

South and Central Asia:

Obama Signs Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghan President Karzai

Remarks by USAID Administrator Shah, April 12, 2012¹

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah gave the following remarks at the Pakistan National Center for the Arts

Administrator Shah. Thank you, Ambassador Munter.

It is an honor to be here in Pakistan and see the progress of our work together. I am also pleased to have the opportunity to officially open this remarkable exhibition, showcasing the long-standing relationship between our two peoples.

In the 1950s, we helped bring the University of Karachi and two American universities together to establish The Institute of Business Administration—Pakistan's first business school.

In the 1960s and 70s, we helped spark the Green Revolution—supporting Pakistani and international scientists to develop high-yield varieties of staple crops and prevent widespread poverty and hunger.

Around that same time, we helped construct the Tarbela and Mangla dams, major feats of engineering that accounted for more than 70 percent of the national output. In fact, one of USAID's senior officers here in Pakistan first came to live in this country as a child, when his father was a civil engineer working on dam construction.

Today, we're building on this legacy to generate real development results for the Pakistani people. I know it's been a tough year, and our relationship has weathered more than its share of difficulties. But

despite the challenges, our relationship has endured and our commitment has remained strong. We will continue to focus intensely on building the capacity of the Pakistani nation—a collaborative effort that advances our mutual interests and lays the groundwork for a peaceful, prosperous future.

Over the past few years, we've listened carefully to Pakistani communities and refocused our programs on five key priorities: energy, economic growth, stabilization, education and health. In each area, we're emphasizing good governance and gender equality to ensure that everyone has access to critical public services and can participate fully in Pakistan's development.

We've made energy a top priority because we know that Pakistan's chronic shortage of electricity stifles the nation's growth.

By supporting more electricity generation to narrow Pakistan's energy deficit, we can help ensure that all facilities—from schools to clinics—have the power they need. By the end of 2013, USAID will have added over 900 megawatts to the grid, enough to provide electricity to nearly 14 million people and close 20 percent of Pakistan's current energy deficit.

We're supporting Pakistan's Water and Power Development Authority to complete two dams: the Satpara Dam and the Gomal Zam Dam, which will generate electricity, control floods and provide irrigation to over 200,000 acres of land and water for at least 280,000 local residents.

And we're helping to modernize the Tarbela Dam, which we originally helped construct in the 1970s. These upgrades

alone will add 128 megawatts to the grid.

Alongside energy, economic opportunity remains one of Pakistan's most pressing needs.

Because agriculture provides 21 percent of GDP and employs 44 percent of Pakistan's workforce, we're working with farmers to improve their harvests and connect them to profitable markets abroad.

Over the past year, we've helped mango growers in Punjab and Sindh increase exports by more than 60 percent and revenues by more than \$4 million.

And in the aftermath of the devastating floods in 2010, we provided over 600,000 households with improved seeds and fertilizer, helping to save the winter wheat harvest and increase yields by 60 percent.

But we know that sustainable prosperity won't come from a single harvest. It needs reliable supply chains, a supportive enabling environment and vibrant regional markets. This past year, we helped drive the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement. While there are still issues to be worked out, the groundbreaking agreement is expected to generate as much as \$7 billion in Pakistani exports to Central Asia—up from \$8 million in 2010.

We're also focused on helping conflict-affected communities achieve vital stability, reducing the pull of extremism and building citizens' confidence in public services.

We've created 170,000 jobs; funded 220 kilometers of roads in South Waziristan; provided 7,500 scholarships to youth displaced by military operations; and worked alongside Pakistani communities to build or renovate 1,500 small infrastructure projects like schools, clinics and wells. These

projects bolster the capacity of the local government, while weakening the grip of militants in the region.

And to help ensure that even the most vulnerable do not slip through the cracks, we're supporting Pakistan's innovative safety net—the Benazir Income Support Program—which delivers money directly to women in impoverished families

Finally, as the government of Pakistan devolves authority to the provinces, we're working with local governments and organizations to support the basic needs of every Pakistani citizen.

Every year, about as many infants are born in Pakistan as in the United States, even though the U.S. has almost twice the population. By 2050, Pakistan's population is projected to more than double, a rate that will dramatically outpace economic growth and overwhelm the government's ability to provide essential services. To help address this high fertility rate, we've worked with Pakistani organizations to reach over 50 million people with messages about voluntary family planning.

We also have to ensure that all children have a chance for a healthy life. Today in Pakistan, nearly one child in 10 dies before the age of five. Though the Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns project, we've helped reduce maternal and newborn deaths by over 20 percent—saving 30,000 newborn lives—though a community based approach that offers care to mothers and newborns outside of a health facility.

And we're working closely with the government and local communities to strengthen Pakistan's education system, enabling 900,000 more children to attend school and expanding opportunity in higher education. Just this morning, I had the opportunity to officially open four centers of advanced studies to help strengthen the capacity of Pakistan's researchers and accelerate progress in the priority areas of energy, agriculture and water management.

I share these results not to imply that everything is easy or always generates a breakthrough. It is important to be honest about the challenges we face, so that we can reduce misunderstandings and improve our efforts.

To increase accountability, we've taken a number of steps to ensure we are spending every development dollar in the most efficient, effective and transparent way possible.

We've put pre-assessment teams on the ground to help ensure that local organizations and government agencies have the proper controls in place from the beginning.

We've established an Anti-Fraud Hotline, where citizens can voice concerns about possible fraud, waste and mismanagement.

And we're funding contracts to the government on a cost reimbursement basis. That means we confirm the work was really completed before we pay the government. I know it can sometimes feel like a slow process, but it is vitally important to ensuring our efforts are effective and transparent.

At the same time, the government and the Pakistani people have to do their share. By most accounts, fewer than 2 percent of the population pays taxes—and the wealthiest often pay the least. So long as this remains true, Pakistan simply won't have the resources it needs to prosper.

Even as we work hard to shift more assistance directly to Pakistan's national and local government, we also know that we can't limit our work to the government. We have to foster diverse relationships with Pakistan's entrepreneurs and civil society leaders.

That's why we've implemented a small grants program to support innovative projects by Pakistanis NGOs. Since August 2010, we've worked with different local organizations to install solar powered panels in remote villages; improve the participation of parents in school management; and improve health and sanitation in flood-affected regions.

With total donor assistance to Pakistan accounting for barely 1 percent of the nation's GDP, we know that the development community can only do so much. Responsibility for Pakistan's development lies with the government and citizens themselves. And it will require crucial reforms and the decision to marshal the country's own resources.

Because ultimately, our work is about

helping the people of Pakistan chart their own future.

And supporting your efforts to ensure that the fruits of development benefit the most vulnerable...

...that economic growth is as meaningful to a smallholder farmer as to a women entrepreneur...

... and that individuals once tempted by extremism today can see the value of peace.

Thank you.

Remarks by Secretary of State Clinton and Secretary of Defense Panetta, April 18, 2012²

Secretary Hillary Clinton and Secretary Leon Panetta gave the following remarks in Brussels

Secretary Clinton. Good afternoon. I'm very pleased to join Secretary Panetta and our defense and foreign minister colleagues here in Brussels for this meeting, the joint ministerial of NATO, to prepare for the upcoming NATO summit in my birthplace, Chicago. The main focus of our conversations today was Afghanistan, which I will focus on tomorrow at the meeting of our ISAF partners. But let me say how grateful the United States is for the solidarity and steadfastness of our NATO allies and ISAF partners.

As difficult a week as this has been in Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan, the big picture is clear. The transition is on track, the Afghans are increasingly standing up for their own security and future, and NATO remains united in our support for the Lisbon timetable, and an enduring commitment to Afghanistan. The attacks in Kabul this week show us that while the threat remains real, the transition can work. The response by the Afghan National Security forces were fast and effective, and the attacks failed. Not long ago, this kind of response by Afghans themselves would not have been possible. So the Afghans are proving themselves increasingly ready to take control of their own

future.

Now by their nature, transitions of any kind are challenging. There will be setbacks and hard days. But clear progress is happening, and today, NATO reaffirmed our commitment to stand with the Afghans to defend stability and security, to protect the gains of the last decade, and to prevent there ever being a return of al-Qaida or other extremists operating out of the Afghan territory.

Both Secretary Panetta and I were impressed by how united the NATO allies are in supporting the Lisbon timetable. We are on track to meet the December 2014 deadline for completing the security transition. Already 50 percent of the Afghan people are secured primarily by Afghan forces, and by this spring, it will be 75 percent. Today, we worked on the three initiatives for the Chicago summit next month.

First, we will agree on the next phase of transition to support our 2014 goals. Second, we want to be ready to define NATO's enduring relationship with Afghanistan after 2014. And third, we are prepared to work with the Afghans to ensure that the Afghan National Security force is fully funded. NATO is united behind all these goals, so we are looking forward to a very productive summit in Chicago.

But let's keep in mind that the transition and NATO's mission are part of a larger enterprise, one that also has political and economic dimensions. Afghanistan's neighbors have a central role to play in that larger enterprise along with the international community. Our common approach was sharpened when the international community met in Istanbul and Bonn last year, and will be carried forward when we meet again in Chicago, Kabul, and Tokyo this year.

So beyond NATO, many nations are invested in Afghanistan's future and are providing support for the Afghans to attain self reliance, stability, and further their democratic future. They have to protect, however, as they go through this transition, their hard-fought political and economic and human rights progress. Incidents like the one we heard of yesterday when 150 Afghan girls became sick after the water at their school was poisoned,

reminds us that there are people who would destroy Afghanistan's long-term future in order to restrict the rights of women and girls. Human rights protections for religious and ethnic minorities are also still fragile. Universal human rights are critical to Afghanistan's security and prosperity, and we will continue to make them a priority.

While NATO has worked very hard to assist the people of Afghanistan, NATO has also been changed by this experience. The alliance is now a leading force for security, not just in the Atlantic region, but globally. We are steadily deepening and broadening the partnerships NATO has with dozens of countries around the world, and our partners are adding valuable capability, legitimacy, and political support to NATO's operations and missions from the Mediterranean and Libya to Kosovo and Afghanistan.

So we believe we are building a stronger, more flexible, more dynamic alliance enriched by partners from every continent and prepared to meet the security challenges of our time. With that, let me turn the floor to Secretary Panetta.

Secretary Panetta. Thank you. Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to join Secretary Clinton here in Brussels. We had a very good series of meetings today with our NATO defense and foreign minister counterparts. Much of our discussion focused on our shared effort in Afghanistan, and what came out of these meetings was a strong commitment to sticking to the plan and the strategy that has been laid out by General Allen, and finishing the job in Afghanistan. Allies and partners have a very clear vision and a very clear message. Our strategy is right, our strategy is working, and if we stick to it, we can achieve the mission of establishing an Afghanistan that can secure and govern itself, and never again become a safe haven for terrorists to plan attacks on our country or any other country.

All of us are committed to the goals that were set out in the Lisbon framework, including continuing the transition to full Afghan security leadership by the end of 2014. We know there will be continuing challenges, and we saw some of those challenges over this last weekend. This is

a war. There will be losses, there will be casualties, there will be incidents of the kind that we have seen in the last few days. But we must not allow any of that to undermine our commitment to our strategy.

The fact is, with regards to the events that took place over the weekend, we saw Afghan security forces do what we have trained them to do. They responded quickly, professionally, and with great courage, rendering ineffective those largely symbolic attacks that we saw in and around Kabul.

General Allen said he visited an Afghan special operations commando who had been wounded in the insurgent attacks and asked him if he could do anything for him. The Afghan commando's response was, and I quote, "I just want to get back out there with my brother soldiers," unquote. That short phrase speaks volumes. As General Allen has made clear, history proves that insurgencies are best and ultimately defeated not by foreign troops but by indigenous security forces, forces that know the ground, that know the territory, that know the culture, that know the neighborhood. When the Afghans do their job, we are doing our job. When the Afghans win, we win.

And the Afghans are making progress. They are in the lead now in areas that encompass more than 50 percent of the population in Afghanistan. When the third tranche of areas are transferred, we will have 75 percent of the population under Afghan governance and security. They have been in the lead for counterterrorism night operations since December. And now, thanks to a memorandum of understanding that was recently signed, all of these operations will fall under the authority of Afghan law. In less than six months' time, Afghan security forces will take full leadership of detention operations, thanks again to another agreement that was signed recognizing Afghan sovereignty.

As I've said, 2011 was a real turning point. It was the first time in five years that we saw a drop in the number of enemy attacks. Over the past 12 weeks, enemy attacks continue to decrease compared to the same period in 2011. Taliban has been weakened, Afghan army operations are progressing, and the reality is

that the transition to Afghan security and governance is continuing and progressing.

We see other signs that we are seriously degrading the insurgency. By January 2011, 600 Taliban had integrated into the society. This month, that number topped 4,000. We intend to build on this success. We're committed to an enduring presence in Afghanistan post-2014 and a continuing effort to train, advise, and assist the ANSF in protecting the Afghan people and denying terrorists a safe haven. We cannot and we will not abandon Afghanistan. The key to our enduring partnership is continued international support. We cannot short-change the security that must be provided by the Afghan forces now and in the future.

Today, I will also discuss with my NATO counterparts the steps needed to ensure that the alliance has the right military capabilities for the future. Across the board, allies are making important commitments to smart defense, with opportunities for new capabilities in ISR, missile defense, and air-to-air refueling. While significant progress has been made, important work lies ahead. The NATO we build is not only the force of today; it must be the force of 2020.

I'm pleased to announce that earlier today, along with Czech Defense Minister Vondra, I signed the Reciprocal Defense Procurement Agreement with the Czech Republic. The agreement reaffirms the importance and vitality of the U.S.-Czech defense relationship and enhances our cooperative security relationship. And as you know, this is the last high-level meeting before the Chicago summit in May. I think Secretary Clinton and I will take back to President Obama the results of these discussions. And I believe we have helped lay the groundwork for a very successful summit, and most importantly, for a strong and enduring NATO alliance.

Q. Madam Secretary, I'm sure that you will have seen that the violence—the government violence continues in Syria. Homs continues to be shelled, I think almost every day since the cease-fire ostensibly took effect. And the Syrian foreign minister has pushed back against the kind of mission that Kofi Annan would like to insert, saying that

it should be no more than 250 monitors, they don't need their own helicopters and mobility, and they should be from friendly countries.

Given this, is it now time for the United States to look harder at whatever kinds of pressure can be brought to bear against the Assad government? And specifically, are you giving any more thought to rethinking your previous opposition to others arming the rebels? And are you giving any more thought to trying to get the Arabs to impose a more forceful sanctions regime on Syria?

Secretary Clinton. Well, Arshad, first of all, Syria was a subject of conversation among many of our allies today. Every country in NATO is watching the situation with concern. I don't want to prejudge what does or does not happen with the observers. The first tranche of the UN monitors is just beginning to deploy. It is, obviously, quite concerning that while we are deploying these monitors pursuant to a Security Council resolution that confirms our commitment to Kofi Annan's six-point plan, the guns of the Assad regime are once again firing in Homs, Idlib, and elsewhere, and Syrians continue to die. So we are certainly cognizant of the very challenging road ahead. We are all here, united in favor of Kofi Annan's plan and his urgent call for a robust monitoring force.

But we are at a crucial turning point. Either we succeed in pushing forward with Kofi Annan's plan in accordance with the Security Council direction, with the help of monitors steadily broadening and deepening a zone of non-conflict and peace, or we see Assad squandering his last chance before additional measures have to be considered.

Now, we will continue to increase the pressure on Assad. I spoke with several ministers about the need to tighten sanctions, tighten pressure on the regime, on those who support the regime. And we also are going to continue pressing for a political solution, which remains the goal of Kofi Annan's plan and the understandable goal of anyone who wants to see a peaceful transition occur in Syria.

I also would add that I've only spoken for the United States. The United States is

not providing lethal arms, but as I've said before, the United States is providing communications and logistics and other support for the opposition. And we will continue to do everything we can to assist the opposition to be perceived as—and in reality become—the alternative voice for the Syrian people's future.

And make no mistake about it; this conflict is taking place right on NATO's border. We saw, just last week, the shelling across the borders into Turkey and into Lebanon. Our NATO ally, Turkey, has already suffered the effects of not only the influx of refugees that it is very generously housing, but also having two people killed on their side of the border because of Syrian artillery.

