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U.S. AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA MEET THE PRESS

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Ambassador Mozena: Good morning everybody. I want to thank all of you for coming. I really appreciate your coming out.

I wanted to meet with you and exchange some thoughts because I've just literally come back from three weeks in the United States. Sad to say, it was not a holiday. My wife is still very unhappy about this. Actually the whole time was work.

Let me just tell you a little bit about what I did in a very general sense. I started off in California. I spent three days reaching out to the Bangladeshi-American Diaspora in Silicon Valley. Let me tell you, they are doing quite well, thank you very much. That was a really good visit.

I went to the United States Coast Guard and got an update from them.

I went to Chevron, the biggest investor here in Bangladesh. Their headquarters is in California, San Ramon, so I visited the number two person in Chevron.

I visited a Grameen project in Oakland. Oakland is part of the San Francisco area, but you know Grameen. It's a Grameen village project right there in Oakland.

I did some outreach with The Asia Foundation. I made some public presentations.

I attended a conference, two-day conference, at Berkeley, California. That's the University of California-Berkeley, one of the absolute best universities in America. And the whole conference was on Bangladesh challenges and opportunities of engagement in Bangladesh. All these experts from Bangladesh and from all over America and all over the world had flown in. It was a big deal. It was a real big deal.

From there I went to Washington and I had three solid days of consultations. I went to the United States Trade Representative and there we discussed TICFA, and we discussed the GSP review process and all of those steps. Maybe in questions and answers we can come back to that.

I visited another huge American company, the second largest company in the world, that's GE.

I went to the Pentagon and went all over that massive building talking to different people about America's military to military engagement with Bangladesh.

I met with the head of the U.S. HIV/AIDS program.

I had another speech with The Asia Foundation -- I did one in San Francisco and one in Washington. Nice big crowds. People are very interested.

I went to the United States Department of Treasury to explore relationships with them.

I went to the FBI to explore setting up, making permanent an office here rather than temporary.

I went to the White House. Met a friend of yours, Nick Dean, who used to be the Deputy Ambassador here, he is now, oh, he's got a head like this. He's the Senior Director for South Asian Affairs at the White House, so I met with him.

I went to Capitol Hill. I always go to Capitol Hill. I met members of Congress. More importantly, I met staff. We can talk about that, too, if you want.

I went to Peace Corps. You know one of my dreams is to bring back Peace Corps. And I spent a lot of time with Bob Blake who is the Assistant Secretary of South and Central Asian Affairs ... and with his whole team.

After that I went to Hawaii, oh my goodness, I suffered greatly in wonderful Hawaii. I went to a two-day conference sponsored by the Pacific Command on the region. I have to tell you, Bangladesh was represented there by Rear Admiral Sarwar, who is the head of the Bangladesh Coast Guard, and by the commander of SWADS, Makbul, Commodore Makbul. And do you know, of all these delegations, maybe 20 delegations from all over Asia, who do you think got the gold star for participation in that conference? Go ahead, make a guess.

Press: SWADS.

Ambassador Mozena: Is anybody here other than me? Bangladesh got the gold star for participation in that conference. I really am proud.

Then I spent a whole day of consultations at the Pacific Command. I'm talking about mil-mil engagement to counter violent extremism, to counter terrorism, maritime security, international peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. So I met the number two commander of Pacific Command. Number one, Admiral Locklear, was out of town. I met all the three stars, four stars.

That's a quick overview of what I've been doing for three weeks. Through all of those engagements in California, in Washington, in Hawaii there were always the same tactical questions asked. People would say, "Tell us about Shahbagh. What's Shahbagh?" So I said Shahbagh is an example of people peacefully manifesting the most basic right, to express their views publicly. I said this is an important part of democracy. So people asked about Shahbagh.

People then asked about what about the violence of the past couple of weeks in Bangladesh? Tell us about that. Then I said well -- And I said, as other countries have also indicated, we all agree, we're very, very saddened by the loss of lives. It's almost 100. It's over 80, the loss of lives, loss of property. We're very concerned about the attacks on the minority communities, Hindu Temples and Hindu homes. I said violence is never the answer, and that we encourage all Bangladeshis across the political spectrum to express their views peacefully. The government of Bangladesh needs to continue to endeavor to ensure the safety of its people.

