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**ASSISTANT SECRETARY ANNE C. RICHARD  
POPULATION, REFUGEES, AND MIGRATION**

**CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES DAVID MEALE**

**PRESS ROUNDTABLE  
ON THE RECORD**

**DHAKA, BANGLADESH**

**JANUARY 23, 2015**

**Moderator:** Hi, good afternoon. Again, thank you for coming on a Friday. I think you’ll be very pleased that you made the decision to join us today.

Our Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration Anne Richard from the U.S. State Department is in her fourth and last day here in Bangladesh. She’s just returned from a couple of days in Cox’s Bazar and also had a number of meetings and engagements here in Dhaka.

The nature of her engagements involved talking with the Bangladesh government, the donor community, NGOs and others. I’ve been talking with the Assistant Secretary and know that you’re about to hear from her about what has been a very productive and satisfying trip focused primarily on issues involving the Rohingya here in Bangladesh. I will leave it at that because I think what you came for is what the Assistant Secretary has to say, but I would like to formally introduce to you Assistant Secretary Anne Richard.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Thank you. I want to at the outset thank the government of Bangladesh for allowing so many refugees to live on its territory. It's a very important model for the rest of the world. A very good example of the generous spirit of the Bangladeshi people. We're very, very grateful.

The interesting thing to me was that the refugees knew that this was a generous move and that they were also, several of them including camp community leaders started off by thanking Bangladesh when they spoke to me. That doesn't always happen, so that was very good.

We had very productive meetings with government officials, both here in Dhaka. I should say that Foreign Secretary Haque is somebody I've known for three years now. I first met him when he was working at the International Organization for Migration, so we have a very close working relationship now that's developed over time with him visiting me in Washington, but this is the first time I've ever been in Bangladesh, and I think he was happy I finally showed up after he invited me several times. And I'm very glad that I was able to get down to Cox's Bazar and see not just the capital city, but also to see this beautiful site that is the home to so many refugees.

By coming and meeting with government officials and international and local non-governmental organizations who are working on the Rohingya issues, it gives me a much deeper understanding of the positive developments and remaining challenges surrounding the Rohingya in Bangladesh.

I think you know I just came from Burma. I had gone to Burma, arriving there on January 9th, gone up to Kachin State, been involved in a human rights dialogue with very senior levels of the government in Naypyidaw, met with a lot of different leaders, religious leaders, Rohingya leaders, Rakhine elders, and also ended up going up to Rakhine State and traveling there. I got as far as Maungdaw. I went up by boat, and looked across and saw Bangladesh for the first time from Burma. The telephone reception all of a sudden was very, very good.

One of the things that was interesting about wandering through the Cox's Bazar camp that we visited was I stopped and talked to a man and told him I had just been in Burma and he said yes, I know. My relatives told me you were there. So that was very interesting to me that word had traveled across the borders of our trip.

So I asked refugees after I saw the camps, because their living conditions are not ideal. It's a very cramped area. Shelter is not particularly great. There are people in the official camps, have been living there for over 20 years. In the makeshift settlements nearby are people who have come more recently. It was very crowded, does not have ideal water and sanitation, although I found that both the international and the local NGOs were working very hard to improve conditions for the refugees.

So I asked them, would you rather be here or would you rather be in Burma. They said they'd rather be here. So clearly, even though the conditions are not perfect, they enjoy a certain amount of freedom here that they just don't have in their home country. That really is an indictment, I think, of the situation in Rakhine State. And that makes the situation in Rakhine State out of step with the spirit of democratic reform that is emerging from the government or that we are encouraging to emerge from the government in Naypyidaw. So that to me was very sobering.

I saw a lot of hard work and dedication from UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, the UN agency; the International Organization for Migration; and the local and international NGOs. Particularly notable was the cooperation and collaboration desire to do even more.

It would be good to have greater coordination. Particularly my sense was that sometimes people working in the field get mixed messages from different levels of government here, so if there can be more pulling together. I told him that never happens in the United States. Different pieces of government go different directions. I'm joking. But that I think sometimes they are encouraged to do more and sometimes they're discouraged from doing more. So that confuses them.

We urged the Bangladesh government to grant official permission to international non-governmental organizations so that they could not only help the Rohingya, but also help the local Bangladesh population. And it was clear to me that many of the aid workers there want to do both. Want to help both.