So we will remain in very close touch as events unfold. I look forward to continuing our consultations tomorrow at the ad hoc group meeting that will be hosted by Foreign Minister Juppe in Paris.

But as I have reiterated, we will judge the Assad regime by their actions, not their words. We have been working to try to reach consensus in the Security Council, which we did in support of Kofi Annan's six-point plan. The burden has shifted, not only to the Assad regime, but to those who support it to be forced to explain why, after time and time again stating that they will end the violence, the violence continues. So obviously, this is going to be a very high priority for all of us going forward.

Q. Is it okay for others to arm any rebels?

Secretary Clinton. I'm not speaking for anyone but the United States of America.

Q. Yes. To both of you, please, could I ask you to comment on publication today of photos purportedly showing U.S. troops posing with the corpses of Taliban militants? What did you think when you heard about this? What did you think when you saw the photos? And doesn't this sort of undermine all the progress that you claim and the strategy you laid out just a moment ago?

Secondly, if I could ask each of you to respond to President Karzai's remark

yesterday that he would like a firm written commitment of 2 billion a year from the United States for security forces. Should he be concerned that you're going to renege on that promise? And why doesn't he just take your word for it?

Secretary Panetta. With regards to the photos, I strongly condemned what we see in those photos, as has General Allen. That behavior that was depicted in those photos absolutely violates both our regulations, and more importantly, our core values. This is not who we are, and it's certainly not who we represent when it comes to the great majority of men and women in uniform who are serving there.

I expect that the matter will be fully investigated. That investigation has already begun. This is a matter that goes back, I believe, to 2010, but it needs to be fully investigated, and that investigation, as I understand, is already underway. And wherever those facts lead, we will take the appropriate action. If rules and regulations were found to have been violated, then those individuals will be held accountable.

Let me also say this: This is war. And I know that war is ugly and it's violent. And I know that young people sometimes caught up in the moment make some very foolish decisions. I am not excusing that. That's—I'm not excusing that behavior. But neither do I want these images to bring further injury to our people or to our relationship with the Afghan people. We had urged the *L.A. Times* not to run those photos, and the reason for that is those kinds of photos are used by the enemy to incite violence, and lives have been lost as a result of the publication of similar photos in the past, so we regret that they were published. But having said that, again, that behavior is unacceptable, and it will be fully investigated.

With regards to President Karzai's comment, we—as both the Secretary of State and I know from our own experience, you have to deal with Congress when it comes to what funds are going to be provided. And we don't, nor do—we do not have the power to lock in money for the Afghans or anybody else.

Q. Did you apologize on behalf of the

United States for those photos or the actions depicted in them in your meetings today?

Secretary Panetta. I was not asked about it, but obviously, my apology is on behalf of the Department of Defense and the U.S. Government.

Q. Thank you.

Q. Madam Secretary, the secretary general told us that some allies already came up with contributions for the Afghan army after 2014. Are you satisfied with this? And while this was not a pledging conference, what do you expect? What amounts do you expect from the allies to come up with? Thank you.

Secretary Clinton. Well, we were very encouraged by the commitment from the NATO allies to the funding of the Afghan National Security Forces. We believe that we are on the path to ensuring that these security forces, which, as Leon has just said, made such progress because of our training and mentoring over the last few years, will have the resources necessary to protect the Afghan state and the Afghan people. So I'm going to let individual countries make their own announcements.

But as we move forward toward the NATO summit, one of the goals is to ensure that NATO has an enduring relationship with Afghanistan, and in many ways, not just in terms of financial commitments, but in other ways as well. A lot of the member countries are stepping up and talking about what they intend to do. And similarly, tomorrow, we expect to hear from a number of our ISAF partners about their continuing commitment as well. So I think both Leon and I were encouraged and believe we're making progress.

Remarks by President Obama and Afghan President Karzai, May 2, 2012³

President Barack Obama and President Hamid Karzai gave the following remarks in Kabul

President Karzai. (In progress)—prosperity and peace for the people of Afghanistan.

Stability in Afghanistan and peace in Afghanistan—people will sleep, will be safe in their house, and also law-abiding citizens. Their life will be—will not threaten their life by any forces. The people of Afghanistan in past three decades, they didn't have this, so now they want. This is the responsibility of government of Afghanistan to fulfill the wishes of the people of Afghanistan to a better life, better future, and peace and prosperity and changing to reality for them.

For us, people of Afghanistan, this is a very important year in our life of our country and the people of Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan want the transition of Afghanistan before 2014, end of 2014, with all the responsibility and take the responsibility for the people of Afghanistan as one of our responsibility we have to take.

Accepting this responsibility—all the forces who were in Afghanistan the past 10 years, they worked with us, helped us and supported us—go back to their country. And of course, the people of Afghanistan will never forget their help and their support, and also their relationship with this country. We will start a new start with this relationship and we will continue with this relationship.

Mr. President, sir, I just want to say all the help and support the people of the United States to the people of Afghanistan did, I thank you for that from the bottom of my heart, sir. And I just thank you. And also, we just want to thank you, sir, for all the—which is provide all the necessity to bring this strategic partnership for signing tonight. And I just thank you, all your team—Ryan Crocker, Ambassador Crocker, General Allen—I thank them for the hard work that with our team worked

together. They very patiently worked together to continue this dialogue. Today we will see the result of this talking and communication—today we sign.

And I just want to thank you. I just ask you, sir, to—give your speech, sir. Thank you very much.

President Obama. President Karzai, the leaders of the Afghan government and society who are here, and most of all, to the Afghan people, thank you so much for welcoming me here today, especially in these beautiful surroundings.

I, too, want to thank Ambassador Ryan Crocker and National Security Advisor Spanta and their teams for the extraordinary work that brought about this day.

I've come to Afghanistan to mark a historic moment for our two nations, and to do so on Afghan soil. I'm here to affirm the bonds between our countries, to thank American and Afghans who have sacrificed so much over these last 10 years, and to look forward to a future of peace and security and greater prosperity for our nations.

Neither Americans nor the Afghan people asked for this war. Yet, for a decade, we've stood together to drive al Qaeda from its camps, to battle an insurgency, and to give the people of Afghanistan the possibility to live in peace and in dignity. The wages of war have been great for both our nations. But today, with the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement, we look forward to a future of peace.

Together, we've made much progress. We've reached an agreement to transition detention facilities to Afghan control, and to put Afghans in the lead on special operations. And today, we're agreeing to be long-term partners in combating terrorism, and training Afghan security forces, strengthening democratic institutions and supporting development, and protecting human rights of all Afghans. With this agreement, the Afghan people in the world should know that Afghanistan has a friend and a partner in the United States.

Mr. President, there will be difficult days ahead. But as we move forward with our transition, I'm confident that Afghan forces will grow stronger, the Afghan people will take control of their future. With

this agreement, I am confident that the Afghan people will understand that the United States will stand by them, and they will know that the United States can achieve our goal of destroying al Qaeda and denying it a safe haven, but at the same time, we have the capacity to wind down this war and usher in a new era of peace here in Afghanistan.

Mr. President, I'm reminded of all who made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, including members of your own family. I pay tribute to those Afghans who have lost their lives alongside our men and women, and sacrificed for their country. Of course, our hearts are heavy as we remember so many who have died in this war. I'm grateful that this agreement pays tribute to the sacrifices made by the American people here in Afghanistan.

As I've said before, the United States has not come here to claim resources or to claim territory. We came with a very clear mission: We came to destroy al Qaeda. And we have enormous respect for Afghan sovereignty and the dignity of the Afghan people. Together, we're now committed to replacing war with peace and pursuing a more hopeful future as equal partners.

To borrow words from this agreement, we are committed to seeking a future of justice, peace, security, and opportunity. And I'm confident that although our challenges are not yet behind us, that the future before us is bright.

Thank you so much, Mr. President.

Excerpts of Remarks by Secretary of State Clinton and Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Moni, May 5, 2012⁴

Secretary Hillary Clinton and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni gave the following remarks in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Foreign Minister Moni. Distinguished friends, good evening. We are delighted to have with us today the U.S. Secretary of State, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton. She

arrived this afternoon on an official visit. This is her first visit as the Secretary of State, but not her first visit per se. Her earlier visit in 1995, along with her daughter Chelsea, is fondly remembered by everyone. Given the personal manner in which she has touched the hearts of the people, Hillary Clinton has been something of a household name in Bangladesh, and we welcome Secretary Clinton with the same fondness and warmth.

Her current visit has been long awaited and will be counted as a landmark event in the shaping of our bilateral relations of the U.S. since the visit of President Bill Clinton in 2000. Our relations with the U.S. have matured over the years and are based on shared values and commitments and reflected a true partnership. The partnership is as much about convergence and the continued effort at greater convergence as it is about space for dissidence and mutual respect for the space.

In this spirit today, we have discussed a host of important issues of concern to both countries, ranging from bilateral, regional, to the global. We have discussed issues on both sides that we wish to move forward on, on our part, duty-free and quota-free access of our products to the U.S. market and extending of GSB facilities where important. In addition, we raised the issue of Bangladesh's enrollment in the Millennium Challenge Account, repatriation one—of one of the self-confessed convicted killers of the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, currently resident in the USA, et cetera.

Both sides expressed the desire to give institutional shape to our partnership dialogue, and we have agreed on signing the Joint Declaration on Bangladesh-U.S. Dialogue on Partnership this evening. The declaration reiterates our common values and aspirations and an accent on cooperation. This declaration now formalizes a dialogue on the entire gamut of our bilateral relations and priorities on an annual basis.

Alternating between Dhaka and Washington, D.C., our friends also raised a number of special interests to them, a number of issues. These include governance and related issues, economic cooperation, counterterrorism, collaboration,

and partnership on global issues, et cetera. We have reiterated our resolve to contribute towards building a peaceful and stable world where our issues of common concern will continue to be our priority.

We wish to collectively propagate our values of democracy, diversity, rule of law, and human dignity globally, building coalitions across north-south or east-west divides, to transcend the ghettos of our minds, crafting one world on this our one earth. I thank you all.

And now I would invite Secretary Clinton to make her comments.

Secretary Clinton. Thank you very, very much, Minister. And it is a great personal pleasure for me to be back here in Bangladesh after too many years away. I am very grateful to the foreign minister for her warm and gracious welcome and the substantive conversations that we just concluded, and I am looking forward to seeing the prime minister to continue those discussions.

I am sorry that I missed the festivities for Bengali New Year. I know you put on quite a colorful celebration here in Dhaka. And I hope this will be a very successful, positive year for progress, peace, and prosperity for Bangladesh and for the friendship between our countries. That friendship goes back decades, and it is rooted in our shared democratic values, our strong economic ties, and our deep people-to-people connections.

Today, we are working together to help solve some of Bangladesh's most pressing challenges, from disaster response to healthcare, from food security to climate change. Bangladesh represents one of the largest development assistance commitments that the Obama Administration has made.

Today, I congratulated the foreign minister on the impressive progress that Bangladesh is making on a number of important issues. Bangladesh is on track to meet many Millennium Development Goals by 2015 with a particular emphasis on saving the lives of mothers and children. The rates of maternal and child mortality have dropped; the rate of poverty has dropped, and that is a great tribute to the commitment that Bangladesh and the people of this country have made to

improving the lives of all of your citizens.

And I also wish to acknowledge that Bangladesh has joined the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, which both helps save lives by promoting clean-burning stoves and fuels and also helps save the environment by removing black carbon and soot from the atmosphere. The people of Bangladesh are setting an example for people everywhere in how to meet similar challenges.

We also discussed Bangladesh's growing contributions on the regional and global stage. This country's world-renowned experts on cholera traveled to Haiti, Somalia, and elsewhere to help fight deadly outbreaks. We are working together to ensure that foreign terrorist groups cannot use Bangladeshi territory to launch attacks. And Bangladesh contributes more personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations than any other country in the world.

We also discussed how both the people of Bangladesh and its neighbors, Burma and India, are making progress together. Bangladesh is ideally geographically situated to serve as a land bridge for trade between the dynamic Asia Pacific region and the huge economic potential of South Asia. And we are pleased to see the reforms occurring in Burma, because that also holds great benefits, first and foremost for the people of that country, but also for its neighbor, Bangladesh.

And we discussed the continuing challenge that the thousands of Rohingya refugees currently living in Bangladesh and in other countries pose and that perhaps now, with the reforms going on in Burma, we can begin looking for solutions.

So there is a great, deep, rich, comprehensive agenda between the two countries, and that is why we have decided to create a U.S.-Bangladesh Partnership Dialogue. We will be signing the memorandum to that effect later this evening, but this dialogue institutionalizes the many discussions we are having. There was a very successful security discussion between our two nations' experts just last week. We have many conversations and high-level meetings on issues concerning the economy and human development. We want to try to maximize our bilateral cooperation

on the wide range of issues that are important to us, including disaster management, counterterrorism, food security, climate change, cooperation between our militaries. This new agreement should leave no doubt how much the United States values the partnership between our two countries.

On climate change in particular, I'm pleased to announce that the American development agency USAID will provide \$13 million over four years to the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund to work toward helping Bangladesh figure out what it's going to do to adapt to climate change and also how to lower your own carbon footprint. We are proud to stand with the Bangladeshi people as they take on one of the great challenges facing humanity.

In addition to all the government-to-government work that I've just described, there is a critical role for civil society, nonprofit organizations, youth leaders, activists, journalists, labor organizations, and more. Civil society sparks social change, and the civil society of Bangladesh has been a model and an inspiration for people in countries everywhere. It has made Bangladesh a home for innovation that has not only positively impacted the people of this country, but literally tens of millions around the world. If Bangladesh is to continue on the path of progress, it will be essential to maintain an environment where civil society groups operate freely.

The world has been especially inspired by the work of the Grameen Bank, which has unleashed the potential of millions of women in Bangladesh and around the world to not only improve their own livelihoods but also contribute to long-lasting economic growth in their communities and countries. And I look forward to Grameen Bank carrying on its good work for a long time to come. I hope the process for identifying a new independent and respected managing director will be carried expeditiously and transparently.

Tomorrow, I will meet with students and citizens and have the chance to speak in more detail about our friendship. But in the meantime, let me reiterate the great feeling of connection that I have for this country. I was saying to the minister that I

served as a senator from New York for eight years, and the Bangladeshi community of New York was a very active participant in the politics of that state, and I got to know many Bangladeshi American citizens and other Bangladeshis who were in New York and value my relationships with them.

I know that our people can look forward to an even more fruitful relationship in the years ahead, and I wish the people of Bangladesh a happy New Year. Thank you, Your Excellency.

Q. I have a question for Secretary Clinton. You know that Assistant Secretary of Political and Military Affairs Mr. Andrew Shapiro came here to lead U.S. delegation to the security dialogue held here last month. And after dialogue, he commented that Bangladesh is a key player in maintaining security in the Bay of Bengal. My question, whether Washington is trying to bring Bangladesh into U.S.-India access to protect security in the Bay of Bengal and explore oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal after Bangladeshi victory in the maritime boundary case against Myanmar. Thank you very much.

Secretary Clinton. Well, first, let me say that the security partnership between our two countries is very important to us both. And we commend Bangladesh's strategy that uses a zero-tolerance policy on terrorism, and we will continue to partner with the security services, your government, and the people of this country to ensure that extremists are not able to use Bangladesh as a transit or training point to commitment violence against Bangladeshis or against people anywhere.

Last month during the security dialogue, Assistant Secretary Shapiro and MFA Additional Secretary Kamal chaired that inaugural meeting and had very positive and substantial discussions related to both our bilateral defense relationship and our shared commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. I think that the future for Bangladesh is extremely positive. And you mentioned the Bay of Bengal. The recent decision setting the mar-

itime boundary between Bangladesh and Burma and the ongoing legal process concerning the boundary between Bangladesh and India will give a very clear demarcation so that Bangladesh can begin exploring and looking for resources that might benefit the people of Bangladesh. But I also think there is room for cooperation in the region in order to protect the investments that may be made regarding natural resources in order to protect against piracy.

