

Under Secretary R. Nicholas Burns
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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to be here at CARI, a pleasure to see all of you. I want to begin by just apologizing for two things. First, my inability to present this discussion in Spanish. It is one of the great failings of my life, that I have not learned your language – this beautiful language – so I am going to proceed in English, and I apologize for that.

Second, we are late and I am well aware of that we are late – but, for a good reason. We had a very good meeting with Minister Fernandez. We saw President Kirchner briefly. We talked about a lot of the issues that have been dominant in the U.S.-Argentine relationship over the last several months and also even issues that have been in the press of late. So we had a very good meeting. It went on so long that we are a little bit late in arriving here and I apologize for that.

It is a pleasure to be here. It is a pleasure to be with our Ambassador Tony Wayne, who is a very close and good friend. We worked together in the White House for many years and at the State Department. I think he is doing a great job here for the U.S. – he is trying to connect Argentina and our country, to break down some of the misunderstandings that have occurred in the past. But that is the past. I think we all believe that the current

relationship between our two countries is very good. We are proud to have Tony here as our Ambassador.

I am also here with someone who is a good friend of Latin America and Argentina, Tom Shannon. He and I have been traveling together for a week. We were in Sao Paulo and Brasilia for three days for meetings with the Brazilian government, the Brazilian business community and leaders of civil society. It was a great visit. The connections between Brazil and the U.S. are quite strong, and I think will be even stronger when President Bush travels to Sao Paulo in just a few weeks' time. So, it is a pleasure to be here.

I have a few thoughts that I wanted to offer about U.S. policy towards Latin America, specifically concerning Argentina. I am going not speak for so long, because I would much rather hear from you, have a discussion, and respond any questions you might have. I always find this is a much more enjoyable part of these proceedings.

First, let me thank CARI, this organization, for inviting me. I had no idea that you have had such a long list of distinguished Americans who have been here in the past, and so I thank you for inviting me. Thank you very, very much. I know that CARI has played a very important role in Argentina, in the foreign policy discussion and debate about your own role in the world and about how we others in the hemisphere interact with you.

Of course, in America we know something about Argentines and Argentina's diplomatic history. We know it is long and proud, and you have a great public servant here many years ago, Carlos Saavedra Lamas. For us, he

exemplifies the spirit of bringing intellectual tradition and scholarship together with diplomacy, and, in his case, with very good results. As Argentina's Foreign Minister in the 1930s, he of course is remembered in my country for the fact that he negotiated an end to the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay. That was a great achievement. We need to draw some inspiration from that. In our world today, there are so many conflicts that require this kind of inventive, creative diplomacy, so we take inspiration from that Argentine tradition. He also orchestrated a group of American countries, including the United States, to support that peace agreement, in what in modern lexicon would be a circle or group of friends to support it. It worked very well. He was recognized with a Nobel Peace Prize in 1936 and was elected President of the League of Nations. So I thought I should say that today, our respect for him and for your tradition in diplomacy in his great country.

I would also say this -- that we have a lot to discuss as Argentines and Americans, a lot about the past but, more importantly, a lot about the future. I think that my country does have a lot in common with yours. We have similar histories. We are both founded, created, as outpost colonies of Europe. Over time we had the good sense to liberate ourselves from European rule. Both of us played a role in the Americas: in establishing a tradition of independence from Europe in the nineteenth century; in a shared notion of sovereignty; and in a pride in independence that in our hemisphere we can create a different world, a new world, liberated from the colonial and imperial regimes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. You might imagine that I would say this. I am an Irish American and so Irish Americans

have strong views about British colonialism of the United States. Over time, and quite so consciously.

Here is the second connecting point between Argentina and the U.S. – we are nations of immigrants. One of the things that Americans admire about Argentina is that you have created in your country a tolerant, open, democratic society of peoples from all over the world and of different religions. We like to think that we have done the same in the United States. Despite the imperfections that any society has, this is a great achievement, especially in the modern world when sadly we look out across the world and see so many examples where there is intolerance, sectarianism and divisions in society. You have created this great, inclusive, society here in Argentina. We are trying to create, and we believe we have created, that same society in our country. I think that is a second connecting point between our two countries, and we are very proud to have that connection with you.

I should also say that Argentine and U.S. citizens are both proud of the countries we have built, we are proud of our achievements, of the arts, and of science, and of leadership. You have a lot to be proud of in Argentina in that regard, as do we. I hope that the Spanish and the British would agree that our countries have made some creative contributions to the Spanish and English languages over the years as well. This dynamic immigration, tolerance, openness, democracy is part of the new Pan Americanism that was so evident over the last one hundred years.

