

Washington File

April 6, 2012

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NATO Must Transform to Have Global Mission, Clinton Says

() (930)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — NATO is looking beyond the challenges of its founding in the Cold War struggle with Soviet Russia toward an alliance that works to ensure dignity and prosperity for people worldwide, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said April 3.

Speaking to the World Affairs Council (<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2012/04/201204043299.html#axzz1r5CHttZ7>) 2012 NATO Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, Clinton said the alliance, formed in 1949, needs to transform itself so that it can continue to champion the principles of “democracy, liberty and the rule of law” around the world as part of what she termed “a battle for the future.”

Across the planet, emerging powers are rising and technology is working to connect “more people in more places, and empowering them to influence global events and participate in the global economy like never before,” she said, adding, “This is all occurring against the backdrop of a recovering economy from the worst recession in recent memory.”

Ahead of the May 20–21 NATO summit, which will be held in Chicago, the secretary told members of the alliance that “the problems we face today are not limited to one ocean, and neither can our work be.”

She cited the example of Libya and how NATO’s work to protect Libyans from the regime of Muammar Qadhafi in 2011 was “a massive and complex undertaking,” but added it is “no exaggeration to say that thousands of Libyans are alive today because of your work.”

In Chicago, NATO members will recognize how their cooperation helped to defend “common values” in the Balkans, Afghanistan, the Middle East and North Africa, she said.

“We want to learn what worked and what didn’t, and I do believe in evidenced-based planning. And what we see in NATO is a very impressive example of that. It’s not only the planning that looks forward, but it’s the lessons learned that help us look backward to make that forward planning even better,” Clinton said.

NATO members will also discuss the next phase in the transition of security responsibility for Afghanistan to Afghan forces by 2014, and reductions in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for Afghanistan from “a predominantly combat role to a supporting role” through training, advice and assistance in 2013, she said.

At the invitation of the Afghan government, some ISAF forces may remain after 2014, she said, but “we do not seek permanent

American military bases in Afghanistan or a presence that is considered a threat to the neighbors, which leads to instability that threatens the gains that have been made in Afghanistan.”

Clinton said a stable Afghanistan is in the interests of both NATO and the United States, and the Obama administration remains committed to achieving it, as well as to supporting Afghan reconciliation efforts to end conflict there.

She called on Taliban rebels to “make unambiguous statements distancing themselves from international terrorism and committing to a peace process that includes all Afghans.”

The secretary urged support for Afghanistan’s economic development, saying projects like the New Silk Road Initiative (<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2011/09/20110929173111su0.1609873.html>) that would create economic and transit connections between the country and its South and Central Asian neighbors “will bind together a region too long torn apart by conflict and division.” Afghanistan’s political future and the economic future of the entire region, Clinton said, are “inextricably linked” to Afghanistan’s economic success.

“That is a lesson we have learned over and over all over the world: People need a realistic hope for a better life, a job and a chance to provide for their family,” she said.

FORMER SECRETARY MARSHALL SAW THE NEED TO INVEST IN OTHERS

In earlier remarks in Lexington, Virginia (<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2012/04/201204033264.html>), April 3, Clinton invoked the memory of former U.S. General and Secretary of State George Marshall, who had urged Americans to help rebuild Europe in the aftermath of World War II.

In Marshall’s efforts was “a recognition that advancing our own interests depends on improving the conditions in which other human beings around the world live,” she said.

In his farewell remarks on leaving military service, Marshall said, “Along with the great problem of maintaining the peace, we must solve the problem of the pittance of food, of clothing and coal and homes. Neither of these problems can be solved alone. They are directly related to one another,” Clinton recalled.

Marshall looked at “a Europe shattered by war,” and “knew that hunger and poverty would ultimately undermine our own prosperity and opportunity, that desperation and chaos would ultimately give rise to forces that would threaten us here at home,” she said.

“Today, we can see the truth of those insights in so many ways. We see how some of the greatest threats to our security come from a lack of opportunity, the denial of human rights, a changing climate, strains on water, food, and energy,” Clinton said.