As maritime trade increases, which is all to the benefit of Bangladesh, as exploratory work increases, which may well turn out to be to the benefit of Bangladesh, it's very important to have a process in place. And certainly what Bangladesh is doing with your outreach to Burma, your outreach to India, Sheikh Hasina's efforts to try to enhance regional cooperation is the way of the 21st century. In order to protect your own interests, your own security, your own economic prospects, there has to be very clear understandings as to what is yours, what is someone else's. We see this across the world right now because of the hunt for natural resources. And I have to commend the Government of Bangladesh for putting in motion a process that is leading to a peaceful legal outcome about boundaries, and that will lay the groundwork for the next steps to be taken.

Moderator. For the American side, CNN, Jill Doherty, please.

Q. Thank you very much. Madam Secretary, there now are reported 22 disappearances in Bangladesh, apparently political disappearances, harassment of the opposition. Is Bangladesh moving, spiraling toward serious political violence? And what are you telling both sides—or what do you plan to tell both sides to help to bring this to some type of control? And then also, is there any update on Mr. Chen from Beijing?

Secretary Clinton. Well first, let me say that we discussed these issues. We discussed the recent killing of Mr. Islam, the labor organizer. We discussed the recent disappearance of Mr. Ali, the political organizer and the need for thorough, independent investigations. The minister

stated very clearly that it was this government's policy to conduct such investigations and that there was no room for impunity. The democracy that Bangladesh has developed depends upon the rule of law, it depends upon political actors of any and every political party being committed to the rule of law to transparency. We urge all political actors in Bangladesh to work together for the good of the country regardless of differences in viewpoints on any policy matter.

In a strong democracy, everybody has to be rowing in the same direction because you're all in the same boat. You're going to make progress together or you're going to run into very turbulent waters. And it's important that in this country, which has such unlimited potential and has proven its ability to sustain the democratic path—the elections of 2008 were free, fair, credible, recognized as such around the world—that everybody take seriously any disappearance, any violence against activists, any oppression of civil society, any intimidation of the press. That is just what's required in the 21st century if democracy is sustainable.

So I am very clear in my hopes for the continuing action on the part of this government of civil society or political actors, because ultimately, it is up to the people of Bangladesh who are the beneficiaries of a healthy, functioning democracy. Violent demonstrations like the recent hartals during which five lives were tragically lost exact a heavy toll, especially on Bangladesh's poorest and most vulnerable citizens. They also send a negative signal to the international community about the investment climate here. So we continue to support democracy in Bangladesh and the freedoms that every Bangladeshi is entitled to of speech and expression and the right to peacefully assemble. And we strongly urge all sides to settle differences through constructive political dialogue, including parliamentary debate.

We want to see Bangladesh succeed. This is personal for me. I've been following Bangladesh now closely for 17 years. I remember the faces of the women and children and men that I met in the villages. I feel so hopeful about what can happen here, and I really am urging all parties—not just the government, but all

parties to do everything necessary to support democracy, to plan for another free, fair, and credible election and to stay committed.

Finally, with respect to your second question, as I said yesterday, we're encouraged by the progress we made in supporting his efforts to have the future he seeks. We are closely engaged in following up as he takes the next steps, and we will certainly keep you informed as we go forward.

Q. I am from ATN Bangla, the first private television in Bangladesh. My question is—before I go for the question, let's say Bangladesh, developing country like ours, we always seek assistance from you. Our foreign minister said we want duty free, quota free access about production, U.S. market, we want development assistance from U.S. and many things. Sometimes our political leaders seek your advice for democracy and many things. But as a journalist, I want to know United States actually wants from Bangladesh.

Secretary Clinton. We want Bangladesh to be a prosperous, successful, democratic country that demonstrates unequivocally that democracy is the best path to sustainable development, that despite the challenges of a democratic process, there is a consensus that cuts across all political actors, that there must be cooperation on the fundamental issues facing the country in order to achieve the level of development that the people of Bangladesh deserve.

We do not seek anything other than that. Within the context of two democracies working together, we have cooperated on many of the issues that the minister and I have referenced on development, on trade, on security, and we will continue to do so. But we are betting on Bangladesh. That's why it's very important to us to continue to urge the hard decisions that are necessary for the rule of law, for transparency. None of this is easy. If it were easy, anybody could do it. And a lot of countries have given up or never tried. You have never given up, and you never have

stopped trying, and that is to the great credit of the people of Bangladesh and to successive leaders. And it has not been easy. The history that brought this country into being, the struggle to establish and sustain a democracy is one that I admire, because it's been hard. So we don't want to see any faltering or flagging. We want to see democracy flourish in Bangladesh. The progress on the Millennium Development Goals sends a clear message that this can be done. The fact you now have a hundred percent enrollment in primary school, this is the future. So all of the issues we raise, we raise as a friend and a partner, as a country deeply committed to that banyan tree that Senator Ted Kennedy planted all those years ago. We want to see this country flourish. That's the best way that I can describe what we want from you.

Moderator. Last question tonight on the American side from Reuters, Andy Quinn. Thank you.

Q. Thanks. Madam Secretary, again, to you. If we could please look ahead tomorrow to your visit to India. The U.S.-India relationship is often described as a natural partnership, but as a partnership that seems to be very slow in delivering. There are a number of issues outstanding—lack of progress on the civil nuclear deal, slow or nonexistent progress in opening markets to consumer FDI, and New Delhi's, publicly anyway, lukewarm stance on Iran—cutting Iran oil imports. Why has progress been so slow in your view? And what concrete expectations do you have for advances on any of these three major areas during your visit over the next couple of days. Thank you.

Secretary Clinton. Well, Andy, of course I'll have more to say when I'm in India about our relationship. So just very briefly, we see signs of a lot of progress. I think trade is up 19 percent. We are deepening and broadening our cooperation across many issues. We are developing partnerships in areas we never have before, like in higher education. Our clean energy cooperation is extraordinarily far reaching. So I think it's like any relation-

ship. There's progress in some areas that we are very heartened by, and there's more work to be done, but that's the commitment that we make when we say to another country, "We want to be your partner," which is why it's so important what we're doing in Bangladesh here today. Because these are long-term relationships.

This is not something here today, gone tomorrow. We are developing in our partnerships the habits of cooperation, the institutionalization that lasts from government to government. I will not be the Secretary of State next year, and I want to see our partnership with Bangladesh or our partnership with India or any other country be embedded in our two governments. And therefore, we are in it for the long term, and we work on these issues together. We make progress. Sometimes there are setbacks, but these are two important countries to us—India and Bangladesh—and we see them in their own ways as being real leaders regionally and globally. I mean, I mentioned that Bangladesh leads the world in U.S. peacekeeping forces, and I have seen those peacekeeping forces. I've seen them all over the world, and you should be very proud.

And I have to confess I'm also very proud of the women that you have in your security forces. When I see them, it is such a strong signal that here is the fourth largest Muslim nation in the world with women leaders of the caliber of the foreign minister, of the prime minister, proud young women serving in every capacity as journalists and as security and military personnel. Bangladesh has so much to give and to model for the world. So we know this is hard, but we are confident. We're confident in the kind of future that his country is building, and we're going to be by your side. We will continue to raise difficult issues, because we think that's what friends do. We're not going to sit by if we see something we believe you should focus on. But overall, we are very much on a positive trajectory together, and we will remain committed to that. Thank you.

**Excerpt of Interview
Secretary of State Clinton,
May 8, 2012⁵**

Secretary Hillary Clinton gave the following interview in New Delhi, India

Q. When you were in China, you talked about how an established power like the U.S. is working with this rising power of China; the same is true here in India. But here, you have a democracy, more of a natural partner for the U.S., yet India still doesn't see eye to eye with the U.S. on some of its policies, like Syria or Iran. How are you working through that with them on this trip?

Secretary Clinton. Well, I don't know any two nations that see eye to eye on everything, whether they're democracies or authoritarian. And part of diplomacy—part of what I do all day, every day—is working with counterparts to try to make progress in areas where we agree, try to narrow the areas of disagreement, and bridge them in some way. And India is the largest democracy in the world. It is, by its own self description, contentious, argumentative, dynamic, and they have to balance out 1.3 billion opinions, because people actually get to vote and they get their voices heard and they have a very strong tradition of engagement domestically. So I'm not surprised that there would be debates within their society and political system just like there are within ours.

Q. But do you feel like you made some progress with them on, for instance, the issue of Iran?

Secretary Clinton. Well, as I just said in a press conference, they have certainly made progress in reducing their imports of crude oil from Iran. Their refineries are cutting back. And they share our goal. Their goal is our goal, which is to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. And I'm convinced that Iran never would have come to the table for the serious negotiations that we are pursuing within the P-5+1 context had it not been for the tough sanctions.

On the other hand, if you're an Indian politician or an Indian business owner or an Indian citizen, who is desperate to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and get them electricity and keep the lights on, this is a hard decision for them because they have been historically looking to Iran for a significant percentage of their oil.

So I always try to put myself in the other person's shoes and say okay, if—we don't get oil from Iran, so it's no skin off our nose as Americans. We want everybody to come together and try to convince Iran to make the right decision. Some countries in Europe that were very dependent upon Iranian oil have found substitutes. Japan has made significant progress, and India is working toward that too, looking for affordable, reliable supplies. But you have to understand where other countries are coming from, and the point that I have made, not just to the Indians but to many other countries, is the United States is leading an international effort to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon or prevent its potential nuclear weaponization from being the cause of conflict, which would be really bad for anybody who gets any oil from the Middle East. So you have to balance all of that. And it's a calculus that countries make, kind of like people.

Q. Does India have any sort of role to play in passing messages to Iran—

Secretary Clinton. Absolutely. And we know they have. I mean, we've asked them to; they have been conveying their concern about Iran's behavior. They just had Iranian agents try to kill an Israeli diplomat—kind of reminiscent of what we've discovered when Iranians were trying to kill the ambassador from Saudi Arabia to Washington. So they—they're investigating that crime. They have put themselves on the line to get Iran back into the P-5+1. They have made it very clear, publicly and privately, that Iran is not in any way entitled to a nuclear weapon. So they're very much on the same page we are and they are working through this very difficult issue regarding oil. They're making progress.

**Remarks by Secretary of
State Clinton and Burmese
Foreign Minister Wunna
Maung Lwin, May 17, 2012⁶**

Secretary Hillary Clinton and Foreign Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin gave the following remarks in Washington, DC

Secretary Clinton. Good afternoon. I am delighted to welcome the foreign minister here today to Washington. We have been looking forward to Minister Wunna Maung Lwin's visit and the continuation of the close consultation and cooperation that has begun taking place between our two countries. We met in Nay Pyi Taw last December, and I am very pleased to have you here, sir.

This is a historic visit—the first in decades, and it is a testament to how far we have come together in a short period of time. I want to salute President Thein Sein for his leadership and the leadership of his government as it charts a path of political and democratic reform for his country. I want to salute those like Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all who struggled and sacrificed because they believe in a better future for their country as well.

And I want to thank everyone here in the United States who has supported this process and understands the significance of what is happening. In particular, our partners on Capitol Hill—Republican and Democrat alike—including Senators McConnell, McCain, Kerry, Webb, Shaheen, Congressman Crowley, and others.

This is a moment for us to recognize that the progress which has occurred in the last year toward democratization and national reconciliation is irreversible, as the minister said to me. The United States wants to do everything we can to be sure that is the reality.

I applauded the parliamentary elections and recent steps to bring an end to conflict with the Karen National Union, one of a number of internal conflicts with ethnic minority groups that remain a matter of concern that the government is focused on. And I heard a very promising report

from the minister about the additional steps that are being taken to continue reform.

The United States is committed to supporting this reform. We want to encourage it. We acknowledge it. But more than that, we want to be partners in seeing it continue. So today, we are announcing the nomination of Ambassador Derek Mitchell as our new ambassador, the first since 1990. Ambassador Mitchell has been serving as my special representative. He is well known and respected in the region. I urge the United States Senate to quickly confirm him to this new post so he can continue our important work. And I look forward to welcoming your ambassador to Washington.

Today, I am also announcing new steps to permit American investment in the country and export of U.S. financial services. These are the most significant adjustments to our previous policy that have been taken to date. The United States will issue a general license that will enable American businesses to invest across the economy, allow citizens access to international credit markets and dollar-based transactions.

So today, we say to American business: Invest in Burma and do it responsibly; be an agent of positive change and be a good corporate citizen; let's all work together to create jobs, opportunity, and support reform.

Now, these are important steps that will help bring the country into the global economy, spur broad-based economic development, and support ongoing reform. We are doing what others have done—the European Union, the United Kingdom. We are suspending sanctions. We believe that that is the appropriate step for us to take today. We will be keeping relevant laws on the books as an insurance policy, but our goal and our commitment is to move as rapidly as we can to expand business and investment opportunities.

The State Department will work with Congress and our colleagues across government, particularly the Treasury Department, to be sure we are promoting responsible investment and deterring abuses. We strongly support the private sector being a full partner, and we want our businesses to set a good corporate example of doing

business in a transparent, responsible manner.

We'll expect U.S. firms to conduct due diligence to avoid any problems, including human rights abuses. We expect our businesses to create a grievance process that will be accessible to local communities; to demonstrate appropriate treatment of employees, respect for the environment; to be a good corporate citizen; and to promote equitable, sustainable development that will benefit the people.

And we hope that our partners in Europe and Asia will uphold the same high standards. The people have waited a long time because they have every right to expect development that will benefit them, not outsiders or insiders, but instead, the people themselves. Now, we are mindful of a pattern of abuses by companies and others, particularly in the ethnic minority areas. So we will keep our eyes wide open to try to ensure that anyone who abuses human rights or obstructs reforms or engages in corruption do not benefit financially from increased trade and investment with the United States, including companies owned or operated by the military. We will be maintaining the arms embargo, because we want to see amongst the reforms that are taking place a move for the armed forces to be under civilian control.

We will also continue working with the government in Nay Pyi Taw to put in place internationally recognized business and labor practices that foster respect for the rule of law. We will be taking these steps mindful of the difficult decisions that the government has already made and will continue to make. We also would like to see the release of any continued political prisoners and a continued emphasis in law and action to promoting national reconciliation.

The United States is very committed to supporting the end of the ethnic conflicts in the country. We think that the diversity of population is a source of great strength for the country going forward. And yesterday, I had a group of young people who were visiting the United States representing the mosaic of different backgrounds and ethnicities, and it was very exciting to see them all together focused on making their contribution to the future.

We are concerned about violence in Kachin State in recent weeks, and I was very pleased to hear about new mechanisms, both official and nongovernmental, to encourage meaningful dialogue. And as I said, the government must do all it can do. People on the other side of the table in these conflicts also must be willing to cooperate, to seek an equitable, fair ending to the conflicts. So reconciliation is a priority, and we will continue to support that.

Finally, we discussed our concerns about North Korea. I am encouraged by reports that President Thein Sein has stated he will end the military relationship with North Korea, and the minister assured me that they will fully comply with international obligations on nonproliferation.

I am very, very positive about what is happening, and I know how difficult this will be. It is never easy. I often remind people about the challenges my own country faced. They were faced many, many years ago—so you didn't have the internet, television, constant attention being paid, as we struggle to live up to our own hopes and aspirations. So this is going to be an exciting, challenging journey for your country and those of us who are committed to supporting you.

But I am very pleased that the United States is taking these steps today, encouraging our businesses to go and help you grow your economy, encouraging our nongovernmental organizations to go and partner with you on education, healthcare, the environment, and so much else.

So, Minister, thank you for being here today, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Foreign Minister Wanna Maung Lwin. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary. Ladies and gentlemen, I have come to Washington, D.C. on an official visit at the invitation of Secretary Clinton. And this afternoon, we had a friendly and cordial discussion on matters relating to further promotion of bilateral relations. I have also had the opportunity to call on Senator McCain, Senator McConnell, and Senator Jim Webb. I also meet with—I will also meet with Deputy Secretary of State William Burns later this afternoon.

And during my meeting with them, they reiterated their recognition and support of the ongoing reforms undertaken by the government and President Thein Sein in Myanmar. We also discussed about further strengthening of relationship and cooperation in various areas of mutual interest, increased assistance to the people of Myanmar, and lifting of sanctions and restrictions imposed by the United States against Myanmar.