Now it is our responsibility to build a new definition of that in the twenty-first century. In doing so, perhaps we in the Americas can build the type of

societies and have a type of integration in our hemisphere that can be a model to the Middle East, which is so much troubled these days because they lack the strength that we have in our societies. I hope that will be the case.

I should also say that Argentina and the U.S. have been at the forefront of two great historical shifts just in the past generation, just in the past 20 to 35 years -- the transformation from dictatorship to democracy and the shift from closed economies to open economies. Those two transformations have created the modern South America, Latin America and the modern Western hemisphere that we inhabit with you. That tradition, of course, those traditions are based on democratic values, free elections, civil and human rights, the pursuit of justice even for crimes that have been committed in the past, and that foundation is a very proud and a very important foundation.

I remember as a graduate student and as a young diplomat watching the events in this country from afar in the 1970s and early 1980s, with so much tragedy in Argentina, a great and proud nation. To see in 1983 and 1984 the return to democracy in Argentina was really one of the great stories of that time. It was very inspiring to all of us who inherently oppose dictatorship and support democracy. I do think that Argentina's experience, however painful it was for you, gives you the advantage of being able to tell other societies now the value of what you have built since you returned to democracy so many years ago. The fact that you maintained and strengthened your democratic institutions, and the fact that your Government -- and we admire what your Government is doing -- is now defending the

rights of the victims of the Argentine military dictatorship, these are very great things. We support what the Argentine Government is doing.

I wanted to say those few words about an American perception of your country that is very respectful and very supportive and I want to say we think we can have and continue to build a very strong relationship both our societies, our business communities but also our governments ahead.

We have just gone through an extraordinary year in our hemisphere – thirteen elections – in Chile, in Brazil, in Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, the United States, Canada, and in many, many countries. We know that democracy was debated in all countries during their elections, and we know that we need to stand up for democracy, that democracy is not a conservative form of government, in fact it is a radical form of government. It is not a conservative form of government because it is not designed to protect the interests of the elite. It is a revolutionary and radical form of government designed to open societies and to unlock opportunities for all of our citizens. No matter what differences we have in our hemisphere over particular issues, if we can stand up for democracy, especially where it is challenged in South America, then we will be stronger in this hemisphere, and more successful.

I wanted to say those opening words just to build a framework for discussion that we might have, but I should also say that Tom and I are here in Buenos Aires with Ambassador Wayne to have discussions with your government. We began this morning and we will go on to see the Foreign Minister after

this session. I think there is a very rich agenda that we can discuss, and that we can build on it in the period ahead.

Here is what is on our agenda. First, we are operating together for security in this hemisphere, particularly in Haiti. Haiti is a country that now has a chance to build a democracy if it is given the time and freedom to do that. Argentina has 575 soldiers in the UN mission, the only UN peacekeeping mission in the world that is dominated by Latin countries, and is working well. I've been to Port-au-Prince, to Haiti, with Tom. We've seen the positive effects of what we can do, and we are very grateful for what Argentina is doing to protect Haiti through the UN.

Secondly, we are very grateful for what Argentina is doing. I think it is the leader of South America, indeed of all of Latin America, in saying to the world that we all need to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons power. Argentina, in the IAEA and in the UN, has been the American leader in arguing for non proliferation, for civil nuclear power, but not for the spread of nuclear weapons issues. We are terribly grateful to Argentina for what is done on the issue of Iran and North Korea, and in sending the message that, of course, nuclear power should be available to all citizens of the world, but not nuclear weapons.

We appreciate the fact that in our struggle against terrorism and the threat of insecurity, Argentina again is a leader in this hemisphere. It is only one of two countries in all the Americas that are part of the Container Security Initiative, which is designed to protect ports from those who would smuggle arms and WMD through our ports, and it is the only country in the

hemisphere that is part of the international effort led by Japan and Russia and the United States and all of those to try to contain the threat of proliferation through the proliferation security initiative. So, we respect this role that Argentina is playing, regionally as well as globally. The agenda is rich.

Together, we have a responsibility to protect democracy in Latin America, in our hemisphere. That is in Bolivia, where the U.S. is trying to be a good friend to the Bolivian Government, where we have open channels, opened them, and continued to keep them open to President Evo Morales. We wish Bolivia well, and we hope that Bolivia can succeed. We know that Argentina is trying for the same objective.

