

## Online Media Briefing with

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

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**MODERATOR:** Welcome to Live at State, the State Department's online, interactive, international press conference. We have received questions from journalists across Africa over the last couple of weeks, and if you haven't had a chance yet to ask your question, you can still do so on the bottom, left-hand corner of your screen now. If you are having technical difficulties, you can email your question to [live@state.gov](mailto:live@state.gov). Unfortunately, we are not able to offer the simultaneous interpretation in French and Portuguese as promised, but we will be able to provide a transcript immediately following the show. I'd like to give a special shout-out to our viewing parties across the African continent tonight, particularly at our embassies in Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Togo. Joining us on the program tonight for her sixth appearance on Live at State is a thirty-two year veteran of the Foreign Service and now Assistant Secretary of African Affairs, Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield. Thank you so much for joining us tonight.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Thank you. I'm delighted to be here. Good, shall I start?

**MODERATOR:** Yes, ma'am.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Let me welcome you, Michael.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you very much.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Since this is my sixth, and I think it is my first time on the show with you. And let me say good afternoon to all of our colleagues joining us from Africa. I am really thrilled to be here with you here today. It's been a while. And, you know, this is going to be a double hitter today because Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Doug Frantz, will be joining you later. We have a lot to talk about today, upcoming elections, the recent AU summit, regional security issues, economic challenges, and let me add, opportunities, because this is a year for tremendous opportunity for the people and the nations of Africa, particularly on the elections front. Many African nations will head to the polls in the next few months, so it's important for us to talk about the role that a responsible press can, and should, play in supporting free, fair, and peaceful elections. Although Africa is our focus today, this is a global truth for us. It's applicable all around the world, including here in the United States.

Last month, I was in Addis as an observer to the 24<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit, and just last week here in Washington, we hosted government leaders and members of civil society from around the world, including thirteen African nations, as well as the African Union, for the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism. These gatherings are very important opportunities for the United States to reinforce our commitment for enduring, multifaceted partnerships with the people and the governments of Africa. We are talking about very complex issues here, whether it's about economic integration, providing opportunities for the next generation, or transnational security threats, as we did last week. No single nation or organization can tackle these complex issues alone. So our response must be a collective one, and the best way to make progress toward our goals is by working together on

long-term solutions. So with that, I will stop, and I look forward to your questions. I am ready for the first one.

**MODERATOR:** Alright, our first one comes from Nigeria. Ebube Okechukwu asks, “What role is the U.S. government playing in encouraging electronic voting and elimination of fraud in the electoral process in Africa?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** That’s a great question to start with. As you know, promoting peaceful, transparent, and fair elections on the continent of Africa is a high priority for the U.S. government. So we have been supporting the efforts of the Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria as they move toward electronic electoral cards. We have provided support since 1999, and we will continue to support their efforts. We understand that for this election, they’ve gotten out now about seventy-five percent of the electronic voting cards, and we hope that during the next few weeks, they have until March 8<sup>th</sup>, that additional cards will be picked up. In fact, we encourage listeners here to pick up their voting cards. This is going to be a key election for Nigeria. We are watching very closely as the preparations go forward for the election that will take place on March 28<sup>th</sup>, and I look forward to seeing you there.

**MODERATOR:** Our next question comes from Senegal. Christine Holzbauer asks, “In a time that the African Union, relying on the African regional organizations, is working hard in trying to make operational an African Intervention Force, how can the U.S. help? Should it be a direct help, or should it go through the United Nations, especially in the Peacekeeping Office?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Christine, that is an excellent question. In fact, we worked very, very closely with the African Union as they moved toward setting up these peacekeeping forces. We were part of their efforts in Somalia, setting up AMISOM, we worked very closely with the African Union as it set up the peacekeeping force in CAR, before that turned over to a UN Peacekeeping force, and we are working closely with the African Union that just approved the Multinational Task Force to support the efforts against Boko Haram, so our efforts are multifaceted. We work directly with the African Union, we work in supporting bilaterally, countries that are making contributions to peacekeeping forces, we work directly with the UN if it is a UN peacekeeping force. So we don’t have a single route for supporting these efforts. The point that I want to leave you with is that we do support Africa’s efforts to provide peacekeeping support, and Africa has been a very good and close partner of ours over the past many years.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you. Richard in the DRC wonders, “The terms of some African heads of state end this year, or will end next year. Pro-Kabila politicians think that the U.S. is exerting excessive pressure on President Kabila, while being more lenient toward other presidents. Why is the U.S. apparently adamant that he must step down at any cost?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** This is a decision that African countries make in their constitutions. Our policy, broadly, has been one of supporting term limits, and supporting the change that Africans, themselves, have indicated that they want. So we are not just pressuring President Kabila to honor the constitution of your country, we are pressuring other countries, as well, to honor their constitutions, because this is what we hear the people of Africa want, and this is what they desire, and we have seen no end of polls that show Africans prefer transitions. And again, it is a broad policy that we support globally, not just in DRC, not just in Africa, but across the world.