Then people asked, "Well what about this thing, International Crimes Tribunal?" People don't understand all of that. I said America supports bringing to justice those who have committed these atrocities ... crimes against humanity. We believe that any trials along this line must be fair, must be transparent, and must be consistent with domestic and international standards, including the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights. I said the United States in the person of Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, Ambassador Steven Rapp has offered suggestions on the conduct of those trials.

Then another tactical issue that people raised related to the continuing political confrontation here. And what I said on that is America, and other friends of Bangladesh, all join in urging the major political parties to find a way forward, to find a way forward to hold free and fair and credible elections. Then I said we are prepared to help support that election process.

Anyway, those are the issues that were on the top of people's minds. I guess everybody's reading your newspapers maybe and everybody's watching your TV. So they're asking these kinds of questions.

But that's not the big story. That's not the big story. The big story and what I spent most of my time discussing is the bilateral relationship between America and Bangladesh. And I explained everywhere I went, everywhere I went, the same message, a powerful message. I said the relationship between America and Bangladesh has never, never, never been broader or deeper or stronger than it is today. And I'm going to read you a dictionary definition, because there's so much confusion over a very simple word. That word is the word "excellent." I am going to read this.

"Excellent. Excellent means excelling or exceeding in kind." I can't read all of this. It means "eminently good ... of great value." Are we getting the drift? I say excellent and nobody ever understands it. That is our relationship, right there ...and here. If you don't believe me, you can take this book and quote from it. That is the dictionary meaning.

Press: Can I add it to my library?

Ambassador Mozena: You can add it to your library.

Press: Then I'll take it.

Ambassador Mozena: They're donating it. But that will cost you \$200. You know we have sequestration now so we don't have any money, so that's \$250. The price just went up.

That is the story that I talked about back home, this bilateral relationship. I don't know if any of you pay attention or not. Actually, I do know. You do pay attention. The stream of American VVIP and VIP visitors to Bangladesh is unending. It is unprecedented. There has never, never, never been this kind of engagement coming from America. This is how you judge a relationship.

Look, people do not come here to get frequent flyer miles. People are not coming here to go junketing and buy gifts and stuff. They're coming to Bangladesh because it matters.

Next we have the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Energy. This is a whole new thing. We are engaging on energy, energy dialogue ... renewable energy. This is a whole new front. He's here right now.

We have the Special Advisor for Burma, for Myanmar. He's coming I think tomorrow. This is a big deal. He's visiting Burma and visiting Bangladesh. You'll have a chance to talk to him later on.

We've had the Secretary of the U.S. Navy. The Secretary of State you all remember that. We've had the four star Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, four star Commander of the Pacific Fleet, three star 7th Fleet Commander, three star U.S. Army Pacific Commander, two stars, one stars. You name it, non-stop. That's just the military side.

Bigger is the civilian side. Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, flooding in here. We had the biggest ever, the biggest ever delegation from Congress was here just two weeks ago. Do you think this is all by some accident? No. These are manifestations of bridges being built between America and Bangladesh and I'm only talking about the VVIP and the VIP.

You know, more important are the high school seniors who were just here a couple of weeks ago. All the college students coming and going, back and forth. All the people-to-people engagement. We have a dance troupe here right now. I forgot to bring you free tickets. Maybe somebody else will give you tickets. You have to go watch this dance thing.

This speaks to this deepening relationship. I know that the government of Bangladesh is inviting Secretary Kerry to come. Well, I certainly will work as hard as I possibly can to support the Secretary's coming.

While I was back in Washington I worked very hard to put in place more foundation blocks to our relationship. We have successfully set up what will be round two of the Security Dialogue between America and Bangladesh. You remember round one was here in Dhaka last April. Round two will be in Washington. It will be headed by Andrew Shapiro, the Assistant Secretary of State for Political/Military Affairs. He's the guy who came here last year, if you remember. The Bangladesh side is sending a powerful team to America headed by Mustafa Kamal, but people from AFD and Home and all the other ministries will go, too, to discuss various aspects of our security

relationship. So I worked real hard to put that in place. We want that to be every bit as successful as round one was.