We know that in the case of energy, which is suddenly one of the great defining issues of our time, bio-fuels can be a connection point between the U.S. and Brazil. While we were in Brazil, we essentially agreed that we would undertake a project together to try to create a global market for bio-fuels with Brazil and the U.S. as the two leaders in the market. This can also be true of Argentina and the U.S., as it is a natural point of conversion for our economies, for our private sectors and for our governments.

We know that when democracy is challenged, we who live in democratic societies must defend them. Democracy has been challenged in Cuba for five decades. There will be a democratic transition, we hope, in the future, and we hope it is peaceful. We hope that all in South America who believe in democracy will stand up and ask that the political prisoners be released, that democracy be returned to Cuba. We know that in Venezuela you have a

close relationship, you have trade; it is an important relationship for your country. Our relationship is not so good with the government of Hugo Chavez, but we tend to focus on Argentina, on Brazil, on Colombia, on Peru, on Panama – on our friends in the region. We do not tend to focus too much on President Chavez. We hope democracy can be defended in Venezuela and not dismantled. So, there are many challenges ahead of us – political challenges, economic challenges, and we need to be good to historians of peace and democracy in this region.

Mr. Chairman, if I may say one last word – that is that we also need to operate together globally. We Americans are convinced of one thing – the world is changing at a remarkable pace and the conditions that affect international life, politics, economics are changing so we barely recognize the world now compared to what it was even 20 or 30 years ago. We believe that the defining challenges of our time, looking ahead for the next 30 to 40 years, will not be the challenges of the Cold War, which is behind us, but the challenges of multilateralism, of building support for the UN, of reinforcing the OAS, NATO, ASEAN, so that we can combine the efforts of countries to resolve problems.

In this sense, what are the great challenges globally ahead of us? Global climate change, certainly; trafficking of women and children, which is an international problem; the outbreak of international criminal cartels – these are in all of our societies, including my own society; the scourge of international narcotics rings that bring cocaine and heroin into our streets, infecting our kids, our children; and, of course, the spread of terrorism and

nuclear, biological, and chemical technology. These are great, great dangers ahead of us.

We are convinced they can only be overcome if we work together. We can be content to be isolated in the world, as my country has been isolationist in the past. We certainly can try to go it alone in the world. However, we must combine efforts, in this hemisphere and around the world, to resolve these problems. That is the dark side of globalization. But there is also a positive side, and let me add on this positive note – globalization also gives us the tremendous breakthroughs in science, medicine, information technology, that have allowed us to live longer, to conquer disease, to have all the great benefits of the information age. We can also take advantage of that and combine our efforts to make these advances available to people all over the world so that their agenda is not just to meet the needs of the wealthy in our societies, but also be concerned about poverty alleviation and about social justice. With collaboration, those at the bottom of our societies economically might enjoy the benefits of the positive side of globalization in the future.

This is a huge international agenda. We have a great opportunity to do good things in the world and we Americans look forward to working with your country, with Argentina, on all of these issues with great respect for you and great friendship. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

Q. My question is how you face the challenge of terrorism, taking into account that now there is not just one force of terrorism, like Al Qaeda, you have thousands of styles and they are throughout the world. They are in Europe, London, Hamburg, Germany, perhaps in South America, we do not know, but it is quite possible, but everywhere, so this kind of war is a very complex and difficult war. If I try to find out the answer, I believe that it is a very difficult answer, if it is at all possible to answer that question.

U/S Burns: Thank you very much. Well, let me just say – I think that all of us have to understand that, unfortunately, terrorism is a reality of modern life and we have to oppose it where it appears, because it means attacks on democratic civilization, attacks on innocent civilians for the most part. One of the abiding principles of our foreign policy in the U.S. is to stand up to terrorism, but do so in an intelligent way.

We think that any wheel has spokes to it, any wheel has spokes. The effort to counter terrorism probably has five major elements. What we see most often on our TV screens is the military response to it, sometimes as necessary – certainly as it was for us after September 11, 2001, when we went into Afghanistan, we think, to defend ourselves, as we had been attacked from there. That was appropriate, but more often than not terrorism would be defeated if we can do four things well internationally.

This is why I spoke about the importance of international cooperation and strengthening the UN, the OAS, the EU-U.S. relationship. Intelligence cooperation is every bit as important as military cooperation; judicial cooperation, to take terrorists off the streets, to prosecute them in our

judicial systems; economic cooperation, to deny them the ability to launder money through our financial institutions; and diplomatic cooperation, so that we can be united as democratic societies and saying that we reject those who would use suicide bombs, who would use chemical weapons, who would use a gun or an airplane to kill innocent civilians who are unconnected to these problems in the first place.