I have expressed our appreciations to the government and the people of the United States for supporting our efforts of reforms and the transition to democracy, and reiterated our determination to continue our reforms. The decision on the appointment of ambassadors in both countries is an important step forward in our efforts to resumption of normal diplomatic relations after more than 20 years.

Ambassador U Than Shwe will be the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United States. He is currently serving as permanent representative of Myanmar to the United Nations in New York. I have full confidence in him, because he has done an excellent job as our interlocutor with the United States side since we began dialogue for resumption of normal diplomatic relations over the last several months.

I am also blessed that Ambassador Derek Mitchell will be the new U.S. Ambassador to Myanmar. And Ambassador Mitchell is no stranger to Myanmar. In the past 12 months, he has successfully served as a U.S. special representative and policy coordinator for Myanmar, during which I had the pleasure to work with him very closely.

So my congratulations to both of them and wish them all the best for their new important responsibilities. I wish to thank Secretary Clinton for inviting me to Washington for official visit. I would like to express our appreciation to the State Department and the United States Government for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality accorded to us, as well as for the excellent arrangements made for us during our stay in Washington. I thank you all.

Secretary Clinton. Thank you so much.

Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin. Thank you.

Q. Secretary Clinton, regarding the easing of economic restrictions, will the—will U.S. companies be able to invest and trade with Myanmar state-owned companies, including in the oil and gas sector? And also, you talk about the corporate responsibilities of U.S. companies. Will these expectations be binding under U.S. law?

And, Minister, could I ask you—there is a lot of international concern about the continued detention of political prisoners. Can you say whether these prisoners, of which people say there are hundreds—are they going to be released? And if so, when will they be released?

Secretary Clinton. Well, thank you. First, let me say our presumption is that our companies will be able to deal in every sector of the economy with any business. That is a rebuttable presumption in the event that there is a company whose reputation, whose practices, are not in keeping with our stated policies of corporate responsibility or other matters that rise to our attention. But the presumption is that our oil and gas companies, our mining companies, our financial services companies are all now free to look for investments that can be mutually beneficial to Burma and to them.

Now, we are taking these steps in a measured, responsible way. We are keeping on the books all legislation and executive authorities that does give us flexibility, if the facts warrant, to tighten sanctions again—similar, as I said, to what the EU, the UK, and others have done. And moving forward, we will be working with our businesses to be sure that they do exercise the highest standards of corporate responsibility.

When I was in Burma, I heard stories about some companies that didn't have a good reputation for the way they treated people, didn't have good working conditions, didn't abide by the basics of how you should run a company. They weren't American companies, but it came to my mind that I want people to look at Ameri-

can companies and say that's how you should treat workers, that's how you should treat the environment, you shouldn't deal with bad customers; you should deal with respectable, responsible businesses if they're state-owned or if they are private and independent.

So we are very confident that suspending these sanctions and moving forward is exactly the right step to take for now, and we're enthusiastically encouraging American businesses to invest.

Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin. Well, for the question you have asked to me about the prisoners, the president has granted amnesty four times in the past 12 months, past 12 or 13 months. About 28,000 prisoners were released from prison, and we have (inaudible) lists, so-called political prisoners, from the European Union as well as from the United States. And after the last amnesty, which has been granted in January, most of the people included in these lists were released.

And there are some remaining from the lists. After thoroughly checking and investigating these lists, there are—they are some prisoners who have criminal offenses, such as murder, rapes, or connecting to terrorist activities. But the president, in exercising his mandate invested upon him by the constitution, he will further granted amnesties when appropriate. I think this will answer your question.

Q. Actually, I have two parts of the questions and plus I'd like to address to the Madam Secretary and Minister Wunna Muang Lwin. Since the United States is easing the sanctions, could that cause collide with the China, which is quite influential in the region? And also, we have seen the report of the concerns from the Chinese officials. And also, last year we have seen that China is disappointed after suspension of Myitsone dam project. Thank you.

Secretary Clinton. Well, let me say what I said when I was in Nay Pyi Taw. The United States does not expect any country to give up relationships with their neighbors. And China is a neighbor, and there are longstanding ties that certainly

are deep in the soils of both nations. What we are doing is providing additional support for the kind of development, both politically and economically, that the reform process, which the government in Nay Pyi Taw has begun, has made possible.

Because we do value representative government, democracy, good working conditions, protection of the environment, the kinds of things that the United States stands for, we hope that our relationship can be one that is very supportive of what I am told are the steps that the government and the people themselves wish to take.

So this is not about any other nation. This is between us. This is rooted in the changes we have watched happen and our desire to support the continuation of those changes. And we fully expect that there will be many countries, as you've already seen, who want to develop stronger and better relationships in the neighborhood, in the region, and around the world. And we think that's good to open up the country, give the people more opportunities. So we are very pleased to be a partner in this.

Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin. Informing on the part of the relationship with China, we have a very long, traditional, and historical relation with China. We have very good relations with China, as we are neighboring countries sharing the common border of more than 2,000 kilometers. So we are cooperating with China. We are inviting investments. There are investment from China.

And according to the suspension of the Myitsone project, we have our domestic concerns, and then we have suspended that and we have informed that cordially to the Chinese side. And this is only a part of the cooperation between China and Myanmar. They can—they understand the situation very well. And I do not want to support your comments that China is disappointed with that, because we have explained the situation very clearly to the authorities and the respective and responsible ministry, and the Chinese company are discussing about the matter also. We have had a very good cooperation with China. So I think that this will not jeopardize the future relations with China.

On the part of the relation with United States, we have this pillar of our foreign policy to have good, friendly relations with—relationships with all the countries around the world. In this aspect, we are working closely with United States to have a strong bilateral relations with United States also.

Secretary Clinton. Thank you very much.

Remarks by Secretary of State Clinton and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Peiris, May 18, 2012⁷

Secretary Hillary Clinton and Foreign Minister Gamini Lakshman Peiris gave the following remarks in Washington, DC

Secretary Clinton. I am delighted to welcome Minister Peiris, the external affairs minister from Sri Lanka. The United States strongly supports the process of reconciliation and reconstruction in Sri Lanka. We have very strong, important ties between our two countries. We were encouraged to see the end of a very long, bloody, terrible conflict, and look forward to working with Sri Lanka as they pursue their commitment to a better future for all the people. And the United States wants to be a supportive partner in those efforts. I'm looking forward to a productive conversation with the minister.

Foreign Minister Peiris. Well, it was exactly two years ago that I was here at the invitation of the Secretary of State, and I am delighted to be here on this occasion to have a wide-ranging discussion with the Secretary of State. During the intervening period of two years, a great deal has happened in my country, and by any standard, those developments represent a substantial accomplishment.

We have been able to complete 90 percent of the work connected with the resettlement of the people who were displaced by the conflict, and there is also a very

moving story in human terms with regard to the ex-combatants who have all been rehabilitated. This includes 595 child soldiers who—they have all been reintegrated into society after the benefit of exposure to programs of vocational training which equip them to earn their living.

The most striking developments have really been in the northern province of Sri Lanka where the economy is growing by as much as 22 percent in comparison with the average for the rest of the island, which is about 8 percent. Now this is the result of an emphasis on the development of infrastructure to a degree that is really without (inaudible) at any other time in the island's history.

This is, itself, the product of a deep conviction of ours that there is an intimate connection between reconciliation and economic development. We believe that any realistic process of reconciliation must focus upon economic factors, there must be a certain threshold of economic contentment and well-being, and emphasis on access to livelihoods and incomes. These are essential aspects of a reconciliation process. They have overriding importance, although of course we are, at the same time, addressing other aspects of reconciliation including land, language, which is a key to the understanding of other cultures, and it is also, as I'm sure you would agree, a very powerful instrument for preventing the stratification of (inaudible) society. We are also addressing, in earnest, constitutional reforms which are appropriate at this stage of the country's political and social development.

I think I should refer very briefly to another deep conviction of ours, namely that a reconciliation process, if it is to be successful, it must reflect sensitivity to the aspirations of our people. It must have a homegrown polity. It is only then that the people of the country at large will be able to identify this process, which will then come alive in their hearts and minds.

Now, we have at this moment, a very rich and multifaceted relationship between Sri Lanka and the United States. We have as many as 5,000 students studying in the universities of the United States. And there is excellent cooperation between our two governments in the realm of defense.

And only yesterday, I had a very productive meeting in the office of the United States Trade Representative, and the object of that meeting was to explore ways and means of building upon the trade and investment framework agreement which is in existence between our two countries.

And I'm convinced that today, more than ever before, with the return of stability and tranquility to our country, there is abundant scope for building further upon the relationship that is already very strong and vibrant. And that is why I'm particularly happy to be here in Washington today to meet with the Secretary of State to have a candid discussion about the future of the bilateral relationship between Sri Lanka and the United States. Thank you.

Secretary Clinton. Thank you so much, minister. Thank you all.

Remarks by President Obama and Afghan President Karzai, May 20, 2012⁸

President Barack Obama and President Hamid Karzai gave the following remarks in Chicago

President Obama. All right. Good morning, everybody. It is a great pleasure to welcome President Karzai to my hometown of Chicago after he extended hospitality to me during my visit to Kabul recently. During that trip to Afghanistan, we were able to finalize the Strategic Partnership Agreement that reflects a future in which two sovereign nations—the United States and Afghanistan—are operating as partners, to the benefit of our countries' citizens, but also for the benefit of peace and security and stability in the region and around the world.

I want to thank President Karzai for his cooperation, and his delegation's hard work in helping us to achieve the Strategic Partnership Agreement. And the NATO Summit is going to be largely devoted to ratifying and reflecting the

broad consensus that so many of our partners and ISAF members have agreed to—one in which we are working with the Afghans over the next several years to achieve a complete transition to Afghan lead for Afghan security; one in which we continue to provide support for the Afghan National Security Forces that have made excellent progress over the last several years; and also painting a vision post-2014 in which we have ended our combat role, the Afghan war as we understand it is over, but our commitment to friendship and partnership with Afghanistan continues.

And so the Strategic Partnership Agreement, this NATO Summit, are all part and parcel of a shared vision that we have in which Afghanistan is able to transition from decades of war to a transformational decade of peace and stability and development. And so I just want to stress my appreciation for the hard work that President Karzai has done. I think he recognizes the enormous sacrifices that have been made by the American people and, most profoundly, by American troops, as well as the troops of our other coalition partners. We recognize the hardship that the Afghan people have been through during these many, many years of war. Both of us recognize that we still have a lot of work to do, and there will be great challenges ahead. The loss of life continues in Afghanistan; there will be hard days ahead. But we're confident that we are on the right track, and what this NATO Summit reflects is that the world is behind the strategy that we've laid out.

Now it's our task to implement it effectively. And I believe that we can do so, in part because of the tremendous strength and resilience of the Afghan people. I think they desperately want peace and security and development. And so long as they're reflecting that resilience and that hope for a better future, they will have a friend in the United States of America.

So, President Karzai, welcome. I am confident this will be a productive NATO Summit, and I'm looking forward to continuing to work to implement the plans that we've laid out.

President Karzai. Thank you, Mr. President. We have had a good meeting today

in which Afghanistan reaffirmed its commitment to the transition process and to the completion of it in 2013, and the completion of withdrawal of our partners in 2014, so that Afghanistan is no longer a burden on the shoulder of our friends in the international community, on the shoulders of the United States and our other allies.

Afghanistan, indeed, Mr. President, as you very rightly put it, is looking forward to an end to this war, and a transformational decade in which Afghanistan will be working further for institution building and the development of sounder governance in the country and a better economy, where the Afghans will be taking steady steps towards self-reliance in all aspects of life, that Afghanistan will be collecting its own revenues.

But in the meantime, that the world community, in particular the United States and our allies in NATO and ISAF, will be with us to make sure that we take steady and strong steps and are back while you are making those steps towards 2024, when Afghanistan will be largely defending itself and providing for itself.

Mr. President, the partnership that we signed a few weeks ago in Kabul has turned a new page in our relations. And the new page is a page of two sovereign countries working together for the mutual interests—peace and security and in all other areas of concentration.

Mr. President, I'm bringing to you and to the people of the United States the gratitude of the Afghan people for the support that your taxpayers' money has provided us over the past decade, and for the difference that it has made to the wellbeing of the Afghan people—to our education and health and the building of the Afghan government.

Mr. President, Afghanistan is fully aware of the task ahead and of what Afghanistan needs to do to reach the objectives that we all have of a stable, peaceful and self-reliant Afghanistan.

In the meantime, until then, thank you for your support.

President Obama. Thank you. All right, thank you, guys. Thank you.

Excerpts of Remarks by President Obama, May 21, 2012⁹

President Barack Obama gave the following remarks at the NATO Summit in Chicago

President Obama. [A]s I said yesterday, NATO has been the bedrock of common security, freedom and prosperity for nearly 65 years. It hasn't just endured. It has thrived, because our nations are stronger when we stand together. We saw that, of course, most recently in Libya, where NATO afforded capabilities that no one else in the world could match.

As President, one of my top foreign policy priorities has been to strengthen our alliances, including NATO, and that's exactly what we've done. Two years ago in Lisbon, we took action in several areas that are critical to the future of our alliance and we pledged that in Chicago we would do more. Over the last two days, we have delivered.

First, we reached agreement on a series of steps to strengthen the alliance's defense capabilities over the next decade. In keeping with the strategic concept we agreed to in Lisbon and in order to fulfill our Article Five commitment to our collective security, we agreed to acquire a fleet of remotely piloted aircraft, drones, to strengthen intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. We agreed to continue air patrols over our Baltic allies, which reflects our unwavering commitment to collective defense. We also agreed on a mix of conventional nuclear missile and missile defense forces that we need, and importantly, we agreed on how to pay for them and that includes pooling our resources in these difficult economic times.

We're moving forward with missile defense, and agreed that NATO is declaring an interim capability for the system. America's contribution to this effort will be a phased adaptive approach that we're pursuing on European missile defense. And I want to commend our allies who are stepping up and playing a leadership role in missile defense, as well. Our defense radar in Turkey will be placed

under NATO control. Spain, Romania and Poland have agreed to host key U.S. assets. The Netherlands will be upgrading radars, and we look forward to contributions from other allies. Since this system is neither aimed at nor undermines Russia's strategic deterrent, I continue to believe that missile defense can be an area of cooperation with Russia.

Second, we're now unified behind a plan to responsibly wind down the war in Afghanistan, a plan that trains Afghan security forces, transitions to the Afghans and builds a partnership that can endure after our combat mission in Afghanistan ends. Since last year, we've been transitioning parts of Afghanistan to the Afghan National Security Forces and that has enabled our troops to start coming home. Indeed, we're in the process of drawing down 33,000 U.S. troops by the end of this summer.

Here in Chicago, we reached agreement on the next milestone in that transition. At the ISAF meeting this morning, we agreed that Afghan forces will take the lead for combat operations next year in mid-2013. At that time, ISAF forces will have shifted from combat to a support role in all parts of the country. And this will mark a major step toward the goal we agreed to in Lisbon, completing the transition to Afghan lead for security by the end of 2014, so that Afghans can take responsibility for their own country and so our troops can come home.

This will not mark the end of Afghanistan's challenges, obviously, or our partnership with that important country. But we are making substantial progress against our core objective of defeating al Qaeda and denying it safe haven, while helping the Afghans to stand on their own. And we leave Chicago with a clear roadmap. Our coalition is committed to this plan to bring our war in Afghanistan to a responsible end.

We also agreed on what NATO's relationship with Afghanistan will look like after 2014. NATO will continue to train, advise and assist, and support Afghan forces as they grow stronger. And while this summit has not been a pledging conference, it's been encouraging to see a number of countries making significant financial commitments to sustain

Afghanistan's progress in the years ahead. Today the international community also expressed its strong support for efforts to bring peace and stability to South Asia, including Afghanistan's neighbors.

Finally, NATO agreed to deepen its cooperation with partners that have been critical to alliance operations, as in Afghanistan and Libya. Today's meeting was unprecedented. Our 28 allies, joined by 13 nations from around the world—Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. Each of these countries has contributed to NATO operations in different ways—military, political, financial—and each wants to see us do more together. To see the breadth of those countries represented in that room is to see how NATO has truly become a hub of global security.

