

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: DhakaPA@state.gov

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



**REMARKS
BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
HILTON DHAKA
GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY
DHAKA
AUGUST 7, 2013**

The Honorable Minister of Home Affairs Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir
The Honorable Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism Faruk Khan
Hilton Worldwide Director of Development Alexander Dadak
Hilton Southeast Asia Director of Design and Projects Andrew Meier
Chairman, Premier Group and local partner Dr. HBM Iqbal
... and all of you who, like me, believe that Bangladesh is on the march, on the march to
ever greater prosperity

Asalaam 'malaikum and good morning.

It was a long time ago ... about 55 years ago.

I was a small boy living on a small dairy farm in remote Iowa.

Literally, our farm was the last one on the lane ... it often seemed like we were at the end of
the world ... or perhaps just beyond.

But we had radio ... radio was a wondrous thing ... as we milked the cows and did the daily
farm chores, our ears were ever tuned to the radio ... and that is when I first learned of the Conrad
Hilton Hotel ... on the Magnificent Mile in downtown Chicago ... the Conrad Hilton Hotel ... it
sponsored some radio show that I have long forgotten, but the advertisements of the Conrad Hilton
Hotel painted images of a wondrous life of opulence and luxury that was far remote from the hot,
dirty, smelly barn where my brother and I did our chores. For us, the Conrad Hilton Hotel might
well have been on the moon, such was the likelihood that we should ever see it. But dreaming is
free, and that was the wont of us two boys ... and dream we did of roaring up that glorious avenue
in our sleek Cadillac and swishing through the grand hotel door, held open by a respectful doorman,
and into the resplendent lobby. Such were the vivid dreams of little boys ...

Those dreams, so rich, so colorful and a bit fanciful, never included any possibility that
someday in a faraway place I might find myself helping to break ground for the newest member of
the family of Hilton Hotels, which now span the globe.

Hilton Hotels have come to Bangladesh not to add a new dimension to my indelible dreams
of the Conrad Hilton Hotel ... no ... they came to Bangladesh, because it makes sense, good
business sense to come to Bangladesh. They are not here by accident; they are here because their

comprehensive analysis of Bangladesh revealed that Bangladesh is a happening place, a place of steady economic growth over the past two decades, growth that has lifted millions out of poverty ... a happening place, a place with brightest prospects for even faster growth that will left millions more out of poverty.

I'd guess that Hilton spent some money assessing prospects for a successful hotel in Dhaka. They really didn't need to spend that money ... they might have read the McKinsey report, which forecasted that Bangladesh would become the world's largest exporter of readymade garments and household textiles replacing China; or they might have read Goldman Sachs's rating that includes Bangladesh among the "Emerging Eleven" hot economies for trade and investment; or they might have contacted JP Morgan, which lists Bangladesh among its "Frontier Five" emerging economies.

Or, best of all, they simply might have called me ... they could have saved their money ... free of charge, I would have told them that Bangladesh could be/should be the next Asian Tiger ... not only number one for RMG and household textiles exports as McKinsey predicts, but also a huge global player in generic pharmaceuticals, small and medium freighters, IT software and process, shoes and finished leather goods, frozen shrimp, bone china, flower exports to the Middle East, jute, silk and the list goes on.

I would have told them about Bangladesh's agricultural revolution that has already made this, the most densely populated country in the world, rice self-sufficient and soon food self-sufficient. I would have told Hilton that Bangladesh is the nexus of the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor, which promises to be one of great trade routes of this new century.

And I would have told them of the challenges that Bangladesh is tackling such as increasing supplies of power and energy, upgrading and expanding the roads, railroads and port facilities, improving the quality of education and skills training so Bangladeshis can better build the economies of the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Bangladesh itself challenges such as reining in corruption and political instability and bolstering the rule of law. Of course, many of these challenges create opportunities ... opportunities that would bode well for the hotel industry as the Bangladesh economy scales new heights.

Yes, all of this and more I would have told Hilton, but they didn't need me to tell them anything for they have figured this all out on their own and that is why they ... and we ... are here today ... here today to break ground on the newest addition to Bangladesh's ever vibrant economy. I am so pleased and proud that America continues to discover the opportunities of Bangladesh.

This is truly a great day for me as my long ago dream of the Conrad Hilton Hotel takes on a new reality, a great day for Hilton as it enters an exciting new market, a great day for Dhaka as it yet again reconfigures its skyline, and, most especially, a great day for fostering the ever strengthening bonds between America and Bangladesh ... to the great benefit of the people of both nations.

Thank you.

=====

**As prepared for delivery*