Secondly, we're cementing the Partnership Dialogue. Do you remember the Partnership Dialogue? When Clinton was here in May last year, 5-6 May, she and Dipu Moni signed this agreement to establish a Partnership Dialogue. The first Partnership Dialogue was held in Washington in September. And this next one will be May 27-28 here in Dhaka. Wendy Sherman, who is the number three person in the U.S. Department of State is going to be here. She's going to lead our delegation and Foreign Secretary Shahid, will be her counterpart. So we're defining that agenda to have a good, strong agenda, to keep giving direction, strategic direction to our partnership. So I was working very hard to make sure that that is equally successful.

The third element would be the second-ever military-to-military conference. Last year that was also in September, the end of September in Hawaii at PACOM, Pacific Command. This year that's going to be in Dhaka. This is more of a middle level, working level engagement of laying out all the detail for five years of working together on military-to-military affairs. Laying out training and all those kinds of things.

That was a key part of my work back home and I'm very, very, very, very happy, all three of those are coming together very nicely. Full steam ahead on that.

So while I was home I did other things to push this dialogue -- not dialogue. To push this partnership to new heights.

One of the things, I mentioned I worked with the diaspora. Over the past months I have reached out to the diaspora -- I'm talking about Bangladeshi-Americans. I've gone up to New York City, a big herd up there. I went to Washington, D.C. I went to Portland, Oregon. That's where Intel is. I went to Los Angeles. Now I just did Silicon Valley. Next trip I'm going to Detroit, Michigan. My trip after that I'm going down to Texas. I hunt them all down. I'm hunting down all these Bangladeshi-Americans.

Why am I doing this? Because I'm helping them. I'm helping them find a way to engage and support what they call their Mother Land. We're on the brink of announcing, I think it's going to happen in April. It will be next month. We're announcing two portals, virtual portals. One portal will be a philanthropic portal. This is a mechanism by which Bangladeshi-Americans who want to give money back to Bangladesh, can do it in a way that their money is safe, will not be eaten along the way, and will have the impact they want. There will be vetted charity groups on the other end of that portal. So that is a mechanism connecting Bangladeshi-Americans with charities.

The second portal is called an Ideas Marketplace. The idea for this is to connect Bangladeshi-Americans who have money, some ideas, and they want to invest in Bangladesh. On the other end you have Bangladeshis with ideas, the plans and visions, looking for expertise, looking for technical assistance, looking for money. So you come through that portal, and you have to do your own vetting. You have to do your own due diligence, but the portal will help potential investors connect with people.

This has worked so well, these two portals, in other countries. Now we're going to open them up here.

I think this is a very big deal to elevate the engagement between America and Bangladesh so I pushed really, really hard on that.

On the military-to-military side. I mentioned I went to the U.S. Coast Guard in California. The reason I went there is I wanted to see the United States Coast Guard Cutter Jarvis because that ship on May 22, 2013 is going to transfer from the United States of America to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. That ship, 378 feet long, will be the largest ship in the Navy of Bangladesh, so I wanted to see it. And I covered every inch of this thing, all the way down to the keel. They said if you go any lower you're going to be standing in mud. I looked at everything. That ship's looking real nice and we're working very closely with the government of Bangladesh to take off some old stuff and replace it with newer equipment that can be maintained.

On March 13, when is that? Two days from now, right? The training of the officers and crew who are going to man that ship will begin right on schedule. It's starting off with I think two or three dozen, mainly officers. Eventually more will come. At the end I think altogether it's a 150, 160 crew. It's a big ship, this is really a big ship. And I told everybody in the U.S. Coast Guard, and I told everybody in the U.S. military, Bangladesh, Bangladesh, Bangladesh will do this so well that when the time comes and there's a second cutter available, I want that cutter to come to Bangladesh, too. That's my plan. I want two of those cutters here because those cutters will enable Bangladesh to secure its maritime assets and borders. That's good for America, that's good for stability in South Asia, that's good for Bangladesh. So I spent a lot of time on that.

I talked to people about four C-130Hs. You know the C-130. Bangladesh has four C-130s now. They're Bs, one of the earliest generations. Three of those planes are flying beautifully thanks to the ability of Bangladesh to maintain aircraft. So my hope is by the end of this calendar year or early next calendar year, to start transferring more C-130s, a much newer version. Hs, not Bs, Hs. First two, and then later two more. So I worked very hard on that.