So those five things represent the battle. It is being fought everywhere. The Philippine government is fighting a terrorist group in Mindanao; the Indonesian Government, a Muslim country, the greatest Muslim country in the world, is fighting terrorism; India, with the second largest Muslim population in the world, is facing a terrorism problem; the Arab States are all fighting and they are all allies in this fight.

I think, luckily, there is very little of this in Argentina and in South America, luckily, and we are all grateful for that. When it has occurred, my country was there up to support Argentina as we did when the Israeli Embassy was bombed here in Buenos Aires, as we did when AMIA was bombed. I am going to go to the AMIA association today to meet leadership, as our Attorney General did two days ago to say that we support you, and we very much support the Argentine government and how it is handling this problem of the judicial investigations so many years later. I do think that if we are intelligent and we use all the resources at our disposal, democratic societies will win in the end.

Q. It was really interesting. I read your points on the agenda, and I could not find any specific reference about trade. Could you talk about that, please?

U/S Burns: I'd be happy to. I know that you are a very famous economist, so I am going to be very careful what I say. I will try not to get into a debate with you, as I will lose. I did refer to trade just briefly and apologize for that.

Trade is obviously a dominant issue in the Americas, dominant globally with the Doha Round. Tony Wayne knows more about trade issues than I will ever know. He is one of our great experts. We Americans believe in free and fair trade, we Americans of the United States of America. We believe that if it is combined with open economies, it can lead to economic growth, to jobs, and not just for the wealthy among U.S. but for poorer people.

I have spent a lot of time in India in the last year. I made seven trips there because we have an enormously big and positive relationship, a great partnership between India and the U.S. India has lifted well over 150 million people out of poverty because of the open economic policies of the government over the last 20 years. It is an extraordinary accomplishment that India has made. China has done the same since Deng Xiaoping made his historic reforms of 1978.

These are the two most populous countries in the world, who started from a very different philosophy – one was Socialist, and one was Communist – and both decided, one in the 1970s, one in the early 1990s, that they would engage in free and fair trade, they would open up to investment, productive investment. They would not close their doors to companies from other countries that wanted to come in to compete. You have seen the enormous

benefits of lifting hundreds of millions of Chinese and Indians out of poverty.

So we believe that trade can work, not just for the wealthy. It can work for the poor if it is accompanied by a commitment to fair trade and to investment, which of course is so important for productive investment. My country could not succeed economically if we were not open to investment and to trade from all over the world. That is our governing philosophy. We know there is a great debate about this in the hemisphere. We have just discussed it, even this morning with some of your government officials. We will continue to stick to our guns and enjoy this discussion and debate, and we hope that it can be a good one for all of us in this hemisphere.

Q. Many thanks, Mr. Ambassador, for your words. I would like to ask about China's influence on our countries, which has been a very positive one over the last few years. I would like to ask whether this positive influence could trigger any mistrust or concern to the United States.

U/S Burns: Thank you very much. This is a question that is much on the minds of people in my country. I was in China just a couple of months ago to have a three-day discussion with the Chinese leadership on their role in the world. What we would say is this: China is a great power. China is a very important partner of the U.S. I think the U.S.-China relationship today is probably better than has been at any time since 1949. It is not without its problems – we do not agree with the way China jails dissidents, restricts democratic freedoms or religious freedoms, and we talked about that very

openly. But China is playing a great role in the world today, I mean great in the sense that it is big.

The Chinese need to have the mentality of a responsible stakeholder, a mentality reflecting they are now part of a global balance of power and with that power comes responsibility. In the case of Sudan, where there is an enormous genocide occurring, in Darfur, a genocide, China is very close to the Government of Sudan, and therefore, should use its influence with the Sudanese Government to allow the UN to come in to protect the people of Darfur. As China invests in Africa and Latin America, it needs, of course, to leave behind a mercantilist philosophy and have a philosophy of two-way trade and investment. We see China's influence as positive in many parts of the world. We also have our disagreements and we are very open about them, but China is increasingly a partner. I will not give any advice to you in Argentina, you do not need my advice, you will make your own decisions. We have a policy of openness and engagement with China, but also honesty when we see things on which we disagree, I think it is a fair way for two great countries to proceed.