For example, we saw the MSF Clinic, Doctors Without Borders, that's also [inaudible]. And they definitely, they just gave me some paperwork. Nearly half of their patients are from the community that's hosting the refugees, not from the refugees themselves.

One big issue different from the usual analysis -- is there enough food, is there enough programs to support the people. One big issue is the extent to which the people in the makeshift camp are subject to exploitation because they don't have any kind of official recognition of their status. So their own government has failed to grant them citizenship at the moment and they don't have any kind of papers from Bangladesh. So they are vulnerable to being arrested under your laws about foreigners who are illegally in the country. And that means that people can take advantage of them, unscrupulous people can take advantage of them.

So we heard stories about people being exploited and trafficked and raped and other horrible things. They're afraid to go to the police, though, because they are living in your country illegally.

There is a discussion of potentially conducting some kind of a listing or survey of who's here and it would make sense that that be carried out in a way, sort of sensitively, so that the refugees end up perhaps with some kind of documentation so they don't have to live in fear here either, but at the same time it doesn't want to make them run and hide and not be counted. So that will be a tricky balancing act I think for the government.

Positive things I saw that I should definitely mention. One was the World Food Program. And the official camp had a new program, an E-Voucher program, so that instead of distributing food or cooked meals, they gave out essentially an ATM card to the refugees and they could shop in three different shops. There's a little competition there. They could buy a broader array of produce and food. So their diets have improved and they just felt better. They had more say over what their families were eating, so people were pretty happy about that, and it had all sorts of checks in it like using fingerprint technology to make sure that there was no fraud. So that's an excellent thing.

The other thing was in recent time, the schools had been expanded to include the 6th and 7th grade, and there were plans to include the 8th grade. That was really well received by the community in the official camp.

As we walked through the makeshift camp, there were a lot of people holding up signs saying we want education, we want food, we need our rights. So I stopped and tried to read all of the signs because I wanted people to feel like their messages were being seen. So we slowed down, we

didn't run past that. A lot of the signs, signs that say "we want education" were being held by children, so that's very effective advocacy. I was very touched.

That was, for me, that was a good trip. We met with the District Commissioner. We talked to the authorities in charge of the camp, and they came along for the visit. We talked a lot to the international organizations and the NGO staff. And like in most parts of the world, most of the staff are Bangladeshi citizens, so they are very invested in what happens here. I was very impressed.

I was very impressed by their commitment to doing something constructive in this area of Cox's Bazar, trying to help everybody. Not just the Rohingya but help for the locals.

So that's some initial impressions that are very fresh since I just flew back. What kind of questions do you have for me?

**Media:** My name is Masoud Kharim. I am from [inaudible]. Thank you, ma'am, for your explanation and all you were discussing. When you spoke at the BIISS [inaudible] understand, and your explanation [inaudible]. So thank you very much.

But this time I also would like to know from you, big problem for us to get information from Myanmar because Myanmar systems are very complicated because of the military regime. So what we are hearing, that the Myanmar government is trying to formulate a Rakhine Development Action Plan which, what we're hearing, I don't know. You just fresh from Myanmar, that they are trying to register the Rohingyas as Bengali people, that what there is a fear to make the situation really complex. So what are your views, what do you know about this and what are your views about this?

Also does the Bangladesh, dilemma is the one hand you have the Rohingya problem, but we are the neighbor of Myanmar, so we need to, one hand we need to make a very good relation with Myanmar for trade and other issues, but the problem is the Rohingya, we cannot avoid this issue as well.

So at this time when the Myanmar government is reluctant to repatriate them. So at this time the Bangladesh government is asking for international cooperation to put pressure on the Myanmar government. And what we are hearing, the United States is always positive about that, but we want to know whether the U.S. will have to organizing other international community to stand by Bangladesh to solve this already and make it more peaceful and good guest. Thank you.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** There is a Rakhine Action Plan that the government of Burma has put together. But what they've not done is finished it. They've had several different drafts. So I have not studied it, but my understanding is as it has evolved, it has been improved. Things that were seen as problems early on have been fixed in terms of treatment of people and communities.

The fact that it's an election year in Burma may slow down some of the progress on the human rights issues that we were hoping to see, which would be a shame. So it was a good sign that they hosted this human rights dialogue, I think.