We worked on other aspects of our maritime security cooperation to bring in more patrol boats. We have these 38 foot Defiant boats. They're the fastest boats on the bay. They catch anybody. We're working with the Bangladesh Navy and the Bangladesh Coast Guard to help Bangladesh secure its borders from trafficking of people, of arms, of drugs, terrorists, people who want to steal your fish. I hope sometime there will be gas in that bay, you have to protect your gas. So this partnership is going ahead very well.

I spent a lot of time working on disaster response, especially earthquakes. I think there's not a person in this room who doesn't know that Dhaka is overdue for an earthquake. We're right on a fault line. America wants to partner, is partnering with Bangladesh to help prepare for earthquakes. Bangladesh raised the idea of a Regional Urban Disaster Management Center on Earthquakes, so we're exploring how to help with that.

It's important to help Bangladesh develop a first responder capability. What do you do when the trembling stops? What do you do? The answer is, people's lives depend upon first responders.

That is people living right there with minimal equipment being trained to rescue, not kill, victims of earthquakes. That's a major focus that we're working on.

Another area is the Coastal Crisis Management Centers. Some of you are aware of this. We're working in partnership with Bangladesh to build 30 of these ...a string of cyclone shelters. But these are cyclone shelters on steroids. They're set back maybe 30 kilometers from the edge. A whole string starting in Teknaf, working all the way over to Satkhira. Coastal Crisis Management Centers will have permanent Bangladesh Coast Guard presence. Each will be outfitted with land transportation. Each will be outfitted with a boat for sea transportation, river running transportation. Each will have cyclone proof communications. The first one of those we're going to cut the ribbon on, the Home Minister and I, this week. Then 29 more. This is a big deal, a real big deal because the communications will not be broken and the central government and outside friends like the United States will know exactly where to initiate search and rescue, followed by relief ... Don't go to Satkhira, they were missed, you go to Bhola. That's where the worst need is. That's going to save lives. This is a big deal. I'm really proud. So we talked about that.

We talked about further strengthening the SWADS. I call them the Bangladesh Navy SEALS. More things there.

Another area -- I'm listing the areas where I've been working, where I did work and continue to work to elevate this relationship. That's regional integration. The whole idea is called the Indo-Pacific Corridor. So we talked about how America can partner with Bangladesh in improving that corridor.

Some of you know, I was just down in Benapole, down in Jessore. I did flowers down there, too. I was down there with [Shykh]. But I also went to Benapole to try to lay in a plan -- And we're coming up with ideas of how to partner with Bangladesh to improve inter-regional integration.

I worked a lot on GSP ... the Generalized System of Preferences. You know that review process is underway right now. So I'm working to facilitate communication between America and Bangladesh, to ensure there's an understanding of this review process and how to ensure that Bangladesh does not have those privileges suspended.

This takes on a special significance because I am told ... I have to do more research so I'm just telling you what people told me ... that in the WTO context there is a movement moving forward to bring duty-free and quota-free access to LDCs, lesser developed countries. So that's happening in WTO. I need to research that. I'm told that's happening in WTO and that's moving ahead, maybe in a couple of years that will move forward. I don't know. I'm just telling you what people told me. I don't know that this is true. I'm just repeating it.

But what they also tell me, that if -- Please hear the "if." If that process does advance, does conclude successfully, the mechanism for providing duty and quota relief will be GSP. So I want to make sure that Bangladesh has GSP privileges so that if that happens, and I don't know ...I'm not saying it will happen. I don't know. Nobody's predicting. It's just, it's in motion. If it happens, Bangladesh wants to be ready by having GSP privileges with the United States and other countries. So that's an area.

I talked about labor situation, labor rights, working conditions.

I talked with U.S. businesses. I talked with the Export-Import Bank to encourage further engagement on their part. I talked about a Bangladeshi idea to establish some kind of law enforcement training center. That's a good idea. If they would like U.S. help, we could help with that. I talked about energy. I mentioned that Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ichord is coming and so we talked about energy cooperation. Talked about the idea of maybe some kind of cooperation to help improve revenue collection. Taxes and VAT. That's an area where the U.S. has expertise.