Q. Armando Rivas. I would like to ask you what may sound like a sophisticated question, although I think it is essential. I think that you consider that majority rule and the rule of law are the same thing. I learned the opposite in the U.S., when I read Madison, and I hope Americans do not confuse these two things because they will get in real problems in the world as they are now, being involved in Iraq. I am sorry about this.

U.S. Burns. Thank you very much. I have to think back to my reading of Madison 30 years ago. I've forgotten a lot of it but I should not say that. Well, we certainly believe in a governing philosophy where the majority does rule through democratic elections, but where minority rights are protected. I know Madison was concerned about minority rights. We certainly believe in the rule of law, it is the foundation of any democratic society. About Iraq, you know we are involved in a great struggle there, it is not over, and it would be irresponsible, after having gone into that country in 2003, to post a government addictive to dictatorship. Of course, having kept 150,000 troops there, it would be irresponsible to just leave, but I am not suggesting that you argued that. Some people do. It is a hard job for us but we know we have to stay as long as we are welcomed by the Iraqi government. We are currently very much welcomed there by that government. We must stay to help the Iraqis get through these enormous challenges and to help them recover, and then rebuild the civil society. That is what we are trying to do in Iraq. It is a tough job, but we know it is our responsibility, and we are not shying away from that responsibility. So, thank you for your question.

Q. Ambassador, could you please elaborate on potential collaboration in the field of bio-fuels and ethanol with our countries?

U/S Burns: Well, our President, when he talked about global climate change two weeks ago in the State of the Union Address, President Bush said that Americans need to reduce their gasoline consumption by 20% over 10 years – that is an enormous challenge that he gave to the entire country. I think it is welcomed by the country. To do that, we need to diversify our

energy sources. We are oil and gas producers in the U.S., as you know. We would like to recommence with civil nuclear power. We have not built a nuclear power plant in 25 years. We would like to emphasize renewable energy sources – wind power, solar power, biomass, bio-diesel, bio-fuels, etc. In this sense, I think right now the United States is just by a small margin the largest producer of ethanol in the world. We have a partnership with Brazil. I think it is a natural connecting point for Brazil and the U.S. to do three things – number one, engage in science and technology research to make more efficient sugar, corn and other types of ethanol production; number two, to develop a market in Latin America, because many Latin American countries have a natural climatic and agricultural advantage to produce bio-fuels, as you know, including Argentina; and number three, to try to create a global market so that both production and consumption demand be much larger. This would further stimulate the kind of advanced production and efficient production that we all should want to see. We admire what the Brazilians have done with their flex-fuel cars. We were told by some of the ministers in Brazil that well over 80% of automobiles in Brazil use flex-fuel technology. This is a great achievement. Brazil has been a real leader. We are just trying to become a partner and we would offer the same collaboration with Argentina.

Q. Sir, just a short question. Military cooperation between our countries has been very important through the years. Due to the requirements you have imposed on your troops to perform exercises abroad, we have limited military cooperation today. Do you think that any changes will be made on this?

U/S Burns: General, thank you because you have been a good friend to our country for many years. We would like to develop our military relationship with Argentina. We understand a transformation of the Argentine military is under way right now and respect it. There is a great need for peacekeeping in the world, in Haiti, in Bosnia, in Kosovo, in Afghanistan, in Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leon, Liberia, Congo, Sudan, Somalia, you name it. The UN has been stretched to the limit because we do not have enough well-trained troops who can be effective at peacekeeping. So we would hope that Argentina and Brazil would contribute more often to international UN peacekeeping efforts, and train with U.S., with Europeans, with Japanese, with Koreans, with Australians, Jordanians, Turks; we are all involved together in this, so that troops can be effective as peacekeepers.

NATO has just announced a new global partnership program. This is not to join NATO, but to work on peacekeeping with NATO. We would hope that Argentina would keep a relationship with NATO. I saw an announcement that the Defense Attaché has been withdrawn from Brussels. I do not want to be critical of the government, it is not my right to do that, but I would say we would like to continue a close relationship through NATO. Argentina has played a big role in Kosovo and we very much value that. This is part of the future evolution of this relationship with Brazil, Argentina, Colombia. These are all well-trained, professional, first-class militaries. There is a great need in Africa and in the Balkans for peacekeeping expertise that I am sure your Government could extend.

Q. There is a lot of talk in Argentina about the U.S. concern over Argentina's advice on Ecuadorian debt. Is this real or is the concern focused on Ecuador shifting toward Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales?