Both research and experience suggest that about 40 percent of countries recovering from conflict “revert to violence within a decade,” she said. “But when they grow their economies and raise

people's income, the risk of violence drops substantially. And there is no better way of doing that than introducing free-market principles, encouraging entrepreneurship, creating conditions for men and women to see the results of their own labor in rising incomes and better opportunities for their children."

Clinton said Marshall understood that "in order for America to have peace and prosperity, we have to invest in that potential for others." Clinton called on all Americans to "channel our doubts and uncertainty into a call to be better and stronger."

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/iipdigital-en/index.html>)

WPD302 04/04/2012

U.S. Food Aid Programs Assist Millions Worldwide

() (558)

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — Azizul Haque has become a successful prawn nursery operator in Bangladesh, thanks to a two-year Food for Progress training project managed by the nonprofit Winrock International and administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

"I have got another avenue to earn my livelihood with more income," Haque said in a USDA blog posted by Katie Gorscak, an official with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. The two-year training program, which began in March 2009, generated more than \$1 million in additional farmer income in the area, according to USDA.

Through Food for Progress, USDA provides commodities to government agencies and nonprofit groups in developing countries that are committed to introducing and expanding free enterprise in the agricultural sector. It is one way USDA leverages its resources. In fiscal year 2012, USDA will fund Food for Progress projects in eight countries.

In the West African nation of Mali, a teacher helps students grow nutritious food like peanuts in their school garden as other community women cook the children's lunch. The garden and school lunches are part of a McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition project managed by Catholic Relief Services and administered by the USDA. McGovern-Dole supports education and child development in low-income, food-deficit countries committed to universal education by providing U.S. agricultural products and financial and technical assistance for school lunches and maternal nutrition projects. In 2012, USDA will fund McGovern-Dole projects in 15 countries.

These long-term food aid efforts and emergency food assistance contribute to the goals of the Obama administration to reduce worldwide food insecurity through its Feed the Future initiative.

USAID EMERGENCY FOOD AID TO CHAD

Through the Food for Peace Program, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has sent nearly 34,000 tons of emergency food aid to Sahel regions of Chad affected by drought, poor harvests, high food prices and conflict.

"Time is of the essence, particularly with the next rainy season to begin in June when roads will be impassable and population will be difficult to reach," according to a blog entry posted by Dina Esposito, head of USAID's Office of Food for Peace.

This is the third drought the region has experienced in 10 years. About 10 million people are at risk of going hungry before the next harvest in September, while food prices are expected to remain high, according to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

USAID's emergency shipment of sorghum to Chad will complement efforts by WFP to procure food for people in need in the region — primarily children, malnourished mothers and Sudanese refugees, Esposito said in the blog post.

In 2012, USAID will provide nearly \$200 million in humanitarian assistance to combat the effects of drought and high prices and build community resilience to future shocks across the Sahel, which includes parts Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, The Gambia and Burkina Faso.

USAID ADMINISTRATOR GOES TO AFRICA

On April 4, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah will address senior development officials attending a forum on strengthening drought resilience in the Horn of Africa. After the meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, Shah will travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to meet with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and Agriculture Minister Tefera Deribew. He also will visit rural areas involved in agriculture.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/iipdigital-en/index.html>)

WPD303 04/04/2012

U.S. Colleges Embrace Asian American Studies

() (752)

By Louise Fenner
Staff Writer

Washington — Asian American Studies, an academic curriculum that looks at the experiences and contributions of the United States' fastest-growing racial group, is expanding to more and

more U.S. campuses. The field is also evolving as the nation's Asian-American and Pacific Islander population becomes increasingly diverse.

"It's important to study the Asian-American population if you really want to understand what the United States is," said David Yoo, director of the nation's largest program, the Asian American Studies Center at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

"Different groups have come here and become part of American society and culture," he said. "If you don't understand Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, you are missing a very large piece of that."

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (alone or in combination with other races) make up nearly 6 percent of the U.S. population, and their numbers are growing faster than those of any other racial group. They constitute 7 percent of the U.S. college student population.