Talked about Peace Corps. I would like to bring Peace Corps back to Bangladesh. I'm a former Peace Corps volunteer, some of you might know. I lived two and a half years in the jungle of Zaire. You don't call it Zaire anymore. You call it DRC, Democratic Republic of Congo. My wife and I were living out beyond the edge of the world working with chickens and rabbits.

Press: Which area? Bunia?

Ambassador Mozena: No, not Bunia. We were in the middle of no place. Bandundu, on a river called Kwilu. There we were, raising chickens and rabbits. Two and a half years. I love Peace Corps. Peace Corps used to be in Bangladesh. I want Peace Corps back in Bangladesh because here they could help with agricultural extension the way my wife and I did. They could help with health. Peace Corps works at the grassroots level. They'll speak Bangla. They'll live with Bangladeshis. And they will work at the grassroots level helping Bangladesh implement the agriculture revolution that Matia Chowdhury is leading in this country ... I brag about her and that revolution every chance I get. And Peace Corps can help bring it down to the lowest level. And also on health; they can help a lot on health, especially maternal mortality and child under five mortality.

Anyway, those are all the different areas. I'm telling you everything I did. There's no classified annex. This is it. I worked really hard and pushed on all these fronts because I think you people know what I think about Bangladesh, and I think Bangladesh is a country that matters a lot to America and to the world, and I am determined during my time here to do everything I can to bolster this relationship and that's what I've been doing for three weeks. I thought you would want to hear about it.

Anyway, that's enough. Oh, my goodness sakes, I have talked -- I didn't know I could talk that long. I'm sorry about that.

Voice: Sir, our first question today is from Raheed from Prothom Alo. We drew numbers.

Mr. Ejaz: This is Raheed from Prothom Alo.

As you mentioned, during your stay in the U.S. people asked you about Shahbagh, about the violence and other things so obviously my question will focus on that particular issue, though we have gone to the U.S. State Department position on that.

You mentioned that friends, like other friends the U.S. also, major political parties will take initiative to resolve their differences. But unfortunately, as of now the violence as well as confrontation and political situation still prevail across the country. The day before yesterday when the Foreign Minister briefed diplomats stationed in Dhaka they also vented their concern that if such situation prolonged in the [remnant] of the election it's a matter of great concern, how a country can continue such a situation.

So considering this scenario, how do you observe the over situation in the country, especially focus on the law and order and attack on the minority. Thank you.

Ambassador Mozena: Raheed, I spoke to that so I'm not going to repeat that. I spoke directly to those issues. I put them up front because I knew you would ask me about them. I said don't bother asking me because I spoke to all four of those tactical issues, and I said what I have to say.

Voice: Our second question is from Monty.

Ms. Monty: [Bhorer Kagoj]. Thank you so much. You already talk about what I am going to ask but it was very vast. I want you to say brief this time, you did a lot of work to successor vision regarding Bangladesh. What exact message you bring for us from Washington to continue these visions and missions?

Ambassador Mozena: That's really a good question. I raised the four tactical concerns, and all the people I interacted with are well-wishers of Bangladesh and they hope that those issues will be resolved soon.

But the real focus is on the big picture. Everywhere I went, even during these really difficult budget times. I don't know if you follow what's going on in the United States, but these are difficult budget times. But still people want to engage in Bangladesh. Why, you might wonder? It's the seventh largest country in the world. You heard me talk about that. And it's a moderate and a secular and a tolerant and a democratic alternative to violent extremism. You've heard that before. That matters.

And look, all these visitors come to Bangladesh. They leave really impressed. For the same reason I love this place and I've told you before. It's because the people here are extraordinary. I'm not saying it because you're Bangladeshi. I don't have to say that. I'm saying it because it's true. That magnetism is catching.

So there's a real determination in Hawaii, in California, in Washington, to deepen this relationship. Some of you have heard me joke that when I arrived here on November 19, 2011, some of you were there. You were there, Mainul. Raheed were you there? At the airport. I remember a couple of you. Do you remember when I came off that plane, I was so tired and I was dragging this huge black leather bag, so heavy I couldn't lift it. Drag it, clump, clump, clump. And somebody asked me, I don't remember who it was, what do you have in that bag? I said that's my mandate. That's my mandate from Secretary Clinton to broaden and deepen and strengthen this relationship as far as

Bangladesh wants to go. That is dead serious, and that mandate is alive and well even now. Even in this difficult budget time. People want to engage. And I will do everything I can to do that.