So again I want to thank all my fellow leaders. I think the bottom line is that we are leaving Chicago with a NATO alliance that is stronger, more capable and more ready for the future. As a result, each of our nations—the United States included—is more secure, and we're in a stronger position to advance the security and prosperity and freedom that we seek around the world.

So with that, I'm going to take a couple of questions, and I'm going to start with Julie Pace of AP. Where's Julie? There she is.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You have said that the U.S. can't deal with Afghanistan without also talking about Pakistan. And yet, there has been little public discussion at this summit about Pakistan's role in ending the war. In your talks with President Zardari today, did you make any progress in reopening the supply lines? And if the larger tensions with Pakistan can't be resolved, does that put the NATO coalition's gains in Afghanistan at risk?

President Obama. Well, keep in mind my discussion with President Zardari was very brief, as we were walking into the summit and I emphasized to him what we have emphasized publicly as well as privately. We think that Pakistan has to be part of the solution in Afghanistan, that it is in our national interest to see a Pakistan that is democratic, that is prosperous and

that is stable, that we share a common enemy in the extremists that are found not only in Afghanistan, but also within Pakistan and that we need to work through some of the tensions that have inevitably arisen after 10 years of our military presence in that region.

President Zardari shared with me his belief that these issues can get worked through. We didn't anticipate that the supply line issue was going to be resolved by this summit. We knew that before we arrived in Chicago. But we're actually making diligent progress on it.

And I think ultimately everybody in the alliance, all of ISAF, and most importantly the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan understand that neither country is going to have the kind of security, stability, and prosperity that it needs unless they can resolve some of these outstanding issues and join in common purpose with the international community in making sure that these regions are not harboring extremists. So I don't want to paper over real challenges there. There is no doubt that there have been tensions between ISAF and Pakistan, the United States and Pakistan over the last several months. I think they are being worked through both military and diplomatic channels.

But ultimately, it is in our interest to see a successful, stable Pakistan and it is in Pakistan's interest to work with us and the world community to ensure that they themselves are not consumed by extremism that is in their midst. And so we're going to keep on going at this. And I think every NATO member, every ISAF member is committed to that.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to take you back to not this summit, but the one you hosted at Camp David a couple of days ago and whether you feel that you can assure investors there are contingency plans in place to cope if Greece leaves the euro to prevent a Lehman-like shock to the U.S. and the global economy?

President Obama. We had an extensive discussion of the situation in the eurozone and obviously everybody is keenly inter-

ested in getting that issue resolved.

I'm not going to speculate on what happens if the Greek choose to exit because they've got an election and this is going to be an important debate inside of Greece. Everybody who was involved in the G8 summit indicated their desire to see Greece stay in the eurozone in a way that's consistent with the commitments that it's already—that have already been made. And I think it's important for Greece, which is a democracy, to work through what their options are at time of great difficulty.

I think we all understand, though, what's at stake. What happens in Greece has an impact here in the United States. Businesses are more hesitant to invest if they see a lot of uncertainty looming across the Atlantic because they're not sure whether that's going to mean a further global slowdown. And we're already seeing very slow growth rates and in fact contraction in a lot of countries in Europe. So we had an extensive discussion about how do we strengthen the European project generally in a way that does not harm world economic growth, but instead moves it forward.

And I've been clear I think in—not just this week, but over the last two years about what I think needs to be done. We've got to put in place firewalls that ensure that countries outside of Greece that are doing the right thing aren't harmed just because markets are skittish and nervous.

We've got to make sure that banks are recapitalized in Europe so that investors have confidence. And we've got to make sure that there is a growth strategy to go alongside the need for fiscal discipline, as well as a monetary policy that is promoting the capacity of countries like a Spain or an Italy that have put in place some very tough targets and some very tough policies, to also offer their constituencies a prospect for the economy improving, job growth increasing, incomes expanding even if it may take a little bit of time.

And the good news was you saw a consensus across the board from newly elected President Hollande to Chancellor Merkel to other members of the European community that that balanced approach is what's needed right now. They're going to

be meeting this week to try to advance those discussions further. We've offered to be there for consultation to provide any technical assistance and work through some of these ideas in terms of how we can stabilize the markets there.

Ultimately, what I think is most important is that Europe recognizes this euro project involves more than just a currency, it means that there's got to be some more effective coordination on the fiscal and the monetary side and on the growth agenda. And I think that there was strong intent there to move in that direction. Of course, they've got 17 countries that have to agree to every step they take. So I think about my one Congress, then I start thinking about 17 congresses and I start getting a little bit of a headache. It's going to be challenging for them.

The last point I'll make is I do sense greater urgency now than perhaps existed two years ago or two and a half years ago. And keep in mind just for folks here in the States, when we look backwards at our response in 2008 and 2009, there was some criticism because we had to make a bunch of tough political decisions.

In fact, there's still criticism about some of the decisions we made. But one of the things we were able to do was to act forcefully to solve a lot of these problems early, which is why credit markets that were locked up started loosening up again. That's why businesses started investing again. That's why we've seen job growth of over 4 million jobs over the last two years. That's why corporations are making money and that's why we've seen strong economic growth for a long time.

And so, acting forcefully rather than in small, bite-sized pieces and increments, I think, ends up being a better approach, even though obviously we're still going through challenges ourselves. I mean, some of these issues are ones that built up over decades.

All right? Stephen Collinson. Where's Stephen?

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. As you at this summit try to continue the work of stopping Afghanistan from reverting to its former role as a terrorist haven, terrorists today in Yemen massacred a hundred soldiers. Are you concerned

that despite U.S. efforts, Yemen seems to be slipping further into anarchy? And what more can the U.S. do to slow that process?

President Obama. We are very concerned about al Qaeda activity and extremist activity in Yemen. A positive development has been a relatively peaceful political transition in Yemen and we participated diplomatically along with Yemen's neighbors in helping to lead to a political transition, but the work is not yet done.

We have established a strong counterterrorism partnership with the Yemeni government, but there's no doubt that in a country that is still poor, that is still unstable, it is attracting a lot of folks that previously might have been in the FATA before we started putting pressure on them there. And we're going to continue to work with the Yemeni government to try to identify AQAP leadership and operations and try to thwart them. That's important for U.S. safety. It's also important for the stability of Yemen and for the region.

But I think one of the things that we've learned from the Afghanistan experience is for us to stay focused on the counterterrorism issue, to work with the government, to not overextend ourselves, to operate smartly in dealing with these issues. And it's not unique to Yemen, by the way. I mean we've got similar problems in Somalia, what's happening now in Mali and the Sahel. And so this is part of the reason why not only is NATO important, but these partnerships that we're establishing is important because there are going to be times where these partners have more effective intelligence operations, more diplomatic contacts, et cetera in some of these parts of the world where the state is a little wobbly and you may see terrorists attempting to infiltrate or set up bases.

Yes, I'm going to call on Jake Tapper because, Jake, Jay Carney told me that you've been talking to some of our troops in Afghanistan. And since so much of the topic of this summit has been on Afghanistan, obviously none of this would be working were it not for the extraordinary sacrifices that they're making, so—

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. I appreciate it. Yes, I put out an invitation for some troops and their families that I know and I'll just give you two or three of them. Mr. President, if this handoff and withdrawal prove premature, what plans are in place for dealing with an Afghanistan that's falling apart or is possibly again under Taliban rule? And I'll just do one more, do you feel that the reporting you receive from the Pentagon fully represents what the on-ground commanders assess? Is there any disconnect between what leaders feel the public and President want to hear versus what is actually occurring on the ground? These are from troops I've met who served in Nuristan Province.

President Obama. Let me take the second question first. I mean, I think that one of the things that I emphasize whenever I'm talking to John Allen or the Joint Chiefs or any of the officers who are in Afghanistan is—I can't afford a white wash. I can't afford not getting the very best information in order to make good decisions. I should add, by the way, that the danger a lot of times is not that anybody is purposely trying to downplay challenges in Afghanistan. A lot of times it's just the military culture is we can get it done. And so, their thinking is, how are we going to solve this problem, not boy, why is this such a disaster? That's part of the reason why we admire our military so much and we love our troops, because they've got that can-do spirit.

But I think that we have set up a structure that really tries to guard against that, because even in my White House for example, I've got former officers who have been in Afghanistan who I will send out there as part of the national security team of the White House, not simply the Pentagon, to interact and to listen and to go in and talk to the captains and the majors and the corporals and the privates, to try to get a sense of what's going on.

And I think the reports we get are relatively accurate in the sense that there is real improvement. In those areas where we've had a significant presence, you can see the Taliban not having a foothold, that there is genuine improvement in the per-

formance of Afghan national security forces.

But the Taliban is still a robust enemy. And the gains are still fragile, which leads me then to the second point that you've made in terms of a premature withdrawal. I don't think that there is ever going to be an optimal point where we say, this is all done, this is perfect, this is just the way we wanted it and now we can wrap up all our equipment and go home. This is a process and it's sometimes a messy process, just as it was in Iraq.

But think about it. We've been there now 10 years. We are now committing to a transition process that takes place next year, but the full transition to Afghan responsibility is almost two years away. And the Afghan Security Forces themselves will not ever be prepared if they don't start taking that responsibility.

And, frankly, the large footprint that we have in Afghanistan over time can be counterproductive. We've been there 10 years, and I think no matter how much good we're doing and how outstanding our troops and our civilians and diplomats are doing on the ground, 10 years in a country that's very different, that's a strain not only on our folks but also on that country, which at a point is going to be very sensitive about its own sovereignty.

So I think that the timetable that we've established is a sound one, it is a responsible one. Are there risks involved in it? Absolutely. Can I anticipate that over the next two years there are going to be some bad moments along with some good ones? Absolutely.

But I think it is the appropriate strategy whereby we can achieve a stable Afghanistan that won't be perfect, we can pull back our troops in a responsible way and we can start rebuilding America and making some of the massive investments we've been making in Afghanistan here back home, putting people back to work, retraining workers, rebuilding our schools, investing in science and technology, developing our business climate.

But there are going to be challenges. The one thing that I'm never doubtful about is just the amazing capacity of our troops and their morale. When I was in Bagram just a couple of weeks ago, the fact that you still have so much determi-

nation and stick-to-it-ness and professionalism, not just from our troops but from all our coalition allies, all of ISAF, is a testament to them. It's extraordinary. And we've very proud of them.

Remarks by Ambassador Verveer, May 25, 2012¹⁰

Ambassador at-Large Melanne Verveer gave the following remarks at the Czech Embassy in Washington, DC

Ambassador Verveer. Thank you, Deputy Chief of Mission Zajicek for your gracious introduction.

It is fitting that we gather here at the Embassy of the Czech Republic for this discussion on Burma. President Havel, whose beloved Czechoslovakia endured more than forty years of totalitarian rule, had great empathy for the people of Burma and for Aung San Suu Kyi whom he had nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He was a steadfast voice for Burma's pro-democracy movement.

A week before he died, he urged the international community to encourage "the signs of cautious change" in Burma. "It is crucial," he said, "that the international community adopt effective policies that encourage a meaningful results-oriented dialogue between Aung San Suu Kyi (Daw Suu) and the Burmese authorities." Daw Suu, in learning of Havel's death, spoke of a letter she had received from him it did not arrive until after his death. In it he told her, "After fifty years of totalitarian rule, the road to a pluralistic and democratic society will not be easy," but he believed in new beginnings, and he offered Daw Suu his help.

We thank the Czech Republic for never forgetting its own struggle for freedom by continuing to promote democracy around the globe.

I just returned from Burma as well as from a visit to the women's groups on the Thai-Burma border. It was a trip I undertook to put a spotlight on issues relating to women and girls, particularly at this time of possibility. We have no surety of where the road will lead but it is, nevertheless, a

time of possibility for a better future for the people of Burma.

The United States has been responding to the positive steps taken in Burma since the recent elections with actions of our own to promote democratic progress and support for the Burmese people. And, as you know, some new measures were announced last week by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. We have no illusions about the problems that still need to be addressed in Burma particularly, the ongoing violence in the ethnic areas and the human rights violations perpetrated against women in those areas. None of us can see how all of this will turn out, but we believe that we must proceed in a thoughtful and responsible way to help the Burmese people chart a democratic, peaceful and more prosperous future.

President Havel founded Forum 2000, which I had the privilege to attend a few years ago. He always put a high premium on the efforts of civil society and the way citizens confront the challenges of their time—people building democracy from the ground up. They are the real agents of change. And that is certainly true in Burma as well.

In Burma, I met with Daw Suu who is such a symbol for democracy around the world and with citizens of all ages across all sectors of society—from students to former prisoners, from people running small businesses and health clinics to those teaching civic lessons to the next generation. I traveled from Rangoon, to Nay Pyi Taw to the Shan state. My meeting with Daw Suu focused on a range of topics from empowerment to development and from the release of political prisoners to the responsibilities of elected officials, from rule of law to transparency.

Development is a key challenge. While there is a dearth of accurate data on Burma's development status, it is clear that women (as well as men) have been deprived of educational opportunities compared to its once glorious past as a center of learning. There is a great need to build capacity in the people, and this was mentioned over and over wherever we went. The frequent closings of universities over the past several decades and the small budgets allocated to education have taken a toll. In our meeting with the

Deputy Education Minister, it was clear that there was at once an awareness of a tremendous gap to be closed, yet there are few additional resources in the budget for curriculum reform, teacher training and secondary and higher education.

Women in Burma Embracing Change and Advancing Political and Social Progress

The older generation of Burmese women with whom we met—most either retired civil servants or professionals—appeared well educated and knowledgeable of Burmese society. Most spoke fluent English and had established civil society organizations. They were still very engaged in providing critical health, education, and other services to compensate for the severe lack of government services. They had been able to operate within limited space and were tolerated, to a certain extent, by the former military regime. Although very realistic, they uniformly expressed a cautious sense of hopefulness about the future.

The younger generation appeared most optimistic and energized about Burma's future. Many of the young women have started or are participating in NGOs advocating civic activism and social entrepreneurship. They were impressive in their independent thinking and can-do spirit. They've become increasingly empowered to embrace their rights, whether in the home, the workplace, in community and political activities or at the university. As a crucial part of the Burmese workforce, they will need guidance and support to become effective advocates for and the future leaders of Burma's social and economic transformation.

Although not all the women I met were affiliated with the National League for Democracy party, they all revered Aung San Suu Kyi. However, they also recognized the need for stories of other women leaders to become better known—the ordinary women who had done extraordinary things. One young woman even allowed that there were no role models for women in the rural areas. This younger generation is eager to contribute and to connect with the world. They are propelled by their belief in a new and better future and they want to do their part.

While Burma has the experienced older generation to anchor society and the young generation to break new ground, the “missing middle” generation poses tremendous challenges to Burma’s transition. Most of the identified “missing middle” women leaders are either from the 1988 students’ generation or are former political prisoners. These courageous women have paid a severe price for their political activism in labor rights, land rights, HIV/AIDS, and democracy promotion. Many of them left the country during the most oppressive years and some have chosen to return. Many are taking advantage of the recent opening to test the progress by creating NGOs, building women’s network, supporting women workers to negotiate for better conditions and higher pay, being politically engaged and working to support women in the ethnic communities.

At the U.S. State Department, we are identifying avenues to engage all three generations of women by providing them with networking and capacity-building opportunities. The 2015 election is on many people’s minds since the by-election, and there is interest in trainings, exchanges and the sharing of best practices. Embassy Rangoon’s small grants programs have proven to be very effective in building grassroots civil society. Increasing Burmese women’s participation in International Visitors Leadership Programs, Fulbright

Scholarship and through other cross border opportunities will help to integrate the Burmese into the global community after decades of isolation. These small, yet catalyzing investments would provide high yield benefits for Burma’s future leaders.

Violence Against Women in Ethnic Areas

As we know, women continue to be victims of violence in the ethnic areas of conflict. In my past travels in the region, I have had the agonizing experience of meeting desperate and often very sick Burmese victims of trafficking to Malaysia or Thailand. The horrifying stories of women victims of rape in the ethnic areas, where rape is used as a tactic of the armed conflict, show the ongoing vulnerability of the ethnic women. As we

gather here, women in Kachin state and other ethnic areas still face unspeakable threats as the conflicts persist. Women’s groups on the Thai-Burma border continue to document these cases. We cannot ignore the abuses.