**MODERATOR:** Ajong in Cameroon asks, “What military assistance is the Nigerian government currently receiving from the USA in its fight against Boko Haram, and does your government have plans to support

countries like Cameroon and Chad, which are proving more formidable in taking the fight to Boko Haram?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Let me start by expressing my condolences to all of the people in the region who have lost lives, their family members affected by the attacks on them by Boko Haram. We have been working very closely with the government of Nigeria for more than a year, in fact even longer, in supporting their efforts against Boko Haram, in terms of providing training, in terms of providing equipment, as well as providing information through our program of information sharing, and we are very actively involved in the information fusion cell that exists in Abuja right now. We are also working closely with the neighbors, and I commend the AU’s decision during the AU Summit to support the multinational task force, and support the countries in the region as they organize themselves to fight against the terror that Boko Haram is posing throughout the region. We have...I have met with your president, met with your foreign minister, and your minister of interior, who was here last week. We are, again, providing support to the government of Cameroon. We just delivered, I think, earlier this week, some equipment directly to the military, and we are looking at additional equipment requests that have been made to us by your government, as well as by other governments in the region. We want to support their efforts to end the terror that Boko Haram is committing throughout the region, and we are committed to ensuring that these efforts succeed.

**MODERATOR:** Our next question comes from Kenya. Margo Kiser, a freelancer, asks, “Could you please update us on U.S. involvement or negotiations in the South Sudan peace process?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Let me just say that the efforts by the IGAD governments, and particularly by the prime minister of Ethiopia, to find a solution for the situation in South Sudan are commendable, and we have been working very, very closely with the governments in the region to help find a peaceful solution to the situation in South Sudan. I will say that we were disappointed that at this moment the negotiations have stalled. Our Special Envoy, Ambassador Don Booth, is in the region now. He is working closely with the other negotiators, with the IGAD negotiators, to help them to find a way to bring the warring parties to the negotiation table. I have to say again that their actions are disappointing to all of us, despite all of the efforts that are being made to try to find a solution to bring peace. The war in South Sudan is wreaking havoc on the people of South Sudan. There are people who have been...millions of people who have been forced from their homes. There are people in refugee camps in Kenya, and the numbers are increasing. There are IDPs across the country who are not able to farm, not able to send their kids to school, because two individuals and two parties are fighting over the spoils of South Sudan.

**MODERATOR:** Our next question comes from the viewing party at our U.S. Embassy in Angola. Journalist Alexandre Cose from TV TPA asks, “How is the U.S. commitment to fight Ebola in Africa?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Thank you for that question, because this...the Ebola fight is one that requires all of our efforts, and I have to say I am very proud of what we in the United States have accomplished. When the President made the decision to deploy U.S. troops to assist in the efforts in Liberia, it galvanized the rest of the international community. And we have worked very, very closely with others, with the Liberian government, with the UN, with other partners, to find a way to end the epidemic of Ebola across West Africa. I am very pleased that we are at a point in Liberia where they are down to single digits, but the hard work is still yet to be done, and that is getting all of these countries down to zero cases, and then working on ensuring that we don’t have another Ebola outbreak again. Through USAID, we have funded about 10,000 civilians who are supporting these efforts, CDC has more than two hundred CDC officers deployed in the region, and we will continue to work with the

governments in the region until this ends. And so our commitment is total, and we will not turn our backs until this is over.