Voice: Mainul has the next question.

Mr. Ahmed: [Ittefaq]. I wanted to know the clear vision. You mentioned earlier in your opening remarks in consultation in D.C., they wanted to know about the Shahbagh movement, and you mentioned this is a peaceful manifestation of the demand of the younger people. That's right? Was it your --

Ambassador Mozena: I don't think I said younger people.

Mr. Ahmed: People. This was the thing you mentioned, your answer to Washington, D.C., what the State Department thinks regarding Shahbagh? What you brought back. Number one.

Number two, the Ambassador Rapp was here for at least three times. I covered, many of us covered regarding the ICT. By now at least three verdicts delivered, and how you see after the third party, how you evaluate the ICT activities, specifically how you see this tribunal? This is my question. If you tell in detail and specifics, thank you.

Ambassador Mozena: On the question of Shahbagh, you're suggesting that somehow you have an Ambassador and a State Department doing two different things. No. We work for President Obama. So when I speak, I'm President Obama's personal representative here. So the State Department and I, we say the same thing. I have nothing to add to what I said on Shahbagh because the State Department's view and my view and President Obama's view are all the same. That's a coordinated view. I have nothing to add.

On the second one relating to ICT, Mainul, I spoke to that. I spoke clearly to that, and that's what I have to say.

Voice: The next questioner is Zahidur from Radio Today.

Mr. Khan: Mr. Ambassador. I'm Zahidur Rahman, I work for Radio Today. It is the first FM radio station in Bangladesh. You already said find out the way to free, fair and credible election. What's your observation of the political party like the Awami League and BNP? Where the solution is the caretaker government.

Ambassador Mozena: Zahidur, I've spoken to that, and don't ask me to repeat what I've said. So I've answered that question. I don't want to repeat my words. I've got too little time here.

Voice: The next questioner is Zahirul Alam from NTV.

Mr. Alam: Ambassador, you said that words from the United States that all parties will find a way forward to hold a free and fair and credible election. You are prepared to support the election process, and balance is never the answer. So how the United States are planning to support the election process? Could you please tell us something?

Ambassador Mozena: The election process includes many technical aspects like registering voters, and the actual mechanics of conducting an election ... observing and things like this. So these are things that the United States through the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, IFES, and other countries too, so many other countries, have experience all over the world in helping countries with the conduct of the election. But that's a later step. But you need to focus on that because there needs to be registration of voters; all of these technical things need to be addressed.

Bangladesh has many friends, including America, and all of us will be willing to help with those.

The larger issue is the one you said. You quoted back my own words, so those words speak to the larger issue. That's for the parties.

Voice: The next question is from Kabir.

Mr. Bhuiyan: [Independent]. I'm really scared to ask questions because I know that I'm not going to have the answers, but let me try again.

Ambassador Mozena: I have never not answered your questions. Now don't ask me to repeat myself.

Mr. Bhuiyan: Okay, I'll not. I'll try not to.

Ambassador, the Shahbagh movement, let me come back to Shahbagh movement. Their demand is the capital punishment for certain individuals. You said it's a peaceful protest, but do you think the demand they're doing is the right one? Can it be demanded or recalled what the verdict will be? And what's your opinion about the demand of banning Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami?

Ambassador Mozena: On the first one, I've spoken to that. I saw you write that down so I'm not going to repeat that.

On the second one, that's an issue for the appropriate authorities to deal with. As an outsider, that would not be an issue I would address. I would note that it is a party with members in parliament. I note that.

Voice: Nazrul from NTV.

Mr. Kabir: I'll pass because already you answered my question.

Voice: Sarwar from ETV is the next person.

Mr. Shumon: Hello, Excellency. I'm going to ask you a question that main opposition party BNP chairperson, Begum Khaleda Zia, called these recent killings as mass killing and the government has criticized that -- as genocide-- and the government has criticized that comment. What's your opinion about this about Begum Khaleda Zia's particular comment.

Ambassador Mozena: You should ask Khaleda Zia. She can speak to that.