Burma’s ongoing internal ethnic conflicts are a major source of instability, human rights violations and the displacement of people—particularly, women and children. We consistently heard about the need for national reconciliation and a lasting peace. According to the NGOs, the conflicts are continuing. In northern Shan state where a 22-year peace agreement was breached in 2011, I heard about ongoing incidents while I was there. The U.S. State Department’s annual Human Rights Report that was released today includes a review of the use of excessive force and other abuses, like rape as a war tactic, in the internal conflicts.

Women and the Peace Process

Any prospect of sustainable peace will not be possible without the participation of the ethnic groups and the women. Many of the women’s groups raised the need for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), which links women to peace and security and recognizes the role they must play in peace negotiations and the need for violence against women to be addressed in any peace process.

Late last year, President Obama issued the first U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. His accompanying Executive Order urges the government from the Department of Defense to the Department of State, US AID and other agencies to insure that in our military, diplomatic and development efforts in areas of conflict and political transition, we support women as critical participants in resolving conflicts, in protecting them from sexual and gender-based violence, in ensuring equal access to relief and recovery and in promoting post conflict reconstruction. They are essential to the task of rebuilding their communities through economic development, education, governance, and more.

Women have been too often excluded from both the negotiations that lead to peace and the institutions that maintain it.

Yet, from Northern Ireland to Liberia and many places in between, we have seen that when women are included, they are a powerful force for peace. It is their daily lived experiences that need to inform the process and need to be addressed in any eventual peace agreements. In Burma’s ethnic areas, issues like land rights, the military presence, the ethnic communities’ role in economic development projects, how justice will be rendered in cases of human rights violations against women—these issues and so many more will have to be addressed for any potential for peace and stability to be sustained. If women are silenced or marginalized, the prospects for a lasting peace and a better life will be subverted.

When I was in Shan state, I attended a meeting with the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (there were also some National League for Democracy members in attendance). It was inspiring (and somewhat confusing) to see them engage in the democratic process. The parliamentarians who were present, including the 27-year old Shan women who had gained her seat in the recent by-election, described a peace process to include some parliamentarians. And the parliament was hoping to begin the process by engaging in a fact finding mission to the ethnic regions. Whatever process is put in place to bring an end to the cease fires and peace agreements, women need to be included in the negotiations. It is in this critical area and in the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 that you and your NGOs can play an important role. The State Department will provide small grants to NGOs in Burma in support of women’s participation in efforts to implement UNSCR 1325.

Women’s Groups in the Thai-Burma Border Area

In addition to meetings inside Burma, we traveled to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand to meet with the leading women’s ethnic groups with whom we have worked closely in recent years. The groups have played a critical role in advocating to the international community for human rights, democracy and freedom on behalf of the ethnic communities in Burma. Their access to the ethnic areas has uniquely positioned them to gather

and distribute critical information to and from remote, but politically important regions of the country, as well as to provide training and skills development to the ethnic women. The women's groups are the most knowledgeable and experienced in advocating for the ethnic minorities and have a continuing important role to play.

Most of the groups provide direct services to the women and children on the Thai-Burma border. They are concerned about a potential withdrawal of assistance to the border region with the changes that are occurring in Burma. It would be premature to do so as the services there continue to be critically needed.

As the international community considers the most effective ways to support the people of Burma, it must focus on empowerment of the people, women and men. As Aung San Suu Kyi said, "Development must be about individual empowerment"—the ability of the people to let go of fear and to take action on behalf of themselves, their communities and their country. For too long, the Burmese people have been unable to realize their full potential; now we have an opportunity to help them through our development assistance. It must be about them, and it must be coordinated with other partners.

Burma's democratic future is a work in progress. Today we have an historic opportunity to help the people of Burma to realize a better future. Everywhere I went, I saw people in Burma embracing the prospect for change, for freedom, for democracy, for opportunity. As President Havel reminded us, the road will not be easy but we must encourage the signs of cautious change in Burma.

Remarks by Ambassador Daalder, May 31, 2012¹¹

Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder gave the following remarks in Brussels, Belgium

Ambassador Daalder. (In progress.) Let me emphasize three particular areas where we made significant progress building on the framework and the decisions that were

made in Lisbon.

You may recall that in Lisbon in 2010, we decided that the—in—with respect to Afghanistan, the process of transition should start in 2011 and should be completed by 2014, so that by the end of 2014, the NATO mission would end and Afghan forces would be in, fully responsible for security throughout the country.

In Chicago, we reaffirmed the fundamental decision that was made in Lisbon. By the end of 2014, the ISAF or NATO-led mission will end and Afghan forces will be in, fully responsible for security throughout Afghanistan. We also agreed in Chicago that in 2013, next year, a time which the Afghan forces will have lead security responsibility throughout the—throughout Afghanistan, that NATO will shift its mission from an emphasis on combat to an emphasis on support of the Afghan forces.

And finally, with respect to Afghanistan in Chicago, we said that our efforts in Afghanistan will not end, even if the ISAF mission ends in 2014. We will have a new mission that will train, advise, and assist the Afghan forces, and we also committed, as the international community, to support the Afghan forces financially so they are sustained with—at a level of about \$4 billion a year. So here, the international community, together with the Afghan Government, will make sure that in the future, even when the Afghan forces are in control and responsible for security throughout Afghanistan, from 2015 onwards, NATO will continue to train, advise, and assist them, and will also provide, with other countries around the world, the financial basis for sustaining the Afghan security forces.

The second area that we looked at in Chicago regards—is regarding capabilities. We adopted in Lisbon a new strategic concept that said that NATO needs to be prepared to deal with an unpredictable world, to have the capabilities and be ready to deal with whatever challenges may come at us. And in 2011, we saw that in the case of Libya, a need for military—the use of military force may come suddenly and will have to require the alliance to have the kinds of capabilities to act quickly.

So on the basis of the lessons that we

learned in Libya, on the basis of the kinds of decisions we made in Lisbon, in Chicago, we agreed to—we signed the contract for a new intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance system called the Alliance Ground Surveillance System, or AGS. These are five very advanced drones that can provide all-weather capability from high altitude to look at what is happening on the ground and to provide that information to military commanders in any far-away places. Only the United States had this kind of capability in Libya. Now the alliance will be able to have its own capability in the future.

We also agreed that because of the threat to—of growing—the threat of ballistic missiles of being able to attack parts of NATO Europe, that the time had come for NATO not only to commit to deploying a territorial missile defense, but in Chicago, to actually declare that that capability now exists. So we agreed that NATO will—now has the command and control arrangements necessary to exercise operational control over a radar that the U.S. has deployed in Turkey, and of—and various other missile defense assets that could be made available to NATO if and when necessary. So as of today, NATO has the capacity to provide a limited defense against a limited ballistic missile attack. That is a major change and a major advance over where we have been before.

And finally, we focused on the issue of partnerships. In Chicago, 61 countries were represented, the largest number of leaders ever to come to a NATO summit, and indeed the largest number of foreign leaders ever to come to the United States at a—for a U.S.-hosted event, came together making clear that this is an alliance that is now a hub for a global security network of countries from as far away as Australia and New Zealand, and as nearby as Sweden and Switzerland, that these countries want to work with NATO to work to improve security, both in their own regions and beyond, and see NATO and the working with NATO as a means to that end.

We also had meetings with countries that aspire to become members of NATO, like Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, and Montenegro in order to

make sure that they understand that the door to NATO membership remains open to all European countries whose membership could contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.

So in these areas—Afghanistan, capabilities, partnership—we made major advances building on the success of Lisbon, and now solidifying what we had achieved in Chicago.

Q. Why was there no mention of a political process that includes Taliban in any of the documents from the meeting in Chicago?

Ambassador Daalder. Gro, thanks very much for that question. We did have extensive discussions about not only the NATO and military strategy in Afghanistan, but also the political strategy. There is a realization here that the military and the political strategy need to go hand in hand, that the way this war will ultimately be concluded is when Afghans sit down with Afghans to discuss the future of Afghanistan. And we see the effort we have encouraged in the military sphere both to enhance security throughout Afghanistan and to build up the Afghan security forces as a necessary precondition for starting a political process. And we are encouraged that this political—we are encouraged that a political process may be feasible. We are—we, the United States, have worked to find ways to bring Afghans together to discuss the political future of Afghanistan on the basis that the people who are engaged in that process will have laid down their arms, or at least abandoned violence as a means of political change, have accepted the Afghan constitution, and of course, have broken their ties with al-Qaida. But ultimately, a political process will have to be part of our success in Afghanistan.

Q. Thank you. The following question is from James Hirst with the British Forces Broadcasting who asks: I noted that the NATO security general talked about the transition in Afghanistan being irreversible. But what discussion was there about a possible backup plan

in the event of security significantly deteriorating sometime after 2014?

Ambassador Daalder. Well, James, we are on a course of providing the necessary training and the necessary buildup of the Afghan forces so that by the end of 2014, Afghan forces will be able to provide security throughout Afghanistan for Afghanistan. That's our goal. We've been at that for quite a long time. We surged our own capability—not only U.S., but also European and allied and partnered capability—which has led to a—not only a halt in the momentum that the Taliban had a few years ago, but a reversal. Clearly, the situation in Afghanistan is improving today.

At the same time, we are still continuing to build up the Afghan forces, and we are—remain committed to supporting the Afghan forces throughout this year, next year, until the end of 2014. And the best guarantee we have for the future of Afghanistan is that there are Afghan forces capable of securing their own country for Afghans. And what we decided in Chicago was that NATO will continue after 2014 to train, advise, and assist Afghan forces, including Afghan special operation forces, so they can provide for the security of Afghanistan. And as importantly, NATO and the international community is committing to providing the financial means to sustain that force over the long term. And that's what we decided in Chicago, and that's why I'm confident that not only will transition occur, but that it will be irreversible.

Q. Are there one or two tracks in this process at the moment, one American-centered around the Taliban office in Qatar, the other more Afghan-driven with connections to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey?

Ambassador Daalder. Gro, I assume that's a question that continues the—about reconciliation in Afghanistan. There's only one track in the sense that everyone is interested in only one process and one outcome: a process in which Afghans talk to Afghans about the future of

Afghanistan. This is not something that the United States or the international community can do. What we can help on is to facilitate getting Afghans to talk to Afghans so that they can decide their own future.

The United States, as you mentioned, has been trying to facilitate this process. The Afghans themselves are working—the Afghan Government itself is trying to work a process by which two sides can come to the table based on the idea that neither will have—use violence to change—to effect political change, that everyone will accept the fundamentals of the Afghan constitution, and that ties with al-Qaida had been broken. That's what we seek to achieve—the United States—that's what NATO would like to achieve, that's what the Afghan Government would like to achieve—Afghans talking to Afghans about the future of Afghanistan.

Q. Is Turkey's overall security guaranteed against an Iranian attack to Turkey due to the Kurecik radar base? Did NATO members discuss it at the Chicago summit? Will NATO's Article 5 be effective automatically in this scenario?

Ambassador Daalder. Article 5 of the NATO Treaty says an armed attack against one is an armed attack against all. And in that regard, if Turkey were to be attacked, just like the United States or Canada or any other NATO member were to—attacked, Article 5 applies no matter what the circumstances, no matter what the reasons.

The deployment of the radar—a U.S. radar in Turkey—is a fundamental part of the missile defense system that we are collectively deploying in NATO. And at Chicago, as I mentioned at the outset, the leaders declared an interim capability—an interim missile defense capability—so that the radar and other assets could operate under the operational control of NATO.

And indeed, President Obama announced at the summit that he had directed the Secretary of Defense to transfer the authority over the radar from the United States commanders to the NATO commanders so that the radar will operate under NATO rules of engagement, under

NATO operational control on a day-to-day basis.

Q. Does NATO intend to make a military intervention in Syria?

Ambassador Daalder. Christine, the issue of intervention by NATO in any country, including in Syria, is something that, of course, is of the utmost importance to all countries. This is not something that is taken lightly. We have no discussions and there were no—there is no planning ongoing within NATO about a possible military intervention.

At the time of the Libya conflict, we agreed that there would have to be three criteria for NATO to even think about the possibility of intervening, and even then, we would have to have 28 countries agreeing to do so. Those three conditions were, first, there had to be a demonstrable need; second, there had to be regional support for military intervention by NATO; and third, there had to be a sound legal basis for NATO.

When we look at the situation in Syria today, it is different from the situation in Libya. With respect to a demonstrable need, clearly when government forces are attacking civilians with artillery and tanks, there is a need to bring that to an end. That was true in Libya and that is true in Syria.

But then when it comes to the question of regional support, there is not, at the moment, a call within the region for military intervention by NATO or indeed by anybody else, and that includes the Syrian opposition, which does not want NATO to intervene. Under those circumstances, it won't be possible for NATO to intervene.

In addition, we agreed that there has to be a sound legal basis, and for most NATO members, that means that the UN Security Council would have to mandate military action. That's what happened in Libya. It's not—it hasn't happened with respect to Syria and it doesn't look likely that it will happen with respect to Syria.

So under those circumstances, the NATO countries understand that the issue of military intervention, which is also always complex, is not right now on the table when it comes to Syria. That said, we do want to make clear that the Assad

regime needs to end its brutal attacks on civilians, and we need to increase the pressure on the Assad regime to abide by the Annan plan to engage in political consultations leading to a transition of power.

Q. There are talks about reducing the target size for Afghan security forces from 350 to 280,000. What is the reasoning behind this reduction, and what role does austerity play in this?

Ambassador Daalder. We are looking at—to—first, thanks very much for the question. It's a complicated issue. Where we are looking at is to find an Afghan security force that in the long run will be sufficient for the task and sustainable financially. And if we look at that, we have—we, in the United States and working together with the Afghan Government, have come to the realization that the current surge of about 352,000 Afghan police and army forces needs to be completed no later than October and then continued at least through the end of 2015 so that for the next three and a half years we will have an Afghan force that is capable of providing security with about 350,000 troops providing security throughout Afghanistan, for Afghanistan, by Afghanistan. But if our assessment of the current—of the situation—likely security situation continues to be what it is, then we believe that in 2016 and 2017, it may be possible to reduce those forces and to have a force that is sufficient to maintain security throughout Afghanistan, but sustainable at a cost of about \$4 billion a year.

In Chicago, we agreed that the international community, including the NATO and ISAF members, would provide a significant—would make a significant contribution to ensure that \$4 billion a year is available. The Afghan Government will pay for, of course—will pay its share, a share that should rise over time as the Afghan economy improves, but the international community writ large, including the United States and our European allies, will also have to provide their fair share in order to ensure that there is an Afghan force throughout the post-transition period

that is both sufficient to the task and sustainable over the long run.

Q. What are the principal threats that led NATO to make the decision for building the ballistic missile defense?

Ambassador Daalder. That's a very important question. Back in 2009 when the Obama Administration decided to embark on a new approach to missile defenses, the reason we had decided that was necessary, and then NATO agreed in Lisbon that it was necessary, was that we were seeing a growing threat of ballistic missile proliferation, as far as we're concerned, in the Middle East—that the number of short and medium-ranged ballistic missiles that could reach NATO-European territory was increasing, and that countries were spending vast resources to enhance the ranges and the capabilities of those missiles over time.

So we adopted what we call the phased, adaptive approach to missile defenses where we deploy as soon as possible, and we did by 2011 deploy a first phase of a system that could deal with short and medium-range ballistic missile threats to NATO-European territory coming from outside of Europe, particularly from the Middle East. We see those threats are growing; therefore, we will expand in the next phase as the missile defense capabilities to provide more and more protection for a larger amount of NATO-European territory.

Remarks by Secretary of Defense Panetta, June 6, 2012¹²

Secretary Leon Panetta gave the following remarks in New Delhi, India

Secretary Panetta. Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador, Dr. Gupta. Thank you for inviting me to the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, and thank you for your leadership of this distinguished organization. It's a special honor

for me to have this opportunity on my first visit to India as Secretary of Defense to be able to address the issues in the defense arena that involve both the United States and India.