It's clear that they take the situation in Rakhine more seriously now. It was one of the chief issues we discussed in the human rights dialogue. There is this draft plan that still hasn't been produced. So they know, I think the government in Naypyidaw knows this is an important issue for the international community, especially the United States, but certainly others too.

You had mentioned Rakhine Action Plan, and then you said something right after that that I want to make sure I mention too. Before the Rohingya --

**Media:** Bengali --

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Oh, right. This is absolutely true. This is something that we raised with them because in order to get citizenship, you have to go through a citizenship verification exercise, and we raised this with everybody with whom we met, because the choice is to either put yourself down as Bengali or not participate in the exercise. So the community asked if they could please register as Rohingya and were told no. And in fact, many Rakhines see that as a political statement that is controversial.

So we discussed with the government all sorts of ways around this. Not requiring citizens to have to put down their origins, you know, really focusing on citizenship and not religion or ethnicity as part of this, coming up with a third name potentially that is neither insulting to the Rohingya nor as controversial using Rohingya. It's for the Burmese to figure this out. But it's clear that this is a stumbling block to counting and clarifying who's there and issuing citizenship to the people who deserve it.

I don't know what the government will do but it was certainly an issue that we raised and discussed with them.

On Bangladesh's relationship with Myanmar, I think Bangladesh is not alone in raising the situation of the Rohingya with the government in Naypyidaw. I think that's important for your readers to know, or listeners to know is that this has become a major piece of foreign relations between many countries and Burma.

We used to always say Burma in the United States and now we're allowed to say Myanmar when we talk to the government there, so now I'm going back and forth because I'm completely confused.

Those were the main things I wanted to share with you.

**Media:** -- international community, mobilizing --

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** I think what may concern some in Bangladesh is that there is a lot of economic interest in Burma now that it's opening up. So I would pick up a newspaper every day to see if our human rights dialogue was in it, and eventually we were in it, but every day it seemed there were trade delegations coming in and corporate interests coming in, so from having traveled there, I have a better appreciation for this desire to open it up economically. What we have to make sure happens is that the human rights piece of the opening is not neglected. And that is why our Ambassador, our Secretary and our President have raised this directly with the Burmese government on a number of visits. It's not just the Assistant Secretary

for Human Rights. My colleague Tom Malinowski's raising it, it's every single American government leader going there.

**Media:** Thank you, Madame Secretary. We know that our government recently had a meeting with the International Committee regarding the funding by the \_\_\_\_\_ agencies to the NGOs working for Rohingyas.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Who had the meeting?

**Media:** The government. The government wants to see the fund should be disbursed through IOM. What's your position regarding this?

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** I heard a couple of different things. That there was a plan to try to shift from international non-governmental organizations to local non-governmental organizations. We met with both. I think both have a role to play. And unlike some other places, here there were some very strong players at both levels. So that was interesting to me. Some of the Bangladeshi NGOs, it was the first time I'd met them and I saw their programs and I was, I thought the partnerships were great and I thought the programs were good.

IOM has a role to play in the makeshift camp that is different from what I've seen in other countries where that might normally be handled by UNHCR.

I traveled with the Regional Directors from Bangkok, from both IOM and UNHCR, and it's clear that their staffs know each other, they work together, they figure things out together.

My bureau funds and is a top funder for both UNHCR and IOM and so it made sense that they would both travel with me. In a way, I think they already are talking to each other and getting along, but we were certainly forcing that and showing a very visible symbolic putting together -- U.S. government, IOM, UNHCR. So that worked well.

I think there's just so much work to be done there. The needs are so great that there's plenty of work to go around. So I would not invite anybody to leave from that collection I met.

I think what's very interesting is the commitment, so many of the aid workers, no matter what it said on their T-shirt or their vest or their jacket, they wanted to help the host community as well as the Rohingya. I think that's a very smart approach. It makes it harder because it's a much larger group of people but I think in this case it makes a lot of sense.

**Media:** I'm \_\_\_\_\_, I work for The Independent.

You have mentioned, you have described about your visit. I was, once upon a time I was a frequent visitor to the camps and makeshift camp. I have been there more than 20 times. Some of your description --

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Sad memories?

**Media:** No, things that are appalling, basically. Things are very bad.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** You think I didn't describe it harsh enough?

**Media:** Yes, I think you have been very careful in selecting words, but things are really, really, really bad both in camps and makeshift camps. Human beings cannot live like, in these conditions. That's my assessment about their fears.