THE ROOTS OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Asian American Studies (AAS) was first instituted in San Francisco and Berkeley, California, in 1969 in response to student protests demanding a curriculum that was more inclusive of minorities. For the next two decades, the majority of programs were on the West Coast.

This changed in the late 1980s and 1990s in response to student activism in the East and Midwest. In 1987, Cornell University was the first Ivy League school to institute an Asian American Studies program, and two years later the University of Michigan became the first Midwestern school to do so. One of the first in the Southwest was Arizona State University in 1997.

There are also significant programs at Columbia University, Hunter College (City University of New York), New York University, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the University of Massachusetts-Boston, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Texas-Austin, according to the Encyclopedia of Asian American Issues Today.

The Association for Asian American Studies lists 32 stand-alone programs, 20 programs within other departments (such as ethnic studies or American studies), and 18 additional campuses that regularly offer Asian American Studies courses.

"The scope and diversity of these programs have expanded dramatically, in part reflecting the fact that since the Immigration Act of 1965 we've had a much more diverse Asian population," said Yoo.

Many programs offer courses focusing on local immigrant populations. The University of Minnesota Twin Cities, for example, has courses in Hmong history and culture. There are Filipino American Studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the University of Maryland. UCLA has an endowed academic chair focusing on U.S.-China relations and Chinese American Studies. South Asian Studies is offered to AAS

majors at the University of Pennsylvania and Binghamton University in New York, among others.

The U.S. Department of Education funds nine South Asia national resource centers at universities across the country; these centers specialize in the study of South Asian languages and cultures.

Carolyn Chen, director of Asian American Studies at Northwestern University, said the program isn't just a service for Asian-American students: "We see it as contributing to the American narrative, to a larger story about who Americans are."

At the request of students, Chen is teaching a course on what it means to be a second-generation Asian American. Next year there will be courses on the Korean-American experience and the South-Asian experience, because "those are things students are telling us they want," she said. "These courses touch on larger issues of immigration and assimilation that are important for all Americans, not just Asian Americans."

Asians make up about 5 percent of the population in the Chicago area, but at Northwestern and many elite universities the percentage is far higher — 20 percent — said Chen. About 200 students are enrolled in Asian American Studies at Northwestern this quarter. Nearly 30 are working toward a minor, and others are taking classes out of curiosity or to meet other degree requirements.

Those who minor in Asian American Studies end up in a wide range of careers, said Chen. "They go to med school, become lawyers, become businesspeople, work in film, go into academia, work for nonprofits," said Chen. "They do everything and anything."

See *Asians Are Fastest-Growing Racial Group in U.S.* (<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2012/03/201203262797.html>)

See also a U.S. Census Bureau report (<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>) (PDF, 2.69MB) on the U.S. Asian population and the website of UCLA's Asian American Center (<http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/default.asp>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/iipdigital-en/index.html>)

WPD304 04/04/2012

In Brief: Hubble Spies Spiral Galaxy Edge-On

(http://photos.state.gov/libraries/amgov/3234/April_2012/04032012_635039main1_potw1213a-673a_jpg_600.jpg) (219)

The NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope has spotted the "UFO Galaxy."

NGC 2683 is a spiral galaxy seen almost edge-on, giving it the shape of a classic science fiction spaceship. This is why the astronomers at the Astronaut Memorial Planetarium and Observatory in Cocoa, Florida, gave it its nickname.

While a bird's-eye view lets astronomers see the detailed structure of a galaxy, a side-on view has its own perks, NASA reports in a press release. In particular, it gives astronomers a great opportunity to see the delicate dust lanes of the spiral arms silhouetted against the golden haze of the galaxy's core. In addition, brilliant clusters of young blue stars shine scattered throughout the disc, mapping the galaxy's star-forming regions.

Perhaps surprisingly, side-on views of galaxies like this one do not prevent astronomers from deducing their structures. Studies of the properties of the light coming from NGC 2683 suggest that this is a barred spiral galaxy, even though the angle at which we see it does not let us see this directly, NASA said.