**MODERATOR:** Nicolas Champeaux of RFI in France asks, “Some observers have said that the resignation of Russ Feingold as U.S. Envoy in the Great Lakes region will mean that the president of the DRC will be under less pressure and less scrutiny from Washington when it comes to respecting the constitution, and organizing free and fair elections. Do you have a reaction to that?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Well let me just start by saying thank you to Senator Feingold for all of his efforts in bringing us to where we are in the region, in terms of trying to find a solution to the situation in the Great Lakes. And let me categorically respond to your question by saying, our commitment is going to continue. Senator Feingold carried us quite far, but he was carrying out the instructions and the guidance from the Secretary, and the Secretary continues to be committed, as I am committed, to finding a solution, and continuing to pressure governments in the region to do the right thing, and we will continue those efforts despite our disappointment that we will no longer have the voice of Senator Feingold carrying our weight here. But another envoy will be named, and that envoy will additionally carry out the same kinds of actions and the same kinds of messages that Senator Feingold carried when he was working on this issue.

**MODERATOR:** Daniel from Angola National Radio asks, “What is the position of the U.S. on terrorism activities in Africa, and how much can you support Africans to fight it?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Our commitment is categoric. As you know, last week we hosted the Countering Violent Extremism conference, the White House Conference on Countering Violent Extremism, and we brought together twelve African...thirteen African countries and the AU, along with countries from around the globe, to discuss how we can work together as partners to fight terrorism, not just in Africa, but around the globe. The issue in Africa is one that we are very much taken with. It’s a high priority. We are working very closely with African partners in Somalia to fight against Al Shabaab, we are supporting the efforts of African partners in West Africa to fight Boko Haram, we work closely with partners in Mali and Niger, in Algeria and Mauritania to fight AQIM, and we will continue to put resources toward the efforts of supporting our African friends and partners to ensure that we end terrorism attacks that are having a negative impact on growth, having a negative impact on peace and security, and keeping young people from pursuing the goals that they want to achieve, in terms of education and prosperity on the continent of Africa. Our commitment is a strong commitment, and again, it’s one that we can’t do by ourselves, and African countries can’t do alone. We have to work as partners.

**MODERATOR:** Theodore, watching at our embassy in Burkina Faso asks, “What is the vision of the United States for Africa by 2020?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** I think our vision is clear. Our vision is the African vision. It is a vision of peace, it is a vision of security, it is a vision of prosperity. And in order to achieve that, we have to continue to pursue good governance, we have to continue to pursue transparency and the end to corruption, and to help build economies in Africa that provide jobs, and provide prosperity for all of the African people. It’s a tough job. It’s the vision we have today. It will not be something that we can accomplish overnight. So by 2020, I hope that we are able to see this vision start to develop into something that is concrete on the African continent.

**MODERATOR:** Another question from our viewing party in Addis Ababa, and that is from Neo of Afro FM. And he wonders, “Is the U.S. prepared to assist in stabilizing any instabilities that may occur during the election process in most African countries?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** As you know, in 2015 and 2016, there are over a dozen elections on the continent of Africa, and we are working closely with every single country where there are elections to ensure that these elections are peaceful, they are free, they are fair, and they are transparent, and that they represent the will of the people of these countries who are going to the polling stations to vote. The one that is coming up right now in Nigeria, we have provided immense support to the INEC in Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission. As you may know, I spoke to Chairman Jega in Nigeria last week, to encourage him in his efforts to continue to courageously support peaceful elections in Nigeria, and we feel the same about elections elsewhere on the continent. So we will be there in every country, through our embassies, through our support to political parties, to our support to providing civic education to citizens who may be voting in elections. We will be there in every single case to ensure that everything that we can do, everything within our power, to support peaceful, transparent elections, will be done.

