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**REMARKS  
BY  
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA  
MEET THE PRESS  
ECONOMIC REPORTERS' FORUM  
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, DHAKA  
NOVEMBER 11, 2014**

Sulan Mahmud, President, Economic Reporters' Forum

Syed Shahnewaz Karim, Vice President, ERF

Sajjadur Rahman, General Secretary, ERF

And all of you who cover the most exciting issues here in Bangladesh.

Asalaam 'malaikum and good morning.

You are the luckiest reporters ... you have the best beat ... you are covering the issues where the action is ... if I were a journalist, I would want to be sitting with you right now.

America and Bangladesh have powerful and growing economic links. America is the largest single-country market for Bangladeshi exports (over \$5 billion,) among the largest foreign direct investors here, the third largest source of remittances and the second largest development partner. I am especially pleased to see creative investments here by the growing and prospering Bangladeshi-American community.

This is great stuff ...

... and I would like to see our bilateral economic relations escalate to new heights.

As you may know, I recently finished my quest to visit all 64 of Bangladesh's districts. I learned so much. Most importantly, I learned how rich this country is ... so many assets: fertile soil, ample water, great climate for agriculture, significant gas reserves, huge deposits of premium coal and, most importantly, the hard-working, creative, entrepreneurial, resilient people of this nation.

These great people are the key to creating Asia's next economic tiger ... the Royal Bengal Tiger ... the world's largest exporter of apparel and a major player in the global marketplace for

generic pharmaceuticals, shoes, finished leather goods, small freighters, software development, semi-conductor production, frozen shrimp and fish, bone china, flowers, silk, and so much more.

This Asian tiger would reflect major investments in the nation's power, energy, ports, roads and railroads so Bangladesh would have the modern infrastructure to move these massive flows of trade.

This Asian tiger would be a welcoming home for foreign and domestic investment by improving rule of law, reducing red tape, reining in corruption and minimizing the threat of political instability.

This Asian tiger would be the nexus of and a giant contributor of goods to one of the emerging great trade routes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor, linking South Asia with China, South East Asia and the world. Active, dynamic linkages of trade and energy between Bangladesh and its neighbors would benefit everyone in the region ... a true win-win for all.

This Asian tiger would cash in the nation's demographic dividend by providing world class education and skills training to the millions of young Bangladeshis so they can build both a modern, thriving Bangladesh and the countries of the Middle East and South East Asia and beyond, where Bangladeshi manpower would no longer be largely unskilled labor, but rather doctors, nurses, engineers, professors, skilled carpenters, electricians, plumbers and much more.

This Asian tiger would be food self-sufficient, thanks to Bangladesh's ongoing agricultural revolution.

This Asian tiger would be strong and healthy, as Bangladesh continues its historic health revolution.

That is my vision of Bangladesh as Asia's next tiger ... that is my vision of Bangladesh as a middle income country where Bangladeshis have the means to provide their families secure housing, ample, nutritious food, good healthcare and quality education.

I believe America is a natural economic partner for Bangladesh, and I look for the day when the investment and economic ties between our countries are much greater than today.

I believe growing economic relations between America and Bangladesh can contribute significantly to Bangladeshis' great quest to build Sonar Bangla.

Thank you.

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*\*As Prepared for delivery*