NGC 2683 was discovered February 5, 1788, by the famous astronomer William Herschel. This image is produced from two adjacent fields observed in visible and infrared light by Hubble's Advanced Camera for Surveys.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/iipdigital-en/index.html>)

WPD305 04/04/2012

In Brief: Asian Fusion Cuisine Wins U.S. Fans

(http://photos.state.gov/libraries/amgov/3234/April_2012/04032012_AP03081406276a_jpg_600.jpg) (147)

“Successful East-West cooking harmoniously combines two distinct culinary approaches,” says Chinese-American chef Ming Tsai, who owns the Blue Ginger restaurant in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Many contemporary restaurants in the United States, including Blue Ginger, have a common feature on their menus: Asian fusion specialties, which combine elements of different Asian cooking styles — and often Western styles — in one dish. U.S. diners, for example, have embraced new types of sushi, including the hybrid California roll, which honors its Japanese roots but adds avocados to the mix.

Recipes favored by Tsai (shown here filming his televised cooking show, *Simply Ming*) focus on two main ingredients: one from the East and one from the West, paired to create simple, flavorful meals.

Thanks to an influx of Asian immigrants, traditional Asian cooking and fusion cuisine are both mainstream fare across much of America.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/iipdigital-en/index.html>)

WPD306 04/04/2012

State Department Daily Press Briefing

() (5594)

(begin transcript)

U.S. Department of State

On-Camera Daily Press Briefing Index

Wednesday, April 4, 2012

1:07 p.m. EDT

Briefer: Mark Toner, Deputy Spokesperson

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— Rewards for Justice / Hafiz Saeed

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPB # 62

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2012

(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

1:07 p.m. EDT

MR. TONER: Just before we get started, welcome to the State Department. And excuse me, I don't want a BlackBerry interruption. I just realized that. Forgive me. And I also especially want to welcome – we have interns from SCA and NEA here in the building today, or in the room with us today, so welcome to all of you.

I don't have anything at the top.

QUESTION: Okay.

MR. TONER: So go ahead, Matt.

QUESTION: So the Iranians now say they don't like Istanbul as a venue. They propose some alternatives. Are you up for considering alternatives? And, if so, I've got some suggestions. Would you – (laughter) – Bahamas?

MR. TONER: I don't think it's up for us to consider.

QUESTION: Shanghai.

MR. TONER: That would be nice. I don't think it's for us to suggest any alternatives. I think what's happening right now is that the EU's office of the high representative is continuing to consult and work out the details with our Iranian counterparts on the venue.

Yeah.

QUESTION: Okay. But – well, all that's well and good, but, I mean, are you still under the – going on the assumption – or is it still your position that these talks should be held in Istanbul?

MR. TONER: Well, again, they're clearly trying to nail down the venue. Obviously – Secretary spoke about this the other day – it was our understanding or belief that all sides agreed on Istanbul and the dates. We've seen, subsequently, some other venues tossed around. But really, the – it's the high representative offices we need to finalize this.

QUESTION: Sure. Fair enough, but --

MR. TONER: But we're looking – no, just to finish, Matt – so, I mean, we're looking to finalize all these details so that we can actually get into talks.

QUESTION: Yeah, but --

MR. TONER: The focus should be on the substance.

QUESTION: For you, for the United States, is the idea of having these – having this meeting in Baghdad or Damascus, is that a feasible – is that a reasonable alternative?

QUESTION: Beijing? (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Again, I'm not going to give you a grade on every venue that's tossed out there.

QUESTION: Well, all right. Let's just start with Damascus. Do you think that it's actually feasible for – from a logistical point of view?

MR. TONER: Again, I don't think we have the time to go through this list. Again, it is the high representative's lead on this. They're working with the Iranians to finalize it. We keep hearing different things from the Iranians. Let her office have the lead, talk to the Iranians, nail down these venues. What I think is the most important here is that we get into talks so we can focus on the substance and not the venue.

QUESTION: Well, then is there any place you wouldn't go?