**MODERATOR:** Another question from Kevin Kelly. “Will the U.S. reconsider its longstanding travel advisory for Kenya, given the virtual collapse of the tourism industry on the coast, and do you agree that the advisory may actually be having the effect of increasing recruitment for terror groups due to the growing number of unemployed linked to the bust of tourism?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Let me answer your last question first. I do not believe, and in fact, I categorically state that our travel advisories are not contributing to people’s participation in terrorism, and we regret any impact that these travel advisories might have. The solution is security. The solution is ensuring that when American citizens, or citizens from anywhere in the world, travel to any country in the world, that they feel safe. But we have a responsibility, as the American government, to warn our citizens if we believe that there are possibilities that there could be insecurity in a country that they are traveling to. This is a legal requirement that we have, it is not something that we can compromise, and it is not something that is directed at any specific country, it is not directed at Kenya. If you go on our website, you will see we have travel advisories all over the world, and these are important so that citizens can take responsibility for their security by knowing what the situation is in a particular country. So again, any impact that this has had, we truly regret. We want to work with the government of Kenya to help improve security on the coast so that there are not these attacks, there are not the possibility that people will be attacked when they are on vacation, but until that security exists, we have to continue to warn our citizens.

**MODERATOR:** Another question from Kenya, this is from Mohamed Adow of the Star Newspaper in Kenya. “President Obama has nominated an ambassador to Somalia after twenty-five years. Why now? The embassy will also be based in Nairobi. Why not another neighboring country like Ethiopia or Djibouti?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Well let me just say, why not now? It’s about time. It’s been twenty years. I was so excited yesterday when I finally saw that we were able to announce our new ambassador coming to Somalia. And this is a sign of the improved situation there, and our confidence that this country is moving in the right direction. So again, having an ambassador in Somalia is a positive thing, and my answer is, why not now? As to why we have the current operation based in Kenya, it is...in terms of ease of travel, Kenya is the easiest place for us to launch our travel into Somalia. Our hope is, in the long term, that we will actually open an embassy in Somalia, and we won’t have our

embassy in exile in Kenya. But this is a good sign, it's a sign that we are moving in the right direction, that Somalia is moving in the right direction. They are not completely, one hundred percent there yet, which is why we are not stationing the ambassador physically in Somalia, but we will have our ambassador traveling there much more regularly to engage with the government, and to engage with the Somali people in a normal fashion.

**MODERATOR:** Staying on Kenya, one more question from the Radio Ergo, Mohamed asks, "Corruption in poor governments force youths to join criminal gangs. Is there a plan to help African countries stop this?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Corruption, as I have said many times, is a cancer all over Africa, and corruption has kept Africa from really moving forward in this century in terms of education, in terms of infrastructure, in terms of growth. And there are a lot of people across the continent who are affected by the tens of billions of dollars that have been stolen from their economies. Following the African Leaders' Summit last year, or during the Summit, we announced an illicit finance initiative, where we are working with African countries to help them to deal with the issue of corruption. The government of Senegal has agreed to work with us on this effort, and we are also working very closely with the AU. As you know, the AU had a high level commission looking at illicit finance last year, this was led by former President Mbeki, and they have determined that these billions of dollars are really having a negative effect on Africa. So this is something that we all have to work on, it is something that populations have to work on, it is something that the press has to take strong positions on, but it is important that when people go to the polls to vote, that they also vote against corruption, and they let their politicians know that they do not support the continued corruption of their economies that have led them to the place where the education systems across the continent are no longer providing good education for the people of Africa, that jobs are not being provided. We know that there are some amazing young people on the continent. Through our YALI program, we had more than fifty thousand young people apply for the YALI program last year, thirty thousand this year. We are looking forward to announcing the five hundred who will be in the YALI program, the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program, and we see the number of young people who are logging onto the YALI website. So I would disagree that corruption is leading people to be involved in crime. I think it is leading young people to take a stand, and to show leadership, and to be involved so that they can ensure that the next generation on the continent of Africa does not suffer as this generation has.

**MODERATOR:** We'll move on now to Madagascar to talk about wildlife. Manjakahery asks, "There are record violations of the law to protect endangered species in Madagascar, such as the illegal export of rosewood, tortoise, seahorse. Do you have any comment about that?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Again, from the Africa Leaders' Summit, we had a whole session on wildlife and the protection of wildlife, and we are working very, very closely with African governments through this initiative to support their efforts to fight wildlife traffickers in their country. I know that Madagascar has been very proactive on the rosewood front in ensuring that everything is done that they can do to stop this illegal trafficking. We are looking at how we can better partner with governments, such as the government of China, on wildlife, and other countries that might be able to help African countries address this issue.

