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REMARKS BY

**U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
TO MARK THE PRESENTATION BY
MINHAJ CHOWDHURY, FULBRIGHT FELLOW
“WHERE’S MY WATER? ASSESSING VILLAGER
PERSPECTIVES OF THE ARSENIC WATER CRISIS”**

**BRAC Auditorium
March 29, 2012**

Good evening!

Additional Attorney General Murad Reza

Secretary Humayun Kabir

Engineer Taqsem Khan

Honored guests and friends ... most especially Minhaj Chowdhury

Water ...

Water ...

Minhaj chose his topic well. Water looms ever larger on the global scope of challenges ... both here in Bangladesh and around the world.

Minhaj spoke convincingly of the deadly realities Bangladeshi villagers confront daily as they seek safe drinking water. A decade ago when I last lived in Bangladesh, I, too, witnessed firsthand the challenges that villagers face when procuring safe drinking water. To be frank, villagers then often failed to fully appreciate the insidious nature of arsenic, that it is a stealth killer ... you don't taste it; you don't see it; and its deadly impact on the human body is deceptively gradual and indiscernible on a daily basis.

Thanks to Minhaj's intensive work and that of others, the destructive nature of arsenic is now being better understood, and villagers more often make the wiser decisions in avoiding

consumption of arsenic-laced water. Minhaj, I trust, is deeply proud of the legacy he leaves in deepening the understanding of how villagers perceive and respond to the threat of arsenic. Minhaj's work focuses on one key aspect of water in the Bangladeshi equation of life.

Earlier this month, I visited Potuakhali in southern Bangladesh and there experienced another aspect of water that bears heavy implications for Bangladesh, the increasing salinity of the water to such an extent that irrigation from the rivers and from shallow tube well is no longer possible and crop production is limited to a single harvest a year; little wonder that southern Bangladesh is one of the nation's poorest areas, which is why we in partnership with the Bangladesh government selected that area as the focus for President Obama's landmark feed the future program, an initiative to enable the world to feed a surging population of 9 billion within my lifetime, 'nshallah,

Water looms large in another sense: national security. Last week, at Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's request, the US Government released an assessment on global water security. The bottom line of that assessment is that over the next two-three decades, many regions of the world will experience severe water challenges and that these challenges will increase regional tensions. Certainly, South Asia and North America, two regions that I know well, have experienced their fair share of tensions already over the sharing of water.

So, you can see why Minhaj chose his topic well. That is the beauty of the Fulbright program. Each year the Fulbright Programs enables thousands of scholars from the U.S. and over 155 other countries worldwide to identify and research the key issues of the day.

I believe that few have chosen a more timely and more critical issue than Minhaj. I thank him deeply for the hard work he expended to make this significant contribution to understanding better the challenges posed by arsenic to millions of villagers living across Bangladesh.

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GR/ 2012

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