing arms to terrorist organizations.

So the good news, I guess, is that I have not yet heard a factual argument on the other side that holds up to scrutiny. There's a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks that this is a good deal. It's because it's a good deal. There's a reason why the overwhelming majority of nuclear scientists and nonproliferation experts think it's a good deal. It's because it's a good deal. It accomplishes our goal, which is making sure Iran does not have a nuclear weapon. In fact, it accomplishes that goal better than any alternative that has been suggested.

And you've heard me, Darlene, stand up in front of the press corps and try to get a good argument on the other side that's based in fact as opposed to rhetoric. And I haven't gotten one yet. So if you're asking me, how do you think our argument is going, it's going great. Now, if you're asking me about the politics of Washington and the rhetoric that's taken—that takes place there, that doesn't always go great.

The particular comments of Mr. Huckabee are, I think, part of just a general pattern that we've seen that is—would be considered ridiculous if it weren't so sad. I mean, we've had a sitting Senator call John Kerry Pontius Pilate. We've had a sitting Senator who also happens to be running for President suggest that I'm the leading state sponsor of terrorism. These are leaders in the Republican Party. And part of what historically has made America great is, particularly when it comes to foreign policy, there's been a recognition that these issues are too serious, that issues of war and peace are of such grave concern and consequence that we don't play fast and loose that way. We have robust debates, we look at the facts, there are going to be disagreements. But we just don't fling out ad hominem attacks like that, because it doesn't help inform the American people.

I mean, this is a deal that has been endorsed by people like Brent Scowcroft and Sam Nunn—[laughter]—right? Historic Democratic and Republican leaders on arms control and on keeping America safe. And so when you get rhetoric like this, maybe it gets attention and maybe this is just an effort to push Mr. Trump out of the headlines—[laughter]—but it's not the kind of leadership that is needed for America right now. And I don't think that's what anybody—Democratic, Republican, or Independent—is looking for out of their political leaders.

In fact, it's been interesting when you look at what's happened with Mr. Trump, when he's made some of the remarks that, for example, challenged the heroism of Mr. McCain, somebody who endured torture and conducted himself with exemplary patriotism, the Republican Party is shocked. And yet that arises out of a culture where those kinds of outrageous attacks have become far too commonplace and get circulated nonstop through the Internet and talk radio and news outlets. And I recognize when outrageous statements like that are made about me, that a lot of the same people who were outraged when they were made about Mr. McCain were pretty quiet.

The point is, we're creating a culture that is not conducive to good policy or good politics. The American people deserve better. Certainly, Presidential debates deserve better. In 18

months, I'm turning over the keys. I want to make sure I'm turning over the keys to somebody who is serious about the serious problems the country faces and the world faces. And that requires on both sides, Democrat and Republican, a sense of seriousness and decorum and honesty. And I think that's what the voters expect as well.

Prime Minister Hailemariam. As regards to South Sudan, I cannot agree more with the President. But we should also recognize that this process has taken a long, long negotiation period. On the other hand, people are suffering on the ground, and we cannot let this go unchecked. And I think the meeting which we are making this afternoon has a strong signal and message that has to be passed to the parties in South Sudan to see that that they're—*[inaudible]*—first.

So I think this is very much essential. And I fully recognize what the President has said, and we'll see how it happens.

As far as Ethiopia is concerned, we need journalists. We need more of them and quality of them, because we have not only bad stories to be told, but we have many success stories that has to be told. And so we need you. This is very important. But we need ethical journalism to function in this country.

As there is limitation in capacity in all aspects of our works, there is also capacity limitations in journalism and that way. Maybe those of you who are in developed nations, you can help our journalists—domestic journalists—to increase their capacity to work on ethical manner. But the only thing, as a leader of this nation, we do not want to see is journalism has to be respected when it doesn't pass the line that working with violent terrorist groups is not allowed, even in the United States. And we need a civilized journalism as a culture and as a profession.

So I think my Government is committed to see this issue, that we need many young journalists to come up and help this country to understand what's going on. And for us, it's very important to be criticized because we also get feedback to correct our mistakes and limitations. So we need journalists. And I think this is our view. And rest assured that we'll continue to do so, because media is one of the institutions that has to be nurtured for democratic discourse. And so that's why we agreed that an institutional capacity-building in all aspects of democracy in this country is essential.

President Obama. Okay. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:47 p.m. at the National Palace. In his remarks, the President referred to President Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan; former Vice President of South Sudan Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon; President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda; Gov. Michael D. Huckabee of Arkansas; Sens. Thomas B. Cotton and R. Edward Cruz; former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft; former Sen. Samuel A Nunn; and Donald J. Trump, chairman and chief executive officer, Trump Organization. A reporter referred to former formerly jailed Ethiopian journalists Asmamaw Hailegiorgis, Edom Kassaye, Mahlet Fantahun, Tesfalem Wadyes, and Zelalem Kibret. Another reporter referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences :: Ethiopia, Prime Minister Hailemariam.

Locations: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Names: Cotton, Thomas B.; Cruz, R. Edward; Hailemariam Desalegn; Huckabee, Michael D.; Kerry, John F.; Kiir Mayardit, Salva; Machar Teny Dhurgon, Riek; McCain, John S., III; Moniz, Ernest J.; Museveni, Yoweri Kaguta; Nunn, Samuel A.; Scowcroft, Brent; Trump, Donald J.

Subjects: Africa : African Union :: Somalia, role; Africa : Agricultural production :: Improvement efforts; Africa : Energy infrastructure, improvement efforts; Africa : Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa; Africa : International assistance; Africa : Trade with U.S.; Africa : Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI); China : Relations with U.S.; Civil rights : Freedom of speech; Congress : Bipartisanship; Education : Foreign exchange programs; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Energy, Department of : Secretary; Environment : Climate change; Ethiopia : Economic growth and development; Ethiopia : Education, strengthening efforts; Ethiopia : Relations with U.S.; Ethiopia : Trade with U.S.; Ethiopia : U.S. assistance; Ethiopia : Democracy efforts; Ethiopia : Economic growth and development; Ethiopia : Educational exchanges with U.S.; Ethiopia : Energy, alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Ethiopia : Human rights issues; Ethiopia : International assistance; Ethiopia : Poverty, reduction efforts; Ethiopia : President Obama's visit; Ethiopia : Prime Minister; Ethiopia : Relations with U.S.; Ethiopia : Security cooperation with U.S.; Ethiopia : Terrorism; Ethiopia : U.S. assistance; Foreign policy, U.S. : Civil and human rights, promotion efforts; Foreign policy, U.S. : Democratization; Foreign policy, U.S. : Foreign aid policies and funding; Foreign policy, U.S. : Humanitarian assistance programs; HIV/AIDS : International prevention and treatment efforts; Iran : International and U.S. sanctions; Iran : International diplomatic efforts; Iran : Nuclear weapons development; Kenya : Relations with U.S.; Peace Corps, U.S.; President : Uganda; Somalia : Relations with U.S.; Somalia : African Union, role; Somalia : Terrorist attack in Mogadishu; Somalia : U.S. assistance; South Sudan : International assistance; South Sudan : International diplomatic efforts; South Sudan : Political unrest and violence; State, Department of : Secretary; Terrorism : al-Shabaab terrorist organization; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Uganda : Relations with U.S.; World Bank.

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