This trip has taken me from the Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii to the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore to Cam Ranh Bay and Hanoi in Vietnam. It's appropriate that as I've had the opportunity to define our new defense strategy for the 21st century that I am now here with a very key partner in India, particularly in this important region.

Over the past two days I have held some very excellent meetings with Prime Minister Singh, with Defense Minister Antony, with National Security Adviser Menon. And I want to thank them all for welcoming me back to this country. I've had the opportunity to visit here a number of times in my prior capacity as Director of the CIA and now have the opportunity to visit as Secretary of Defense.

I also want to take this moment to thank Ambassador Chandra for his role in helping to convene and moderate today's discussion. And I also want to thank him for his contributions. He's made a number of very important contributions in helping to advance United States-India relationship during his career in public service. And I had the opportunity to see that personally during the time I was in the White House.

His first year in Washington as India's ambassador overlapped with the end of my tenure as President Clinton's chief of staff in the 1990s. It was a time when the legacy of Cold War and the suspicions that developed during that period still loomed large. And though the United States and India shared many values and many common interests, our bilateral relationship suffered from many of those suspicions.

My former boss, President Bill Clinton, I think got it right at the time twelve years ago here in New Delhi when he said, and I quote, "India and America are natural allies, two nations conceived in liberty, each finding strength in its diversity, each seeing in the other a reflection of its own aspiration for a more humane and a more just world," unquote. Thanks to the efforts of past presidents, both Republican and Democrat, our two nations, I believe, have

finally and irreversibly started a new chapter of our history.

When I returned to government in 2009 to serve as Director of the CIA, I found a transformed United States-India relationship. We had acted together to get past our differences and re-establish better cooperation. It required that we get beyond our outdated notions about one another. And today, thanks to President Obama and Prime Minister Singh, along with Indian leaders from across the country's political spectrum, our two nations now engage actively and effectively as partners on a whole host of bilateral, regional and global issues.

President Obama has said that the United States and India will be one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century, and I believe that to be true. Today we have growing economic, social, diplomatic ties that benefit both of our nations. But for this relationship to truly provide security for this region and for the world, we need to deepen our defense and security cooperation and this is why I have come to India.

America is at a turning point. After a decade of war, we are developing a new defense strategy for the 21st century, a central feature of that strategy is rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, we will expand our military partnerships and our presence in the arc extending from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean region and South Asia. Defense cooperation, defense cooperation with India is a linchpin in this strategy.

India is one of the largest and most dynamic countries in the region and, for that matter, in the world with one of the most capable militaries. India also shares with the United States a strong commitment to a set of principles that help maintain international security and prosperity. We share a commitment to open and free commerce. We share a commitment to open access by all to our shared domains of sea, air, space and cyberspace. We share a commitment to resolving disputes without coercion or the use of force and in accordance with international law. We share a commitment to abide by international standards and international norms—rules of the road, if you will—which pro-

mote international stability and peace for the world. One of the ways we will advance these principles is to help develop the capabilities of countries who share these values, and India certainly is one of those countries.

Our two nations face many of the same security challenges: from violent extremism and terrorism to piracy on the high seas, and from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to regional instability. Handling these challenges requires a forward-looking vision for our defense partnership and a plan for advancing it month by month and year by year. We have built a strong foundation, and we will enhance this partnership over time in the spirit of equality, common interest and mutual respect.

In particular, I believe our relationship is, can and should become more strategic, more practical and more collaborative. Our defense cooperation is strategic, in that we consult and share views on all major regional and international security developments. Our defense policy exchanges are now regular, candid and invaluable. Our partnership is practical because we take concrete steps, through military exercises and exchanges, to improve our ability to operate together and with other nations to meet a range of challenges. And our defense relationship is growing ever more collaborative as we seek to do more—more advanced research, more advanced development, share new technologies and enter into the joint production of defense articles.

Let me share my view on the progress we have made in each of these areas and outline additional steps that I believe we can take in the coming months and years. First of all, with regards to strategic cooperation, we've built a strong strategic relationship. That is the nature of the relationship between the United States and India. In my own experience, including during my visits here as Director of the CIA, my Indian counterparts always offer clear strategic analysis and recommendations. We are transparent. We are honest in our discussions, something that has come to define the strength of our relationship.

During my two days here we discussed the new defense strategy that is guiding the United States military rebalance to the

Asia-Pacific region. We also talked about the value of the ASEAN regional architecture in promoting international norms and in guaranteeing freedom of navigation. We discussed Afghanistan, where we have embarked on a transition to Afghan responsibility for security, for governance and for economic affairs.

India has supported this process through its own significant investments in Afghan reconstruction and has signed a long-term partnership agreement with Afghanistan. We are making significant progress towards a successful transition. The United States now has an enduring partnership agreement with Afghanistan, and we are committed to the long term in assuring that Afghanistan is a stable nation in this region of the world.

I urge India's leaders to continue with additional support to Afghanistan through trade and investment, reconstruction and help for Afghan security forces. We both realize how important it is to ultimately have a stable Afghanistan if we are to have peace and prosperity in this region.

We also discussed India's immediate neighborhood. In particular, I welcomed the initial steps that India and Pakistan have taken to normalize trade relations. This is a process that we believe is key to resolving their differences and to helping Pakistan turn around its economy and counter extremism within its borders. Pakistan is a complicated relationship, complicated for both of our countries, but it is one that we must continue to work to improve.

And finally, we exchanged views about other key issues, like piracy and terrorism, tensions in the South China Sea, our concerns about Iran, about North Korea's destabilizing activities, and new challenges like cyber-intrusions and cyberwarfare.

Second, what is it we can do to improve a practical defense partnership? At a very practical level, our defense partnership is coming of age. Expanded military exercises, defense sales, intelligence sharing are key examples of the relationship's maturation. Last year alone we held more than 50 cooperative defense events. Some of the most significant include our military exercises, which enhance our ability to prepare for real-world challenges.

The annual MALABAR naval exercise has grown from a passing exercise for our ships into a full-scale engagement across all functional areas of naval warfare. In March, U.S. Army soldiers joined their counterparts in India to rehearse scenarios involving United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief in a post-conflict setting. U.S. soldiers even had the chance to participate in a Holi celebration, in which, I gather, all experienced a colorful occasion. One month later the SHATRUJEET exercise took place at Camp Pendleton in California, my home state, with amphibious operations and other exercises between U.S. Marines and Indian soldiers.

These engagements, these exercises provide opportunities for our militaries to learn from each other. This will sharpen our skills the next time we are called upon to interdict a weapons of mass destruction shipment or break up a terrorist plot or respond to a future tsunami.

We've also increased our defense sales relationship from virtually nothing early in the last decade to sales worth well over \$8 billion today. Our sales are rapidly growing.

For example, India and the US have agreed to sales of maritime surveillance and transport aircraft. India will soon have the largest—the second-largest fleet of C-17s in the world, expanding the reach and strength of India's forces and their ability to rapidly deploy. Your C-130J transport

ing, co-production and other initiatives that will be a great value to each of our nations. Lockheed Martin, Sikorsky, India's Tata Group are already jointly manufacturing spare parts for transport aircraft in Hyderabad. This project benefits each of our nations by creating jobs in India and America and strengthening our defense industries. Our shared goal should be to solidify progress and deepen defense engagement and cooperation in all of these areas.

So now let me turn to the future. At a strategic level, we have worked together to counter piracy, to counter terrorism, and now we should join forces to tackle new and even more complex threats.

We can do more to drive the creation of a rules-based order that protects our common interests in new areas like cybersecurity and space. We need to develop rules of the road in these domains to help confront dangerous activities by state and nonstate actors alike.

In terms of regional security, our vision is a peaceful Indian Ocean region supported by growing Indian capabilities. America will do its part through doing things like rotating the presence of Marines in Australia. We will have littoral combat ships rotating through Singapore. And we will have other deployments in the region. But the fundamental challenge here is to develop India's capabilities so that it can respond to security challenges in this region.

As the United States and India deepen our defense partnership with each other, both of us will also seek to strengthen our relations with China.

aircraft and P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft purchases are also historic. In fact, India and the United States will be the only countries operating the P-8I aircraft.

In providing such world-class capabilities to the Indian armed forces, we also enabled new training and exchange opportunities between our militaries. For example, our sales of transport aircraft included U.S. Air Force training of Indian pilots, loadmasters and maintenance staff.

The third area is defense collaboration.

Finally, in terms of building collaboration, we have some early successes and are poised to embark on technology shar-

The United States supports Southeast Asia multilateral forums such as the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus, or ADMM-Plus. These mechanisms will prevent and manage regional tensions. As I told my Indian colleagues over the past two days, India's voice and involvement in these international forums will be critical.

As the United States and India deepen our defense partnership with each other, both of us will also seek to strengthen our relations with China. We recognize that China has a critical role to play advancing security and prosperity in this region. The

United States welcomes the rise of a strong and prosperous and successful China that plays a greater role in global affairs and respects and enforces the international norms and international rules that have governed this region for six decades.

And again, with regard to Pakistan, India and the United States will need to continue to engage Pakistan, overcoming our respective and often deep differences with Pakistan, to make all of South Asia peaceful and prosperous.

And to improve our practical cooperation, I do believe that the United States' and India's participation in military exercises, which are already strong, should continue to be more regular and complex. And we must move beyond a focus on individual arms sales to regular cooperation that increases the quantity and the quality of our defense trade.

I want to stress that the United States is firmly committed to providing the best defense technology possible to India. We are both leaders in technology development, and we can do incredible work together. Indeed, I think a close partnership with America will be key to meeting India's own stated names—aims of a modern and effective defense force.

The Obama administration is hard at work on export control reforms, in cooperation with our Congress, in order to improve our ability to deliver the best technologies even more quickly. Meanwhile, we look to India to modernize its own regulations in areas like defense procurement and nuclear liability legislation.

But to realize the full potential of defense trade relations, we need to cut through the bureaucratic red tape on both sides. For that reason, I've asked my deputy secretary, Ash Carter, to lead an effort at the Pentagon to engage with Indian leaders on a new initiative to streamline our bureaucratic processes and make our defense trade more simple, more responsive and more effective.

Believe me, I know this is not going to be easy. This is hard. But that's the nature of the democratic systems that we share. Your leaders understand the challenges I face, and we understand the obstacles you face. But we both need to persevere to support our defense needs and our strategic interests. Over the long term, I am cer-

tain that we will transition our defense trade beyond the buyer-seller relationship to a substantial co-production and eventually high-technology joint research and development.

During my visit to Asia this week, I have sought to bring closure to some of the past chapters of the United States involvement in this region. The government of Vietnam opened three new areas to search for our missing in action from the Vietnam War.

And here in India, I'm pleased to announce that the Indian government will allow a team to return to India to continue the search for U.S. service members that were lost during World War II. This is a humanitarian gesture by a government with whom we share so many values. The ability to return these heroes and the remains of these heroes to their loved ones is something that America deeply, deeply appreciates.

America's involvement in Asia has an important past, but it has an even more important future. India is at the crossroads of Asia. It is at the crossroads of a new global economy, and it is at the crossroads of regional security. We, the United States, will stand with India at those crossroads.

I began my trip across the Asia-Pacific region eight days ago. Along the way, I have laid out how the United States military plans to rebalance towards this region. As I come to the end of my trip, I'm struck by the opportunities for closer cooperation, the strong support throughout this region for the rebalance, and the hope that this cooperation can help forge an even brighter future for this region and for the world.

The United States and India have built a strong foundation for defense cooperation in this new century. My country is committed to an even greater role in the Asia-Pacific, extending all the way to the Indian Ocean, and our attention and resources will advance partnerships throughout the region, including in particular a partnership with India.

Our two nations may not agree on the solution to every challenge that faces us. And we both face the challenge of political gridlock at home that sometimes prohibits advancing our broader strategic objectives. But I am sure that we will con-

tinue to draw closer—closer together because we do share the same values, because the same challenges and threats confront both of our countries, and we share the same vision of a just and stable and peaceful regional order.

Our people, our businesses, our militaries and our governments will all be partners in this effort to serve the dream that guides both of our great democracies, the dream of building a better and more prosperous future for our children. Together as partners, we will help one another realize this great dream of the 21st century. Thank you.

Remarks by Secretary of State Clinton and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Mammadyarov, June 6, 2012¹³

Secretary Hillary Clinton and President Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov gave the following remarks in Baku, Azerbaijan

Foreign Minister Mammadyarov. Welcome for those who are from the foreign press to Azerbaijan. I am really happy to greet Secretary of State Madam Hillary Clinton to Azerbaijan precisely on the days when we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of establishing of our bilateral relations. On the 25th of December of '91, the United States recognized the independence and—of Azerbaijan, and through these years, we managed to establish a strong partnership and strategic cooperation in various fields, fields like energy, fields like security cooperation, combating terrorism, drug trafficking, humanitarian cooperation, and so on.

Today we have very, very interesting and very, very intensive discussion. I am really happy that Secretary—Madam Secretary is coming to Azerbaijan for the second time within no less than two years.

The last time it was on the 4th of July celebrating the independence of the United States here in Baku.

And one of the major priorities of today's discussion was, of course, resolution of the Armenia and Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. There was a few ideas which were sounded with (inaudible) with Madam Secretary as one of the co-chair of the Minsk Group, where we're standing and how we can make an appropriate steps to reach the breakthrough on the issue of settlement.

As I already told yesterday to our media, on the 18th of this month we are planning to have a meeting with Armenia—my Armenian counterpart in Paris together with the co-chairs. And again, that's trying to bring the impetus to reaching more sooner a breakthrough in regard to this very longstanding conflict.

We also discussed the issue of Afghanistan, where our soldiers are shoulder to shoulder with the soldiers from United States of America, from the alliance trying to strengthening and building peace. Energy issue was an issue of another very, very interesting discussion, and regional issues as well.

So in two words summarizing what I said, Azerbaijan is firm and we are recognizing that with all the support which is extended to us by international community and particularly by United States, we'll move forward on the path of being a more secular Muslim state, and that's how we see our future on the globe.

And now, Madam Secretary, if you can, the floor is yours.

Secretary Clinton. Thank you so much, Foreign Minister, and I am very glad to return to Azerbaijan for my second visit as Secretary of State. It's especially good to be here after the Eurovision crowds have departed. But for me, it's a great opportunity to once again highlight the relationship that we've had between our two countries for the last 20 years. Our nations have been steadily strengthening the bonds between our governments, our businesses, and our people.

In my meetings with the president and the foreign minister today, we focused on three key areas: security, energy, and democratic reform. On security, I reiterated my appreciation for Azerbaijan's past contributions in Iraq and Kosovo and its vital ongoing work in Afghanistan. Azer-

baijan is essential to the transportation of troops and nonlethal supplies that support the international effort in Afghanistan.

Today, we discussed the continuing important role of the Northern Distribution Network and the importance of supporting the Afghan people after 2014 when they transition to full responsibility for security.

We also had in-depth discussions about Nagorno-Karabakh, including the most recent incidents and deaths along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. As I said earlier this week in Yerevan, I am deeply concerned about the danger of escalating tension, which could have unpredictable and disastrous consequences. This cycle of violence and retaliation must end, and everyone should work to keep the peace and comply with the obligations under the 1994 ceasefire agreement. I have stressed to President Aliyev that the United States is prepared to do whatever we can to help reach a settlement based upon the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. And I have asked the president, as I have asked the president of Armenia, to work together to exercise restraint and to take the steps necessary for peace, not conflict.

Regarding energy, the United States works closely with Azerbaijan on energy security. It is a common strategic interest for both countries and one of the great global challenges of our time. Today, I briefly visited the 19th annual Caspian Oil & Gas Show, and I conveyed to the president and foreign minister our great appreciation for the central role that Azerbaijan plays in efforts to diversify supplies of oil and gas as well as the routes over which they are transported. The United States supports Azerbaijan's goal of establishing a southern corridor for natural gas exports to Europe, a crucial link that will solidify Azerbaijan's ties to the Euro-Atlantic community. And I look forward to even deeper cooperation in this area.