But leaving it aside for the time being, in Bangladesh particularly, that part of the country, you know the local demography is being changed due to the presence of Rohingyas. In some areas, you know, in our local administration system there is a union system, \_\_\_\_\_ system. Some unions have more Rohingyas than our people, and it is creating quite a lot of problem in that area with regards to law and order, socioeconomic, et cetera. As you will perhaps appreciate, that we cannot afford as a country of limited resources, we cannot afford.

There has been a suggestion floated to you if I can remember when you were delivering the lecture at BIISS, the Chairman of BIISS put forward a suggestion to take the undocumented Rohingyas back to Myanmar, into the camps inside Myanmar until they return to their original homes. How do you see that particular idea? Thank you.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** On your comment that people can't live like this. Well of course, I'm glad to hear you say that because you're obviously a humane individual. What we see is that camps like this can save lives. When people have nothing else. When they're elderly, when they're female head of households with children and the husband is missing or away. When they have disabilities. A camp like this can be a safe place for people to get food, clean water, use the latrine, and get a minimal level of shelter. So it saves your life.

But what it doesn't do, it's not an atmosphere you want to live in for any length of time. So we met the leaders of the official camp, three of them. We met five of them. Three of them were young men in their 20s, and one of them had come when he was 4 years old and now he's 26. They were 26, 27, 26 years old. And they had spent from 4, 5, 6 years on living in this camp.

So is it a good thing to have Bangladesh allowing Rohingya to come? Yes. Is it saving their lives? Yes. Is it the kind of life any of us would want to live? No. Definitely not. And the makeshift settlement has the equivalent of open sewers, essentially. We worry very much about whether people are getting enough to eat. There are programs to keep children from starving to death, but it does not seem like it's living up to standards on that, on food especially.

And people want to be educated. They want to learn. They want to have jobs.

I think some of them leave the camps, the makeshift camp certainly, and work and are fishermen or are farmers or are working for local land owners. That's the type of thing they would not be able to do if they were living in an IDP camp in Rakhine State. They live in fear of being arrested, but they don't live in fear of being tortured if they're arrested the way they would if they were in an IDP camp in Burma. So I think I understand a little bit about why they prefer to be in Bangladesh, despite it not being ideal, despite it being, you know, your phrase, people shouldn't have to live like this, can't live like this and shouldn't have to live like this. I agree

with that, but I think for them, it's actually better. Believe it or not. Which really says terrible things about what they've fled from.

There are tensions with local governments, with local groups. There's also a lot of inter-mixture, especially in terms of Rohingya being laborers. But I take exception to the idea that like local crime is somehow fueled by Rohingya. I think there's law-breaking to some extent on both sides because we heard about how Rohingya were victims of crime from the local community, or victims of exploitation, and then they had no way to protect themselves from that. No way to speak up and get any kind of help from the police because they feel that their own, for the people outside the official camp, they feel their own situation is so precarious.

Our dream, of course, is that Rohingya are given a place in Burmese society, in Rakhine State, and are able to live with their neighbors, the Rakhine Buddhists, in a peaceful place where both communities thrive. I know it's possible, I just don't see many people inside Burma working towards it at the moment, and that's -- But I think that is a dream that we probably in the United States share with the people of Bangladesh.

**Media:** What about the position of BIISS Chairman.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** That's what I say, I don't think putting them in IDP camps inside Burma is a good idea because I visited those IDP camps and people are not allowed to do some of the very modest income-generating things -- jobs -- that they can do in the Cox's Bazar area. They really are just sort of -- the IDP camps in Burma, the ones near Sittwe are very much detention centers, camps. Detention camps. So it's not a good situation at all.

Some of the Rohingya are traditionally shopkeepers. So all over Rakhine State it was the Muslim citizens who were running the shops. So none IDP camp was set up and the owner of the land said, "I don't want the Muslims running shops." So this IDP camp, full of Rohingya, the Rakhine Buddhists are running the shops. It's like it's going too far to curb the normal life of the Rohingya.

I see room for improvement in many directions, but I think the fact that the refugees, I asked more than one, and we checked with the aid workers too. They said we'd much rather be here in Bangladesh than in Burma at this moment right now. It's very worrisome.

**Media:** This is [Inaudible].

Up to last year, that means first half of 2014, United States has taken back [inaudible] [settled] more than 75,000 Bhutanese refugees from Nepal.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** When?