MR. TONER: (Laughter.) Again --

QUESTION: I mean, Bamako? Where – is there a place that is absolutely --

MR. TONER: No. Seriously, Matt, I mean we're --

QUESTION: I'm being – trying to be serious.

MR. TONER: Yeah – no --

QUESTION: I want to find out if there is – if there are – if a venue – if the choice of venue could crater this before it even happens because you guys are opposed to it. Now, I mean, frankly, the Iranians suggesting Damascus is a bit ludicrous. And I would think that you could say that from the podium considering what the situation --

MR. TONER: I actually hadn't seen that. I had seen that they had suggested --

QUESTION: They've also suggested Baghdad.

MR. TONER: I had seen that they had suggested Baghdad.

QUESTION: But you guys – well, Baghdad, you guys --

MR. TONER: I had not seen Damascus --

QUESTION: You think that Baghdad --

MR. TONER: -- seen Beijing.

QUESTION: You said Baghdad last week was a wonderful venue for the Arab League summit. So what's wrong with it for this?

MR. TONER: Again, it's not our place right now to weigh in on this process. First of all, it's not just about the United States. This is about the P-5+1 working together in concert to engage with the Iranians to find a workable venue for these talks to continue or to go – or to begin.

QUESTION: Okay. I don't – I won't –

MR. TONER: So --

QUESTION: You're not going to answer, but I don't think it's out of line to ask what you guys think is a reasonable or not reasonable venue.

MR. TONER: And – yeah. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Back to the substance?

MR. TONER: Yeah, sure.

QUESTION: You said that what's important is the substance here, right? So if what is important is the substance, isn't the venue pretty much a matter of indifference? I mean, if you're – if they're willing to have a substantive, serious conversation, why should the venue be so hard to pin down? Why don't you guys just agree to a venue?

MR. TONER: Well, again, it speaks to – it's not just the United States; it's the EU, it's the other P-5+1 partners. There's timing, there's schedules, there's all – there's a lot of logistics that weigh into this process. So again, it's not really for us to go out and offer our viewpoint or our opinion. I think what's best now is for High Representative Ashton's office to take all of that under consideration, speak directly to the Iranians, nail down the venue, and then we can get into talks.

QUESTION: Do you think the Iranians are playing games with you?

MR. TONER: I truly don't know. I mean, Toria spoke a little bit yesterday about the fact that – I think it was yesterday – about we tend to hear different things from different parts of the Iranian Government. That's a question for the Iranians. What we're looking for – we've seen an official response that they want to get back into talks, so we're eager to do that.

QUESTION: And I think Mr. Zebari is quoted as saying – Foreign Minister Zebari is quoted as saying that he is looking for a written response from the P-5+1 to the idea of Baghdad as a potential venue.

MR. TONER: I'm actually not aware of that, so I don't have an answer for you.

QUESTION: Can I just ask you --

MR. TONER: Yeah, sure.

QUESTION: The President and the Secretary have both repeatedly said it's incumbent on the Iranians to prove the seriousness of their intent and the peaceful nature of their program. Bearing that in mind, why would you even negotiate on the venue? I mean, they suggested Istanbul, you've accepted. Say you're showing up on the 13th and if they don't show up, they fail. Why do you need to go through this whole negotiation?

MR. TONER: Well, again, our intent here is to have productive, ongoing talks. And as you said, we want Iran to come to these talks with a seriousness of purpose, trying to address the international community's concerns. It is – as I said before, it's not for us to determine. It's for the P-5+1, speaking with one voice, to consult with the Iranians, find an acceptable venue. We believed it was Istanbul. We've heard other things, but again, it's unclear who's speaking with authority within the Iranian Government. So it's best for us, really, to work through Cathy Ashton, who has the lead on this.

QUESTION: Okay. If they were to back out of Istanbul, their own preferred destination, what would that say about the seriousness of their intent?

MR. TONER: Let's let that happen. Let's see how we go forward here. We believe that we can nail down the venue and have the talks on the 13th and 14th.

QUESTION: Mark, why shouldn't an outsider looking at this view this as somewhat akin to arguing over the shape of the table?