Finally, the president and foreign minister and I spoke about the importance of fostering a vibrant civil society, embracing and furthering democratic reforms, which will add greatly to the long-term success and prosperity of Azerbaijan. The United States remains strongly committed to working with the government and people

to advance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. And we, as we always do, urge the government to respect their citizens' right to express views peacefully, to release those who have been detained for doing so in print or on the streets or for defending human rights.

I commend the president and the government for the release on parole of Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, whom I had a chance to see earlier today. And I hope he and all who are members of civil society in Azerbaijan continue their work, which is really work that strengthens society, strengthens the opportunities for Azerbaijan to become an even stronger and greater country, because we believe that countries that flourish in the 21st century will be those that respect the rule of law, freedom of the press, freedom of expression, other universal rights.

I also had the opportunity to discuss the progress that is being made with a group of civil society leaders, and we stand ready to help Azerbaijan on this important journey.

For 20 years the United States and Azerbaijan have been working to build a constructive, comprehensive relationship that benefits the people of this country and the larger region. There's been a lot of progress made in 20 years. One only has to open one's eyes to see the progress that has occurred. But we need to go further. I have great confidence that Azerbaijan can both continue the path of economic prosperity and continue on a path toward political reform.

And Mr. Minister Elmar, I thank you again for another productive visit.

Foreign Minister

Mammadyarov. Thank you very much. Now, Madam Secretary kindly agreed to pick up our questions, I mean answers.

Moderator. Yes.

Q. (Inaudible.)

Q. One question for you each, if I may. Madam Secretary, on Syria, there's been increasing talk from Russia and UN officials of setting up a new contact group, of creating or organizing a new conference of states to push for-

ward a plan, and that this conference could include Russia or even UN. What do you think about such an approach, and what will your talks this evening in Istanbul be about?

Mr. Foreign Minister, we've all seen the tremendous wealth in your country and its progress, but recently the State Department issued its Annual Human Rights Report and offered some harsh criticism of the government's human rights record, notably on freedom of expression. When will your government be able to offer its citizens the full respect for human rights that they deserve?

Thank you.

Secretary Clinton. Well, first with regard to Syria, as you know, I've been stressing that it's time for all of us to turn our attention to an orderly transition of power in Syria that paves the way for a democratic, tolerant, pluralistic future. It's clear that President Assad cannot and has failed to bring peace, stability, or positive change to the Syrian people, and in fact has worked against all three.

So tonight in Istanbul, I will meet with some of our most concerned and active partners to assess where we are, to determine what steps we can take together. The work is continuing on sanctions. In fact the Friends of the Syrian People sanctions implementation group is meeting in Washington today and coordinating on new sanctions measures and closing loopholes on the existing regime. We will look for additional measures that we can take to pressure Assad and alleviate suffering. And we'll also discuss this evening the essential elements of a democratic transition strategy.

Then I will see Kofi Annan in Washington on Friday to discuss next steps, including our shared efforts to encourage Russia and China to use their influence to end the bloodshed and work with the international community in promoting a transition. Until I've had those meetings and heard the opinions of those most directly involved, I won't prejudge whether we will hold a conference and who would be invited to the conference. It's a little hard to imagine inviting a country that is stage-managing the Assad

regime's assault on its people.

So we will have more to say as we move forward.

Foreign Minister Mammadyarov.

Thank you very much, by the way, that you recognize that the wealth is coming to Azerbaijan. We are on the way. We're just in the beginning of this.

But you just asked me about the Human Rights Report. Of course, I always responded to this question that the human rights cannot come within a night. It's a generational issue. It's a process, and the most important to be inside of the process.

I believe—and I strongly believe—that Azerbaijan is doing a lot for building up more stronger civil society, more stronger respect of human rights, and building up strong with the rule of law. Human Rights Reports issued by State Department—as a person who used to work in the United States for years, I can tell you that there is a lot of criticism, not regarding Azerbaijan, but the other countries as well. And we understand that there is no angels in the world. But it means that we are in the process. We're doing our best, and we want to be better and better for sure.

Thank you.

Moderator. Victoria.

Q. Thank you. APA News Agency. My question will be to Secretary Clinton. Just few hours after you had visited Yerevan and expressed your concern about the incident on the contact line and have called the both parties to refrain the use of force, the Armenians subversive groups tried to enter the Azerbaijani armed force line, and as a result, five soldiers were killed. And by the way, it's not the first time during your previous visit to the region the same—the very similar military incident took place. So how do you perceive this fact?

Thank you.

Secretary Clinton. I'm very sad about it. As you know, I'm sure, when I arrived in Yerevan, there had been three Armenians killed, and I heard exactly the same concerns about that as I heard today in Azerbaijan. It is painful to think about

these young soldiers or anyone being killed, and there's no military solution to this conflict. We mourn the senseless deaths of Azerbaijani and Armenian alike. And we should honor their deaths by recommitting ourselves to peace and doing everything we can, as quickly as possible, to pursue a path towards peace.

There will be a meeting in about, I guess, two weeks between the two foreign ministers who will meet with the Minsk co-chairs. And we will explore some new approaches that I have had the opportunity to discuss with the foreign ministers and with the presidents, because there has to be a solution.

It's the year 2012. It is past time that we resolved this issue, and I'm going to do everything I can—and I've pledged that to both presidents—to help facilitate a resolution and the end of the deaths of anyone around this tragic situation. Thank you.

Foreign Minister Mammadyarov.

Thank you.

Remarks by Acting Secretary of Commerce Black, June 12, 2012¹⁴

Acting Secretary Rebecca Black gave the following remarks before the US-India Business Council

Acting Secretary Black. Thank you. It is wonderful to be here with the U.S.-India Business Council.

I want to recognize the Council's President, Ron Somers. The Council has helped foster a vibrant relationship between our countries over its 37 years. Thank you for your leadership and work, Ron.

I also want to recognize CII President Adi Godrej. Thank you for helping to host the Secretary's recent successful trade mission in New Delhi, Jaipur, and Mumbai.

Of course, Secretary Bryson regrets that he could not be here today and sends his greetings. As you may have heard, he is taking a medical leave of absence to focus on his health.

And, of course, I want to recognize the Deputy Chairman of India's Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia. Thank you for coming today and being part of this event. It's a pleasure to see everyone here from both business and government. You're poised for an important and engaging week, which includes the U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue.

Everyone knows India's dramatic story over the past 20 years. It started when then-Finance Minister Singh led the effort to better open up India's economy to market forces and private business.

India's entrepreneurial spirit was unleashed. Millions have been lifted out of poverty. And India's middle class grows bigger each day.

Even though recent GDP growth in India has slowed (as it has in many other places around the world), if India continues on a path toward openness, liberalization, and integration into the global economy, the next 20 years look just as promising.

Within the next 20 years, it's estimated that India will become the most populous country in the world. Nearly 70 cities throughout India could grow to have populations of over one million. And total yearly income of urban households in India could reach four trillion U.S. dollars.

Now more than ever, it's clear that the U.S.-India relationship is—and must continue to be—one of the defining partnerships of this century. Today, I understand that your discussions will revolve around national security, energy, food security, and, of course, our economic relationship.

I'd just like to touch on a few ways we can work together to strengthen our economic relationship.

First, trade. Our bilateral trade relationship has seen continued growth in recent years.

From 2009 to 2011, U.S. goods exported to India grew over 30 percent to a record \$21.6 billion.

Meanwhile, the U.S. imported \$36 billion in goods from India in 2011—also a record. We must continue on the path toward strong, balanced trade growth.

That's why Secretary Bryson recently led a trade mission to India. The businesses on the trip specialized in management, engineering services, transportation, ener-

gy, and more. These businesses are offering up their strong experience in building the U.S. infrastructure as India looks to invest \$1 trillion in its own infrastructure over the next five years.

Cities like Jaipur—a key stop on the trade mission—are particularly important. Jaipur's economic strength has historically been in areas such as tourism, but today it's attracting broader investments through projects like the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and from top Indian companies such as Mahindra. I understand that Anand Mahindra himself will be getting an award and speaking later today.

So we look forward to bilateral trade growth that leads to more jobs and greater overall prosperity in both countries. At the same time, our bilateral investment relationship must also be strong and balanced.

Currently, U.S. investment in India is over \$27 billion while India's investment here is substantially less. The good news is, we are hearing more stories of Indian investment in the U.S.

I had the pleasure of visiting a steel plant in Ohio last August that is owned by Tata's parent company. And, last September, Tata Chemicals announced a joint venture with the U.S. company that makes Arm & Hammer products. Together, they're going to invest \$60 million in a new U.S. manufacturing facility to make chemicals for pollution control. We need more stories like that.

We want to build on the fact that over 30,000 Americans go to work each day at U.S. subsidiaries of Indian firms. So, we need to move forward with efforts such as a Bilateral Investment Treaty, which would provide greater stability for investors in both countries.

Also, at the Commerce Department, we have launched SelectUSA. This is the first coordinated effort by our government to attract business investments to America. Already, our commercial service officers and embassies in India are helping businesses there as they explore building facilities and hiring workers in the U.S.

And we look forward to the first SelectUSA Investment Summit next year here in Washington.

At that Summit, we hope to make even more matches between Indian investors and economic development organizations

throughout the U.S. I hope you will join us.

Truly, there are broad opportunities to strengthen our trade and investment relationship, but challenges remain.

U.S. businesses continue to express a number of concerns about trade and investments in India. Tariffs remain too high on some U.S. products. Investment caps still exist in key services sectors. Intellectual property protection concerns remain. And we are troubled by the policy trend toward mandated local content in areas like manufacturing, IT, and electronics.

That said, it is promising to see India taking steps such as the use of integrity pacts by contractors, and ratifying the U.N. Convention Against Corruption, among other things. I believe—more than ever—that we can indeed overcome challenges if we embrace a shared commitment to transparency, accountability, and openness.

These ideals are essential for strong, innovation-driven ecosystems, which is what both of our countries are striving to create and foster in the 21st century.

Finally, I just want to emphasize that our path forward in the U.S.-India partnership is not, in fact, driven by numbers and statistics. It is driven by person-to-person relationships and friendships.

At the highest levels, these relationships involve the leaders in our Commercial Dialogue, which was just renewed.

This Dialogue will continue bringing together public and private sector leaders in both countries.

And I'm pleased to hear that it will be focused on key areas such as smart grids, intelligent transportation systems, and sustainable manufacturing—all critical to India's continued growth.

But person-to-person India-U.S. relationships are seen in other ways than just through our shared investments. For example, you may know that the Commerce Department recently released the results of its 2010 Census.

From 2000 to 2010, the number of Indian-Americans in the U.S. increased dramatically—by nearly 70 percent—to nearly 3 million people. Also, in 2011, the U.S. welcomed a record of over 660,000 visitors from India.

Working with the State Department, we hope to welcome even more in the months and years ahead, for both business and pleasure.

Clearly, both of our nations can grow richer and more vibrant as we continue to exchange products and services, as well as ideas and cultures.

So, in closing, let's continue to build on each others' strengths. Let's work together to help our entrepreneurs and businesses bring new ideas and innovations into the global marketplace.

And, yes, let's continue to foster the ideals of freedom and democracy throughout the world. If we can achieve those goals, I'm confident that we will continue to lead together in the 21st century, and that our people, our cultures, and our economies will continue to thrive.

Thank you.

Remarks by Ambassador Rice, June 27, 2012¹⁵

Ambassador Susan Rice gave the following remarks at the UN Security Council

Introductory Remarks Omitted

Ambassador Rice. Mr. President, in the last few months the international community has underscored its support for strengthening Afghan leadership and Afghan sovereignty while reinforcing its commitment to Afghanistan well beyond 2014. As President Obama has said, the message to the Afghan people is clear: As you stand up, you will not stand alone.

This morning, I will focus my remarks on recent and upcoming events that have reinforced this message.

On May 2nd, Afghanistan and the United States signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement. It is one of several bilateral agreements Afghanistan has concluded that demonstrates how the international community continues to come together to support Afghanistan as it prepares for the transition in 2014. The agreement provides a long-term framework for relations between Afghanistan and the United States after a responsible drawdown of

U.S. forces. It reaffirms the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. I want to be clear that the United States does not seek any permanent American military bases. The post-2014 U.S. presence will be shaped in close consultation with the Afghan government and will support Afghanistan's social and economic development, security, institutions and regional cooperation.

This agreement enshrines a range of mutual commitments, including on combating terrorism and strengthening democratic institutions. The United States welcomes a strong Afghan commitment to strengthen accountability, transparency, oversight, and to protect the human rights of all Afghans—men and women. Afghanistan and the United States have taken steps together to show that Afghanistan's progress will be irreversible and that our commitment is real and enduring.

Mr. President, the Strategic Partnership is just one piece of a larger international effort to work with the Afghans for a successful transition. At the NATO Summit in Chicago in May, world leaders reaffirmed the Lisbon framework for transition in Afghanistan and further outlined the support the Alliance and individual nations will provide to the Afghan military and police after 2014. As the Afghans assume full responsibility for security by the end of 2014, the enemies of the Afghan people should know that there will be steadfast and capable Afghan forces standing against them, with strong NATO support.

President Karzai's recent announcement of the third of five tranches of areas to transition to Afghan security lead is an important step forward. As transition begins in these areas, nearly 75 percent of the population of Afghanistan will be living in provinces, districts and villages where Afghan forces are beginning to lead. This would not be possible without the growing strength of the Afghan National Security Forces, which remain essential to our shared goal of an Afghanistan that can secure and govern itself. The transition is on track, Afghans are increasingly standing up for their own security and future, and NATO remains united in its support for the Lisbon

timetable, and an enduring commitment to Afghanistan.

Mr. President, the region is also supporting Afghanistan through its transition. We applaud the recent "Heart of Asia" Ministerial Conference in Kabul that endorsed "a process of continuous dialogue" and confidence building measures that will contribute to achieving regional peace and stability and we welcome the positive role UNAMA played in helping ensure the conference was a success. Security improvements will also contribute to the sustainable reintegration of returning Afghans and enable economic opportunity. We are encouraged by the success of the UNHCR international conference on Afghan refugees in May and urge the United Nations to continue focusing attention on the needs of "high return" communities to ensure voluntary and sustainable reintegration. And the March Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in Dushanbe accelerated Afghanistan's growing connections with its South and Central Asian neighbors. We also applaud the private sector conference being hosted in New Delhi this week to promote investment in Afghanistan's people and industries.

Mr. President, we look forward to the Tokyo Conference next week, which is an important opportunity for the Afghan government to clearly commit to improve governance and intensify the fight against corruption. These reforms are vital. Afghanistan cannot rely on donor financing indefinitely. Sustainable development requires private investment and improved regional connectivity. And as Afghanistan makes progress on governance and anti-corruption, the United States and the international community will take concrete steps of our own to help, as we promised at Bonn. Despite serious fiscal challenges of our own, our continued investment in Afghanistan is essential, and it should come from both governments and the private sector.

Mr. President, the coming months will be a dynamic time for Afghanistan. The Afghan people, the international community, the UN and UNAMA have been unfaltering in their commitment to Afghanistan. I want to underscore the enduring importance of the United

Nations and UNAMA's work, from its good offices to promote regional cooperation and co-chairing of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board to its humanitarian assistance and support for refugees and internally displaced persons. The United Nations has remained steadfastly committed to the Afghan people, and we are grateful.

The Afghan government and people, the region and the international community have demonstrated their resolve and long-term commitment to a secure, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan. The United States will work with all of them, every step of the way.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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1. USAID Press Release, April 12, 2012.
 2. State Department Press Release, April 18, 2012.
 3. White House Press Release, May 2, 2012.
 4. State Department Press Release, May 5, 2012.
 5. State Department Press Release, May 8, 2012.
 6. State Department Press Release, May 17, 2012.
 7. State Department Press Release, May 18, 2012.
 8. White House Press Release, May 20, 2012.
 9. White House Press Release, May 21, 2012.
 10. State Department Press Release, May 25, 2012.
 11. State Department Press Release, May 31, 2012.
 12. Defense Department Press Release, June 6, 2012.
 13. State Department Press Release, June 6, 2012.
 14. Dept. of Commerce Press Release, June 12, 2012.
 15. State Department Press Release, June 27, 2012.

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