**MODERATOR:** Next question on South Sudan again. This is from Kevin Kelly. "Is the U.S. going to offer a resolution to the UN Security Council, calling for an arms embargo on South Sudan? When will the U.S. expand punitive measures against spoilers, given repeated broken ceasefires, many thousands of deaths, and failure to make progress toward a peace accord?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** The UN, as an organization, is looking very, very closely at how to move forward on sanctions against South Sudan, and we are working with our partners on that effort. We have already sanctioned some individuals, and we have the possibility of sanctioning others who are blocking the possibility of achieving peace in South Sudan, and we will continue to have a dialogue with South Sudan's neighbors to see how they, too, can participate in an effort that will make those who are involved in this war understand that it is unacceptable to continue to be involved in what they are doing, and to ensure that they are held accountable for what they are doing.

**MODERATOR:** The next question comes to us from Dakar. Frankie Taggart of the AFP wonders, "The U.S. is now scaling down its military operations to fight Ebola in Liberia, which seems to have been an unmitigated success. The relationship hasn't always been plain sailing, though. James Ciment, the author of "Another America, the Story of Liberia and the Former Slaves who Ruled It," describes Liberia as "America's half-forgotten stepchild, poorly set up, and neglected thereafter by the U.S. ." How would you characterize the ongoing U.S. relationship with Liberia, does the U.S. feel a moral responsibility toward Liberia based on their shared history, does it still consider the country strategically important from a military point of view?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Let me see if I can remember all of those questions. Let me just start by saying, as you know, I was the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia for almost four years, and President Sirleaf is in town, in Washington, this week, and we will be having a series of meetings with her to reaffirm our strong relationship and our partnership with this country. You are absolutely correct that the U.S. effort to fight Ebola was an unmitigated success. We had more than 2,800 U.S. troops deployed to West Africa, and they have completed the task that they were assigned to. And so we are in the process of transitioning, we are not turning our backs, we are transitioning to a civilian operation that is already supporting more than ten thousand civilians who are working in the region, and we will continue to work with these countries. We can't change Liberia's history, but we can change Liberia's future, and we are working very closely with the government to ensure that they stay on track, they continue to build their democracy, and promote opportunities for their people. And I think the Liberian people and the Liberian government know that the U.S. government will stand with them as they are moving in that direction. Liberia has had a tough history. They went through twenty...almost twenty years of conflict and they have come out of that, and then they had to face Ebola. And very slowly, they have come out of the worst part of that disease. We are working with them now to ensure that we get through...now, the toughest part is getting to zero Ebola cases, and then starting to rebuild the country so that the people, and particularly the children of Liberia, have a future.

**MODERATOR:** Kabre in Burkina Faso asks, "With the political situation that Burkina has experienced, is Burkina Faso still eligible for a new compact as part of MCA?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** We are working with your government to make sure that Burkina Faso stays on track. I have to commend the transitional government that is moving in a positive direction to move toward elections, to make sure that Burkina does not have any setbacks. In terms of MCC, we will continue to look at how well Burkina is doing on the indicators, but at this point, they are still on track. So we hope to continue to work with them.

**MODERATOR:** Alright, and we'll move over now to South Africa, this one from Sherwin. "What updates are you able to provide on AGOA since the U.S. -Africa Summit last August. When do you expect the legislation to be renewed, and what can be said about South Africa's inclusion or exclusion after concern from a number of U.S. senators over market access for U.S. chicken exports?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Thank you for that question. As you know, there is strong support for AGOA on both sides of our...the Senate and the House. Fourteen years ago when the AGOA legislation was passed, it was really hallmark legislation in terms of our trade partnership with Africa. I can tell you, absolutely categorically, that AGOA will be extended. How that will happen will depend on what our Congress decides. And we have had continuing discussions with the government of South Africa. I was in South Africa earlier...well, late last year, in which we...I had conversations with the trade minister on how to deal with the issues and concerns that our poultry industry has expressed about the South Africa market, and we are continuing to work with the government to address those concerns. But in terms of AGOA, I can say that we will see some legislation come out of Congress this year to extend it.