MR. TONER: I mean, that's – look, it's fair that venue should not trump substance, and I think I said that. We want to settle the venue issues so we can get to the substance of these talks. But I think that when you consider that – and again, it's not just about the U.S., it's not just about Iran, it's not just about the EU; it's about a number of different countries and organizations coming to the same table on the same day or days to talk about these issues. There's some level of coordination that needs to take place there. It's best that that's handled through the EU and not through public statements conjecturing this place or how about this place. Let's let the Iranians talk to the EU, and there's two point – there's one point of contact there so that they can iron this out.

QUESTION: And one small last one on this.

MR. TONER: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: It's hypothetical, but I think you probably can answer it. If these talks do actually occur, will the United States be represented by Under Secretary Sherman?

MR. TONER: It's been that – that's been the --

QUESTION: In the past.

MR. TONER: -- case in the past, so yes, we expect that.

QUESTION: Okay.

MR. TONER: That's it? We're done? Anything else? Any other --

QUESTION: A different topic?

MR. TONER: Yeah, sure.

QUESTION: Pakistan?

MR. TONER: Yeah.

QUESTION: Just a couple days after the United States announced this reward money for Hafiz Saeed, he very openly called a press conference in Rawalpindi. What's the U.S. reaction to that? Do you think that the Pakistani authorities should have allowed that, or should they have arrested him?

MR. TONER: Look, just a couple of clarifications about the Rewards for Justice against Hafiz Saeed. I'm aware that he did give a press conference yesterday, made some public statements. Let's be very clear because I've been getting questions all morning, "Hey, if you know where he is, why issue this reward?" Just to clarify, the \$10 million is for information that -- not about his location, but information that leads to an arrest or conviction. And this is information that could withstand judicial scrutiny, so I think what's important here is we're not seeking this guy's location. We all know where he is. Every journalist in Pakistan and in the region knows how to find him. But we're looking for information that can be usable to convict him in a court of law.

QUESTION: I thought that information was already out there. The Indians certainly seem to say that they have it.

MR. TONER: Well, the Indians do, and I'd refer you to the Indians and the Pakistanis to talk about their counterterrorism cooperation, but we're --

QUESTION: Were you ever able to find out how much money the Indians have ponied up for a reward?

MR. TONER: I don't -- Matt, did you ask that yesterday? I'm sorry if you didn't.

QUESTION: Yes, I did.

MR. TONER: I didn't -- I thought you -- I thought we had only gotten the question about --

QUESTION: I'm just curious as to why the U.S. taxpayer should pay for this.

MR. TONER: Well, I think we talked about -- a little bit about this yesterday. One is that --

QUESTION: I understand. I mean, if you want to join with the Indians in offering some kind of a joint reward, but I don't understand why the conference down --

MR. TONER: Well, you know how our Rewards for Justice works. It's a very effective program and it's not a joint program; it's something that we do on behalf of the United States.

QUESTION: No, no. I mean, I'm not talking about -- I mean, if you wanted to add this to whatever the Indians might be offering, I thought that would make -- that would -- I suppose that would make sense. I just don't understand.

MR. TONER: I don't -- I just know that (inaudible) --

QUESTION: And if he's already been indicted -- as Toria said yesterday, if he's already been indicted, presumably the prosecutors have information; otherwise he wouldn't have been indicted.

MR. TONER: You're talking about he's indicted within the U.S. or indicted --

QUESTION: Anywhere.

MR. TONER: Anywhere. Well, again, I think -- look, I think what they're trying to -- we're trying to get information that can be used to put this gentleman behind bars.

QUESTION: Are you saying that there is no information right now that could -- that you could prosecute him for?

MR. TONER: There is information, there is intelligence that is not necessarily usable in a court of law.

QUESTION: So, there -- really? There is not -- there isn't information out there that could be used to prosecute?

MR. TONER: I think that the Rewards for Justice announcement speaks for itself, insofar as saying that they're looking for evidence that can be used against him that implicates him --

QUESTION: Mark --

MR. TONER: -- in a court of law.

QUESTION: There's something I don't understand, which is --

MR. TONER: Yeah, sure.