**Media:** More than 75,000 Bhutanese refugees. It is the information --

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Over a number of years.

**Media:** So do you have any plan for the Burmese refugees, the Rohingya people?

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Well, Burmese are right now being resettled. They're one of the top three groups we resettle. I don't have the specific numbers, but we can get them for you. It's the Iraqis, Bhutanese from Nepal and Burmese. But some of them are coming from Thailand where they were living in camps, so that's mostly Karen, Karenni, Chin, I think, but also some of what, UNHCR was telling me that some of the Rohingya that have gotten to Thailand or who have gotten to Malaysia are also being resettled in the United States.

So we'll have to see how the year goes. We don't discriminate based on ethnicity or jobs, when it comes to refugees. We just take a piece from the UNHCR. But it involves us working with the UNHCR, working with the government. So that is something that it would be a normal thing to explore, is what other Burmese should be coming to the U.S. and where should they be coming from. I can't really say more than that right now, but that's --

The concern is, we really don't want all the Rohingya to leave Burma. We want them to live happily there. And we want the ones who are here to go home and get their citizenship. It's just not going to happen in the short, near term, but it's something we're working toward.

For people who can never go home again, resettlement in a third country is definitely an option and the U.S. takes more refugees than any other country. In fact, we take more refugees than all the other countries added together.

So the idea of resettling Rohingya in the U.S. is not just a good idea, it's one we're acting on now. We have Rohingya coming to the U.S. But I don't think it's a solution for most of the Rohingya. I think the real solution for most of the Rohingya that we all should strive for is having them go home again.

**Media:** [Inaudible]. You said [inaudible]. We know that [inaudible] Bangladesh side. So [inaudible].

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Those were the large numbers for a long time. First off, it takes 18-24 months to resettle someone. It's not automatic. Since 9/11, we can't just throw fly in a plane and load it with people and fly them out. It's a much slower process. They have to have medical checks, background checks, security checks. So it would be wonderful if there's peace with these ethnic minorities and the people who are living on the Thai side of the Thai-Burma border could go back home. That would be great. So we have slowed down, I believe we're in the process of slowing down resettlement from there. We did something called last call saying if you really want to go to the United States you should express that now, otherwise you may be just then more likely waiting to see if you can go home.

One of the frustrations has been that they don't feel it's safe to go home yet. So we have a process of democratic reforms going on in Burma. We have refugees from other parts of the country still living outside the country. I think they're probably starting to call relatives, make inquiries to see if it's safe to come home yet. But most have chosen not to return yet, and we insist that they be allowed to go back voluntarily and decide for themselves when it's safe enough to come back.

So I think there's going to be a lot -- for those groups it will be interesting to see what the year brings. If they put a big push on producing some kind of a ceasefire then I think it would be appropriate to start talking about return of those groups, but to this point, it hasn't been appropriate to raise that yet. That's what we hope for them.

For the Bangladesh side, it involves two governments and UNHCR and other governments like Australia and Canada too. So it hasn't been a big initiative, but that doesn't mean that it might not be a possibility in the future.

**Media:** My name is Rahid. I represent [Tosomolo] [inaudible] Bengali daily.

My question is two-part. One is supplement to my colleague referring that in my recent visit, mid-December, when I visited those three unregistered camps, I do also believe that human beings cannot live a normal life there. But also the thing is that at this I met five family members who recently slipped into the border, bribing the border guards of the two sides, and reunite with their family. And though they slipped into Bangladesh for the medical treatment, but they have decided, voluntarily decided to stay here, this part of the world, because of the aggravating situation in the Rakhine State. But when they slipped into here and they don't have any registration for --

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** They're here illegally.

**Media:** So they involved with unlawful activities for their livelihoods and other things. And also visiting of that part of the country I found a good number of Rohingya people now stayed in a rented house or any places who have better livelihood.

So there is agreement that because of the more softened stance of the Bangladesh government, or more human support for the Rohingya people who slipped into the border, they fall victim of the human traffickers and often the \_\_\_\_ and other may elude them for the human trafficking, other things.

If the situation continues, there is agreement that more Rohingya people will come here because they don't have sort of stateless people, as you mentioned [inaudible] BISS, so there is agreement that more we are softened towards them, they will continue to come in this part of the world.

