



**REMARKS BY AMB. STEPHEN J. NOLAN
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 234th ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES
TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2010**

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Honorable Phandu Skelemani,

Speaker of the National Assembly, Honorable Margaret Nasha,

Other Ministers here present,

Dikgosi,

the Honorable Mayor of Gaborone,

Dean of the diplomatic corps, Ambassador Neto,

Colleagues and fellow heads of mission,

Honored guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dumelang bomma le borra.

Judy and I welcome you to our home and thank you for joining us today as we celebrate the 234th anniversary of the independence of the United States of America.

I would like to thank the Marine Security Guard detachment for serving as the color guard, as well as Vivien Dakpo and the BOTUSA Choir for singing the national anthems.

While the official anniversary date is July 4th, several members of my staff will be leaving Gaborone in the next week, and I wanted to ensure they could attend and be recognized, especially Dr. Thierry Roels, who has spent over eight years in Botswana. More than a dozen members of the US Mission will be leaving in the next month, including Dr. Michael Thigpen

from BOTUSA, LTC Chris Wyatt, Adrienne Taylor, Rich Peterson, Marina O'Connell, Chris Machin and Dan Saint-Rossy.

We will miss these friends and colleagues, and we appreciate the hard work and contributions they and their families have made to the US Mission and to Botswana.

This year, like every other year, Americans will celebrate Independence Day with parades, fireworks and backyard barbeques across the country. But Independence Day for us is also a time of reflection over what it means to be an American, and how we work together to achieve our vision for America.

Today we can also reflect with pride on the participation of the US team in the World Cup. Though we had hoped for better results, it was great a match with Ghana and our team went out with honor. I commiserate with my French and British colleagues. But, Jennifer, at least Ambassador Hanel isn't here to rub it in about Germany's outstanding performance against England. But, looking at the performance of Brazil against Chile last night, I think Ambassador Padilha may once again have the last laugh.

I should get back to the business at hand.

America's forefathers held certain truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. American Revolutionaries fought to establish and defend the values of the Declaration of Independence. Those values became the vision of our new nation.

They were also the vision of Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, who died on Monday. With 51 years in the chamber, Mr. Byrd was the longest-serving senator in United States history. He saw himself as the Senate's protector and defender, a guardian of its history and traditions and American democracy.

But democracy is a process, not an event. Back in 1776, when the bold words of the Declaration of Independence were written, there were only 2.5 million people living in America, a few more than current day Botswana. The nation's population this Fourth of July will be over 309 million. The 13 stars on our flag have become 50.

Despite the enormous changes in my country over the last 234 years, the values of our founding fathers hold just as much meaning today as they did in 1776. But I doubt George Washington or Thomas Jefferson could have foreseen what America would be like in 2010, nor that an African American would lead our nation.

It is a great honor and a pleasure for me to represent President Obama here in Botswana.

President Obama has faced an unprecedented array of challenges since he was sworn in seventeen months ago, and he has met them with a bold, comprehensive vision. The US economy is recovering, and an historic health care bill has been signed into law. President Obama has kept faith with the American people through a government that is more open,

transparent, and accountable. A great deal of work remains, but he has done much to restore America's alliances as well as our American values at home.

The nation of Botswana is also based on a vision. It is one of opportunity, of hope and good health, and of respect for one another. But we know that achieving this vision requires hard work, and we are glad to find ourselves on the same pathway.

The partnership between our two nations continues to grow, prosper and mature. Due to our mutual respect, the United States and Botswana work well together. We partner in the effort to increase trade and investment, both bilaterally and regionally - a shining example of which is the USAID funded Southern Africa Trade Hub here in Gabs. We are working hand-in-hand to improve the rule of law and prevent global crime and terror through the International Law Enforcement Academy. Botswana also hosts one of two VOA shortwave relay stations in Africa.

However, nowhere is our partnership better illustrated than in our joint response to HIV/AIDS. Over the last five years we have worked with Botswana to reduce the number of deaths and provide care and treatment to those in need, providing over US dollars 390 million. Most recently, our PEPFAR team has been working closely with the Government of Botswana, civil society organizations, other cooperating partners, and the private sector to develop a new Partnership Framework. This new five year strategic plan ensures that PEPFAR programs continue to be an integral part of the HIV/AIDS response in Botswana. Under the leadership of NACA and the Ministry of Health, it will focus on technical support and long-term sustainability of health programs. We look forward to signing the Partnership Framework in August.

Last week I swore in a new group of 56 Peace Corps Volunteers, bringing the number of PCVs to 118. They are working in villages all over the country to reach Botswana at the grass-roots level in addressing the dangers of HIV/AIDS. It is literally true that through the health programs of CDC/BOTUSA and the Peace Corps, we touch every corner and community in Botswana.

But these government programs are not the only reflections of the American partnership. Private universities such as Penn, Harvard and Baylor are helping to improve the delivery of health care here, and institutions such as the Gates and Merck foundations and many others, including private American citizens, are helping to build a better future for Botswana.

In closing, as we reflect on the vision and promise of America, let us also reflect on the vision and promise of Botswana. We can learn much from each other. That is what true friendship is all about.

With that, may I ask you to join me in a toast to the good health and well being of His Excellency Lt Gen Seretse Khama Iain Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana, and to the people of Botswana, health, happiness and peace – Pula!