U/S Burns: You are going to get a two-part answer. One part by me and one part by Tom Shannon, who knows a lot more about this than I do. Here is my part. We believe that we need to respect the democratic elections in Latin America. So we have stretched out our hand in cooperation to Bolivia. Tom went to Bolivia to visit President Morales. Secretary Rice met him. President Bush called him on the phone. We are trying to be helpful. We have the same policy towards President Correa in Ecuador – to respect him, we are going to work with him. So, you'll find that our government is very ecumenical in its approach – we deal with left governments, center governments, right governments. Two governments that we have not dealt with are the far-left radical governments of Cuba and Venezuela, but that is another matter. I think the only thing I say about Argentina – and I do not want to give any public advice, because it would not be right for the Argentine government – is that we think that Argentina is playing a very positive role, in both Bolivia and Ecuador, as a friend of both of them, as an example to both of them.

A/S Shannon: There is not much that I can add to that answer. But to answer the question in a very short fashion, no, we are not worried about the advice Argentina might be giving Ecuador. Argentina has a unique and important experience. Ecuador is going through a very important political time and the idea that Ecuador is prepared to reach out to countries in the region and learn from their experience would be useful. But, as I said in

Washington several weeks ago, it is important for the Ecuadorian government to understand that there are many countries in the region that want to be helpful. They agreed that they can allow U.S. to be helpful, which will be positive.

Q. Can you speak briefly about anti-terrorism measures, and also about the AMIA and the Israeli Embassy? What is the official line from the U.S. Government on who is responsible for the AMIA bombing and also the Israeli Embassy? Is it Iran? Does the administration think that it is Iran and Hezbollah that is to blame?

U/S Burns: Are you from the United Kingdom?

Q. No, I am from New Zealand.

U/S Burns: Ah..., good, (laughter) because I was going to apologize for all those things I said about British colonialism in the eighteenth century, but since you are from New Zealand, we are friends. We are friends of the British government as well. It was 238 years ago after all, and now we are very good friends of the British.

This is a serious subject. As I said before, we are so pleased that South America has been largely free of the type of terrorism that has afflicted the Middle East, Europe, and my own country. We pray that it remains that way. But there were these two horrible terrorist attacks of 1992 and 1994 in this city, and we have supported the Argentine government's very careful, methodical investigation. Now, of course, it is appealing to Interpol, and we

have great sympathy with the Argentine authorities, and we give great support to them.

In general, we do believe that Iran has been behind terrorist attacks against the United States in 1993 in Lebanon, and in 1996 in Saudi Arabia. We know that Iran continues to be the largest funder, I would even say the central banker, of Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command. We have enormous sympathy for the Palestinian people.

Our Secretary of State is going to be in the Middle East in about a week, and she is going to convene a meeting with PM Olmert and with Abu Mazen, the President of the Palestinian Authority. Our declared objective – the U.S. objective – is to help create an independent Palestinian State, that will live along side Israel, and we are working with the Palestinian and Israeli governments to try to create some progress towards that end. So, we are friends of the Palestinians, but we have to reject this radical Palestinian terrorism of these terrorist groups, and certainly we reject the role of Iran, which is the most important global supporter of terrorism, the Iranian government.

Q. You have just met with President Kirchner and Cabinet Chief Alberto Fernandez. Did you speak specifically about the Argentine-Venezuelan relationship, and about the Chavez administration? Did you speak about possible obstacles to the access of U.S. capital to Argentina's electricity business?

U/S Burns: Well, I think I should keep private what is discussed with your President and your Minister. That is the best way to proceed diplomatically. But we have a great respect for President Kirchner and Minister Fernandez and all of the meetings we had today. We had a very good discussion with Minister Fernandez on all these issues. We were very pleased to be greeted by President Kirchner; we are thankful for that.

On the second question, is the job of any Embassy, anywhere in the world, of any nationality, to promote its own country? Certainly, the job of the U.S., as well as Argentine embassies, is to promote their companies. We do this in a very respectful way. We simply say to a government – please look at this company, look at this investment, this might be helpful to you. We know that, in the end, the sovereign government makes its own decisions, and we respect that. It is fair competition all over the world. One of the biggest jobs that Ambassadors of your country and my country have now is commercial diplomacy. So, we do that job, and there must have been some misunderstanding that led to some of these press stories. I think we have now clarified the misunderstanding to the satisfaction of both governments.

This was just a misunderstanding – we will continue to support American companies who want to invest in Argentina because we have a sense that you want American companies to trade and invest.

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