Mr. Shumon: What's your opinion, observation, about Begum Khaleda Zia's comment?

Ambassador Mozena: I think I've spoken to the range of issues there. But if you want to know her views, you can ask her views.

Voice: Lotus?

Mr. Karim: [The Daily Star]. Excellency, you are fully aware about the killing of over 80 people last few days following the verdict of Delwar Hossain Syadee. So there are 10 verdicts and 13 appeals that will happen in next few months. So how do you evaluate this? Do you think the situation will further deteriorate or how this government can tackle this situation?

Ambassador Mozena: That's a hypothetical question. Please don't ask hypothetical questions.

Look, you all have been at this longer than I have. You know better than that.

Voice: Nadeem, would you like to try your luck?

Mr. Qadir: [ATN News]. Mr. Ambassador, it's good to have you back, and it seems that you have not really had a holiday, you have put in a lot of hard work during your visit.

Ambassador Mozena: I had zero holiday. I did see my son for a couple of days -- He and I went trekking and I saw my 92 year old mother. She and I did not go trekking.

Mr. Qadir: Ambassador, you mentioned in your opening statement that the India-Bangladesh corridor, you very specifically mentioned connectivity.

Ambassador Mozena: Indo-Pacific.

Mr. Qadir: Indo-Pacific connectivity, but that's true Bangladesh and that is a very sensitive issue politically in Bangladesh. I would like to know if you can elaborate what you mean by this corridor, especially the word corridor. How this road would be operating and what has been your background study for the upcoming days? That's number one.

Number two, our Foreign Minister, Dr. Dipu Moni while briefing the foreign diplomats here, she did not rule out the possibility of deploying the army to check the violence if it's needed. We know that the military option is always a sensitive option. How would Washington look at that? To check a civil disobedience. Thank you.

Ambassador Mozena: The second one's hypothetical so I won't touch that. But the first question is a question relating to the vision of Bangladesh at the nexus of what one hopes will become a huge trade route of the future. With Bangladesh not simply just facilitating pass-through trade, but you all have heard me describe Bangladesh as the next Asian Tiger. I see Bangladesh pumping out as

the world's largest producer of ready-made garments and the world's largest producer of household textiles and a huge exporter of pharmaceuticals and footwear and finished leather goods and jute products and silk products. I see Bangladesh pushing trade through that corridor.

Some would go west to India, and some would go east. You go east to Burma. You turn left, you're in Kunming. You turn right, you're in Singapore and the world. That's my vision of the Indo-Pacific Corridor. And other countries would use the corridor too, but Bangladesh -- Don't you see this Bangladesh? -- Don't you see the world's largest exporter of ready-made garments shipping shirts to China. Let me tell you, the Chinese want to buy your shirts. They don't want to manufacture shirts. They want to buy your shirts. They want to buy your pants. They want to buy your underwear. That's what they want to do, but you can't do it if you can't get there cheaply. The way you get there cheaply is the Indo-Pacific Corridor.

It's a wonderful vision. But the way to build the Indo-Pacific Corridor, you must go to Benapole and make sure that that is operating efficiently. The Padma Bridge will be built. Then you have all the industries of Bangladesh channeling into this corridor and feeding west and feeding east and creating, by the way, millions and millions and millions of jobs.

When people talk about the middle income Bangladesh, the Sonar Bangla, that is not a myth. That is not a myth. That's millions and millions of people having jobs, producing goods that are shipping east and shipping west. That's my vision.

But that means connectivity. Connectivity means Indo-Pacific Corridor.

Voice: One more from Shamim, next on the list.

Ambassador Mozena: The good Lord put you at the end.

Mr. Ahmed: [New Age]. Mr. Ambassador, I know that you are quite intelligently awaiting the questions, sir, on the very much burning issues in Bangladesh, now I would like to --

Ambassador Mozena: Shamim, I've talked to the four burning issues, so don't ask me about those. I've said what I'm going to say on those.

Mr. Ahmed: In your direct remarks and you are planning to set up a Pentagon, and FBI. And you are planning to set up a permanent office of the FBI. If you can please elaborate, how many people will be manning the office in Dhaka? What will be their function?