**MODERATOR:** Staying in South Africa, this next question from Johannesburg, "What is the U.S. reaction to claims in spy cables released recently by Al Jazeera, that it opposed Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's bid for the AU Commission chairmanship?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Let me just say that's absolutely ridiculous. We work closely with the AU. We're not a member of the organization, we don't select leaders of the organization, but we work with the leadership that the organization chooses. And we are working very closely with Dlamini-Zuma and her leadership of the organization, and our partnership has grown during the period that she has been in charge of the organization. So again, I don't know where these allegations are coming from, but I can say categorically they are untrue.

**MODERATOR:** And the follow up to our earlier question on Somalia from Jo Biddle of the AFP, "Is there a time frame that you might be able to reopen the embassy in Mogadishu?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** I wish I could give you a time frame. I wish I could say, tomorrow we are going to reopen the embassy. What I can say is, it is in our planning process. It depends on the security situation that we are working on every day, and we are seeing the security situation improve, but occasionally we have had setbacks, as you heard last week, when Al-Shabaab attacked a hotel. It was a cowardly act. They are doing everything possible to try to stop the Somali people from succeeding, and they will not succeed, and eventually we will reopen our embassy in Mogadishu, and I look forward to being there that day.

**MODERATOR:** Alright, our second to last question, this one from Daniel of Bloomberg, "Do you think Nigeria is making sufficient progress against Boko Haram to safely hold their elections on March 28<sup>th</sup>? Is it your view that the conduct of Nigeria's election will set the tone for other African elections this year?"

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** We have been assured by the government of Nigeria and by Chairman Jega that the elections will take place on March 28<sup>th</sup>. And we are seeing very active work being done by Nigeria's security service, working closely with the government of Chad, and Cameroon, and neighbors, to fight Boko Haram. We are all watching this election. This election will be a bellwether for the entire continent. The world is watching, the continent is watching, Nigeria's neighbors are watching this election. And our hope is that the election will be free and fair, that it will be transparent, it will be peaceful, and that the results of the election will reflect the will of the people of Nigeria. I will be in Nigeria on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, there as an observer for the election on the 28<sup>th</sup>. As you know, Secretary Kerry visited Nigeria in...a few weeks ago, and again, expressed our concern that there not be violence. He met with both candidates. He met with President Jonathan and General Buhari, he had a conversation with Chairman Jega, he met with the press, and he made it very, very

clear that Nigeria is a strategic partner of the United States, we want to see this election go well, and we want to continue to work with Nigeria in the future.

**MODERATOR:** Our last question comes from Ann Brown. “What were your observations on the 24<sup>th</sup> African Summit Union...African Union Summit?”

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** It was, you know, that was my third summit since becoming Assistant Secretary, and I told my staff I thought it was the best. I had about thirty bilateral meetings with various governments, and the African Union Summit gives us an opportunity to engage with governments across the continent in a way that we cannot do anywhere. Even when we are in New York, we are not so concentrated as we were in the AU. I was extraordinarily pleased with the decision by the Peace and Security Commission to support the Multinational Joint Task Force for West Africa, and to push that through to the UN Security Council for consideration. I was pleased with the session on Ebola, which brought together all of the countries that have been involved in supporting the Ebola effort, but also highlighted the key role that the AU, as an organization, played in supporting the efforts against Ebola in the region. The 24<sup>th</sup> session was one that recognized the role of women in development, and this is certainly something that is a high priority for the U.S. government. It is important that women on the Continent of Africa be recognized for the contributions that they make to Africa’s development and Africa’s prosperity in the future. So I found the summit extraordinarily productive, and I look forward to the next one that I understand it will be in South Africa this year, in June.

**MODERATOR:** Well, Madam Assistant Secretary, thank you so much for joining us here today. It has really been an honor to have you in the studio with us.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY THOMAS-GREENFIELD:** Good. Thank you very much, and I welcome you, as well.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you. And thank you for tuning in from countries across the African continent. I would urge you to stay tuned in. Following today’s press conference, we will have another with Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Doug Frantz, who will speak about elections, the upcoming African elections and the press freedom there. I apologize again for the lack of simultaneous interpretation in French and Portuguese. We will be providing a transcript as soon as we can following today’s Live@State. And I would urge you to consider continuing the conversation on Twitter @stateafrica and @statedept. You can also follow us on Facebook at DOS African Affairs. Thank you for tuning in, and please stay tuned for Assistant Secretary Frantz.