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**REMARKS
BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
THE 237TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE
A CELEBRATION
LAKESHORE HOTEL, DHAKA
JULY 4, 2013**

Good evening ... and welcome, everyone!

A most special welcome to good friend, Minister of Finance, Abul Maal Abdul Muhith ... and a warm welcome to my diplomatic colleagues, distinguished guests, and friends ...

Tonight we celebrate the anniversary of America's independence ...

Tonight we celebrate the birth of our nation 237 years ago in the steamy summer heat of Philadelphia ...

The year was 1776 ... the day was this very day ... in a room smaller than this ballroom ... the smell was wretched, reeking of sweat and fear ... one by one, 56 men came forward, dipped a quill into a pot of ink and signed a most audacious document, a document declaring that the colonies of America were severing their ties with the British Crown.

Some inscribed their names with great flourish; others did so more meekly; each knew that with his signature he was committing treason against the mighty British king; each signer knew that he was putting his neck, his property, his family at mortal risk.

With those signatures, the battles already raging between America's ragtag militias of farmers, shopkeepers, frontiersmen, and hunters against the powerful, professional armies of the British Crown took on new meaning, new purpose: the battles were now about freedom, about independence.

But for us Americans this day is about more than commemorating the bravery of our forefathers in pledging their lives and their fortunes to throw off the yoke of British Imperial domination ...

On this day, we Americans celebrate not only the birth of America, the nation; we celebrate the birth of America, the idea ...

... the idea that all men and women are created equal, the idea that all have certain inalienable rights ... the right to life; the right to liberty; the right to pursue happiness.

The pursuit of these ideas is the history of America, and it is a pursuit that continues to this very day as we Americans strive to overcome our imperfections, as we seek to build a more perfect union.

Bangladesh, too, is working to perfect its own nation. Bangladesh, like America, faces the challenges of building a more free, a more just, a more prosperous nation. I believe that both nations, America and Bangladesh, are moving forward on the path of development as both nations endeavor to create better futures for our children.

To me, the Fourth of July is not just an occasion for Americans to commemorate brave signatures on an inflammatory challenge to the British monarch so many years ago; to me, the Fourth of July is an occasion shared by all who believe in democracy, all who believe in freedom, all who believe in the rights and responsibilities of the individual, all who believe that each person has worth and rights. No wonder this room is filled tonight ...

In this spirit, I again welcome you to this celebration of the birth of America, the nation ... to this celebration of the birth of America, the idea.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*