Secondly, as you've heard, because you are very fresh from Washington, recently Jamaat-e-Islami and Shibir activists have during their hartals they have turned their mode of actions to very much violent. They have burned down trains. They have removed the [INAUDIBLE]. They have attacked the police, they have killed police. Also killed a blogger. And five students of North South University were arrested. Yesterday they have snatched away from a police office in Rajshahi. In this development some of the government officials said that Jamaat-e-Islami and Shabbir are emerging as a terrorist outfit. So, I know that your stand and Bangladesh's stand is against extremism and violent extremism. Don't you think that things are turning towards that, that some of

the political parties, particularly Jamaat-e-Islami are turning towards that extremism to solve their...to gain their purpose?

Ambassador Mozena: I've already spoken to the question of violence, and violence is not the answer. Violence is not going to resolve the issues at hand. These continuing loss of property and loss of life, these are horrible. I've said that very clearly.

You've spoken about the FBI. The FBI now has a rotating presence here. They have an officer come for like three or four months and then leave and another one comes. I said why are we doing that? Let's have someone come for a two year tour or a three year tour like me, bring your family, and you get to know people, people get to know you. And you can be more effective. So they agreed. So that's what we're going to do. So instead of this rotating person that's been going on, I don't know how long, it will be a person who will be transferred here like I'm transferred here, and bring my family and that person will bring his or her family and that makes a whole lot more sense.

Mr. Ahmed: It will be a one man show or more than one?

Ambassador Mozena: Oh, I think they'll have a Bangladeshi; I think it will be a one-man show, but with a Bangladeshi or two to help. They have one now. That makes a lot more sense, it will be more effective.

Bangladesh wants to improve its law enforcement. They want to improve basic investigation techniques. They want to improve crime scene management. They want to address cyber security. These are all different issues that we're working on, too. I'm not saying we have all the answers, but to have somebody here that people get to know I think can be more effective in building that partnership with Bangladesh to address those issues.

I'm very happy. I pushed very hard for it, and it was not easy to do. These are tough budget times. Everybody said wah, wah, wah, we can't afford it. I said no, you have to do this. This is the right thing to do.

Mr. Raha: [Boishakhi TV]. My question is almost a repeat of Shamim Brother's.

Ambassador Mozena: No, don't repeat. He's a communist, don't repeat the communist --

Mr. Raha: So far we know Washington, describes Jamaat-e-Islami as a moderate Islamist party. After all these incidents does Jamaat-e-Islami still stand on this ground?

Ambassador Mozena: I don't know anything about anything that you said. All I know is that Jamaat-e-Islami is a recognized party. It has members of parliament. I can't remember how many. Two. Okay. That's what I know.

Okay everybody -- Mainul.

Mr. Alum: One thing left. This is different. You visited a Grameen Bank village in the Oakland [United States].

Ambassador Mozena: I did, yeah.

Mr. Alum: What's the position on the Grameen Bank board? What's the latest observation on the Grameen Bank?

Ambassador Mozena: Our position on Grameen Bank is that we hope that the effectiveness of the bank will be sustained and the integrity of the bank and the unique governance structure of the bank will all be sustained. We hope that at some point there will be an acceptable new managing director.

Just switching back to the American context, it was absolutely exhilarating to see Grameen at work in an American setting. Do you know there's a Bangladeshi there who heads up, in fact Grameen is scattered all over the United States and there's a Bangladeshi who's the branch manager in each one of those, who brings in that philosophy and those beliefs. I was very touched.

Next time you go to the States, go find one. It's something to see. I think Bangladesh can be very proud of this export.

Ambassador Mozena: Thank you, everybody.

Mr. Bhuiyan: Are you accompanying Dr. Yunus when he receives his award?

Ambassador Mozena: Sorry?

Mr. Bhuiyan: Are you accompanying Dr. Yunus when he receives his award?

Ambassador Mozena: Oh no, no. I have too much jetlag. Do you have any idea how much I suffer from jetlag? I just die.

Mr. Bhuiyan: I hope you travel business class.

Ambassador Mozena: I work for the government of the United States of America. I proudly travel economy class. You abuse me. You should feel sorry for me. [Laughter]. I try to pay to upgrade myself. I pay for it myself, though. I only get an economy class ticket. Everybody else is up in first class and business class. All the Americans are in economy class.

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