So considering this contrast, don't you feel after your visit to the Rakhine State as well as the visit in the [Teknaf] that now it is the responsibility of the Myanmar regime to improve the situation there, to stop this sort of scenario. That is one part of the question.

And in regards to the repatriation of the registered Rohingya, how this process could be once again resumed for bring back the Rohingya people who now stay in the registered camp and start there more than two decades. Thank you.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** You're an expert on these camps. You've been there many times. He knows more about the camps than I do, but you're interviewing me. I should listen to you.

But I think we're agreeing with each other that --

**Media:** [Inaudible].

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Skip those guys, go straight to you. [Laughter].

I think we agree that the conditions are bad. They're better than Burma. It's the responsibility of the Myanmar government to make changes so that their people can go home. Maybe a small fraction will never be able to go home. Perhaps they've been so tortured and abused that mentally they cannot cope with going home, in which case third country resettlement would be perfectly appropriate for them. Maybe there are some who have now married Bangladeshis who they and their children should stay here. So some combination of these.

For most who are there, to me the answer is they should go home. Can they go home tomorrow? No. That would not be wise. Not based on what I saw in Rakhine State.

What can be done to change the situation in Rakhine State? I think part of it is international pressure. I think it's pressure from governments like ours that have an element that interests the Burmese. They would like to have a military to military relationship with the U.S. military. That's not going to happen until they have human rights in their country. They would like to have, you know, economic investment and economic ties to the United States. That is being explored but it could all be undone by problems with the Rakhine.

I think what's good is that the U.S. government is being very clear, speaking with one voice. Our military is saying the same thing to the government in Yangon that the State Department diplomats are saying.

**Media:** How do you see, as you said the international pressure is necessary, so how do you see Chinese role in this regard? Because we know in Myanmar, China is very much present with the Burmese government or [inaudible] policy. So how do you think China can play a role?

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** The big secret of my trip was I was in China as part of this trip. I changed planes. So I had no meetings with the Chinese government and I'm not going to say anything on the record about the role China should play because that wasn't really part of my discussions with anyone here, or there.

**Media:** Ms. Richard, you must be aware that the Bangladesh government is not interested when you talk about resettlement because you see what the government thinks, that every year or in every two years, only a handful number of people are resettled. When this news goes to Rakhine and people simply flock into Bangladesh, what --

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** I am aware that the Dhaka government is worried about pull factors. I am aware that people are coming anyway. I am aware that resettlement could be part of a solution as I described it. So I think where our conversation is leading is sort of the conclusion that I think propelled this visit in the first place which is the solution is for the

Rohingya to be able to go home and be citizens in their own country and be treated decently by their own government.

**Media:** If Rohingyas are encouraged to come here then their number in Rakhine will be reduced. Then the repression may be, there may be more repression there to flee, to push back to Bangladesh. That is one point. If their number is reduced.

Another point is if you see the reform in the political reform in Myanmar, but I don't see any hope because of the [Suu Kyi's] mentality. She is like the Army.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Who --

**Media:** Also [Suu Kyi] --

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** Okay, [Suu Kyi's], yeah.

**Media:** Is just like the Army generals regarding the Rohingyas issues, because

**Media:** -- united.

**Media:** United or [inaudible]. Minority support. So it's becoming a very complex situation.

**Assistant Secretary Richard:** I agree 100 percent it's a complex situation. [Laughter]. There was something else I wanted to respond to though, at the beginning of what you were saying.

Oh, I had in one village that was majority Rohingya in Rakhine State, Northern Rakhine State, there were people who were afraid to talk to us. And I think I told you I was being followed or

protected by contingents of police, so it wasn't really an atmosphere to have a lot of blunt conversations.

One older gentleman came up to me, and he was Rohingya, and he said, "they're trying to push us into the sea." They might as well just push into the sea. So he found, it was clear to me he found life there intolerable but also there was no other option.

This is why Bangladesh providing a sanctuary, even a less than perfect sanctuary, temporarily, even if the temporarily is getting old for the ones who have been here the longest, is a very, very human move. It's a wonderful thing to do. And my government is grateful, I personally am grateful, I don't think your reward for this should be that all the Rohingya come and live here. I think your reward for this should be the gratitude of the international community and continued efforts to get the Rohingya to go home.

Monica said you all would ask very good questions, and she was right. Thank you.

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