QUESTION: I mean, I went back and I read the Rewards for Justice posting on it, and the reasons given are fairly old reasons, including that he is suspected of masterminding the Mumbai attacks. That was three and a half years ago, right? Why now? I mean, why would it take years to decide to put him on the Rewards for Justice Program?

MR. TONER: Sure. I mean, I -- first of all, as you saw with the 9/11 attacks, we don't ever necessarily -- there's no statute of limitations on these terrorist attacks --

QUESTION: (Sneezes.)

MR. TONER: -- God bless you -- statute of limitations on these kinds of terrorist attacks. I do know that there are -- when we nominate someone for the Rewards for Justice, there is a legal process that needs to take place, or an internal process that needs to take place in order to designate him. I'm not sure how long

that process is and how – when it began, but it does take some amount of time. But I also --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) years?

MR. TONER: Not years, undoubtedly.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) forgive me, but it was months, right? So, I mean --

MR. TONER: Yeah.

QUESTION: I'm sorry.

MR. TONER: Yeah, Cami.

QUESTION: I thought Toria had said yesterday or the day before as well that the Pakistanis were aware of this, and yet we've got a statement today from the foreign minister saying that the U.S. must provide concrete evidence if it wants Islamabad to act against it. So it would seem like there's some confusion on the part of the Pakistani Government as well.

MR. TONER: On the contrary. I think it speaks to the fact of what we're looking for, which is people to step forward that can provide that kind of evidence that the Pakistanis can then arrest this individual and try him.

QUESTION: But Pakistan's saying they want the U.S. to provide that concrete evidence.

MR. TONER: I don't – I'm not aware that they said the U.S. I think that they are looking for usable evidence against him.

QUESTION: All right. To clarify, so --

MR. TONER: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- the U.S. doesn't have any concrete evidence at the moment that can implicate him?

MR. TONER: Well, again, I think the announcement speaks very clearly to the fact that we're looking for evidence that can withstand judicial scrutiny against this individual, information that can be used against him to convict him in a court of law.

QUESTION: And how does the timing of this announcement – does it in any way impact on U.S.-Pakistan relations when the parliament is debating the way forward? Is it –

MR. TONER: No. It has nothing to do with the ongoing parliamentary review. I think Toria spoke to that and de-conflicted it all and said that yesterday. It's – this is about a process in and of itself, separate and apart from our ongoing bilateral relations with Pakistan. It does, however, speak to the fact that we are in a shared struggle here and that individuals like this gentleman, Hafiz Saeed, are a threat to the region. It wasn't just six Americans killed. It was scores killed in 2008 attacks in Mumbai. And he's also – he's been – his group has been responsible for many attacks in the region.

QUESTION: Is it your kind of no confidence in Pakistani Government?

MR. TONER: Sorry?

QUESTION: It's a kind of no-confidence vote in --

MR. TONER: Not at all. I think we're trying to work in concert with the Pakistani Government in order to bring this guy to justice.

QUESTION: If there is – I'm confused. If there is not any evidence, why is this guy a wanted terrorist? If you – I mean, you could put anyone's face and name up there and say I'll give you 10 million if you can give me some information that connects them to some attack someplace.

MR. TONER: Right.

QUESTION: Why – there's – there has to be something out there.

MR. TONER: Well, there is information out there. I just can't speak to --

QUESTION: But it's – but it can't be used in court?

MR. TONER: Correct.

QUESTION: Well, that means that there is not any – that means that there's – I don't get it. What kind of information are you talking about that's --

MR. TONER: Well, it's based on intelligence, and it's not --

QUESTION: And that can't be used in court?

MR. TONER: Not to my understanding, but I can't talk about it in detail.

QUESTION: But just getting back to the initial question, it's okay for him to be openly giving press conferences and to be goading in the U.S.? I mean, is that --

MR. TONER: He's free to do that, unfortunately, up to this moment, but we hope to put him behind bars.

QUESTION: Did you do this to try to put pressure on the Pakistanis?

