

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 DAN MOZENA**

**AT THE
U.S. ELECTION GALA**

**DHAKA
November 7, 2012**

Good morning, everyone ... wow, what a morning this has been ... and the finish line still lies ahead.

I asked Viraj to shut off all the TV commentaries and to cut the video feeds, so we could have just a moment or two of silence ... just a moment or two to reflect, to reflect on the bigger picture of what is playing out this morning before our very eyes.

Like many of you, I find myself swept up in the current of discussion and debate of swing states, super Political Action Committees, attack ads and endless polls of voters and potential voters. A political junkie at heart, I risk being wholly consumed by the unending analysis, the relentless dissecting of every angle, real or imagined, of the political process.

During this brief break from the cacophony of reporting, analysis, projection, speculation, I would like to shift focus from the immediacy of the election itself to a broader perspective.

We this morning are witnessing not just the 2012 U.S. presidential and congressional elections; we this morning are witnessing democracy ... we are witnessing democracy in action ... not democracy in some abstract, theoretical sense ... no ... we are witnessing the reality of democracy with all its energy, vibrancy, and imperfections. We are witnessing the people of America give voice to their aspirations, their dreams, their hopes for themselves and for their children. This is the reality of democracy.

The elections we are witnessing today, like free elections everywhere, are an expression of human liberty, manifesting the freedom to choose, the freedom to be heard, the freedom to contribute to the future direction of the nation.

With these freedoms comes responsibility ... the responsibility to be informed and to make informed choices; the responsibility to participate in the process; the responsibility to abide by the results, whether your preferences have prevailed or not.

Democracy is a competition of ideas, ideas on the future course of the nation. I think this competition is a good thing; it drives deep thinking, reflection, and creativity on the nation's future. Competition by definition means there will be winners and losers, and I think this is a good thing, too. Although everyone prefers winning, losing is also good, as that provides opportunity to dig more deeply in consideration of how to devise a better course of action to win the future support of the majority of the people.

I suspect that shortly we will hear statements from the leading candidates. If the past is a guide, the victors will speak out in magnanimity for the opposing side, pledging to build bridges with their opponents to advance the nation's welfare. And the losers will concede with grace, acknowledging a competition well fought, and pledging themselves to work with the winners for the common good. These rituals of victory and defeat are extremely important as they establish the legitimacy of the results, reinforce the nation's unity, and pave the way for peaceful and effective transitions of power.

Bangladesh, too, knows the joys and demands of democracy. Bangladesh, too, has heard and benefited from the voice of the people. Bangladesh, like America, like democracies everywhere, endeavors to strengthen and deepen its democratic institutions and traditions. Building a strong democracy is a never ending process; it is a continuing work in process, a process that is ongoing at this very moment in America and here in Bangladesh.

As the democratic experience in both America and Bangladesh has shown, democracy, warts and all, is truly beautiful. And I am so pleased and honored that you have joined with me and my colleagues to witness this latest iteration of democracy in action, American style. And I wish in particular to thank our many sponsors, listed on this banner behind me, for their support in making this event possible.

So, with that, I'm headed off to vote. I have my ballot right here, and I'm headed over to the ballot box to add my voice to the chorus of democracy. If you haven't yet cast your ballot, I hope that you will follow me to ballot box.

Thank you.

=====

**As prepared for delivery*