MR. TONER: I just think we are trying to – we have very close cooperation with India. We have very close cooperation – counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan, apart from our recent difficulties in the broader relationship. We're – the major attack in Mumbai in 2008. There were subsequent terrorist actions undertaken by this group. And we are dogged in our pursuit of these individuals. I don't know that – this is not to put pressure on any one government, but we wanted to be able to provide Pakistan with the tools that they need to prosecute this individual.

QUESTION: Pakistani president?

MR. TONER: Yeah.

QUESTION: He's traveling to New Delhi, to India. Basically, it's a spiritual journey to a shrine.

MR. TONER: That's right.

QUESTION: So the – do you think this announcement at this time will move the initiative – the narrative back to the anti-militant fight and cooperation?

MR. TONER: Well, difficult for me to say. And certainly, we would refer you to the governments of India and Pakistan as to what he's going to discuss with the government there when he's on his trip. But we want to see, obviously, ever closer counterterrorism cooperation. It's to everyone's interests.

QUESTION: Just getting back to the –

MR. TONER: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- that this is to help the Pakistani prosecutors. Is that – so that's what this is aimed at, getting him prosecuted in Pakistan, not in India or not --

MR. TONER: Not necessarily. Not necessarily in Pakistan. I think we spoke to that in our Taken Question yesterday.

QUESTION: Exactly. Which is why --

MR. TONER: But he currently resides in Pakistan, obviously.

QUESTION: So you want the – you are offering this reward for information not so that the Pakistani police will go arrest him or can find him, which they presumably can do now, but so that then they can prosecute him or ship him off to India to be prosecuted or ship him off here?

MR. TONER: I mean, we're – I think we said yesterday we're looking for information to lead to his conviction in any U.S. or foreign court of law.

QUESTION: Different topic?

MR. TONER: Please.

QUESTION: Sudan.

QUESTION: Can we stay on (inaudible)?

MR. TONER: Oh, I'm sorry. Sure. I didn't mean to ignore you. Go ahead. Are you Pakistan, too?

QUESTION: Yeah. In 2000 --

MR. TONER: Okay, we'll go to you and then --

QUESTION: Okay. In 2009, you – David Headley was arrested and he testified in court in a plea bargain deal on the Mumbai attacks. Is the evidence – if the evidence isn't sufficient, then

what about the testimony he gave, testifying that he was trained by Lashkar-e-Tayyiba to carry out the Mumbai attacks? Is that evidence and not usable? Because it was then used to convict someone else.

MR. TONER: You know what? I'm not conversant on the evidence that he gave in that case, so I'd have to refer you to the relevant law enforcement agencies as well as to the lawyers. I just don't know if that – if any of the evidence that he gave would be usable.

Yeah. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Do you expect the Pakistani Government to move against him? I mean, this guy clearly thinks that he can operate with immunity inside Pakistan.

MR. TONER: I think what we're looking to do is, as I just said to Arshad, I think we're trying to, through this Reward for Justice offer, is to, first of all, put this case back and this individual back in the limelight but also to seek out information that we feel would give Pakistani authorities the tools or the wherewithal to prosecute him.

QUESTION: Sudan?

MR. TONER: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: The talks in Addis Ababa between Sudan and South Sudan, by most accounts, didn't go very well. South Sudan said that the – that Khartoum's delegation walked out, but there's some dispute of that from Khartoum's side. And at the start of the briefing, South Sudan was saying that it shot down a Sudanese jet. What's your assessment of how tensions – or how the relations are going right now? What is the United States hoping that the two sides will do?

MR. TONER: Well, we're obviously very concerned. I did just see that story before coming in here about the shoot down. We're calling on – clearly, we're calling on restraint by all – for – on the part of all sides, and we're very concerned about the ongoing hostilities on the border areas between South Sudan and Sudan. And we call upon the parties to cease fighting and ensure the safety and security of civilians, first and foremost, and then the negotiated solution to grievances under the auspices of the African Union. So they need to get back into these negotiations.

And I think as you saw yesterday, the White House announced that we're going to provide an additional 26 million in emergency funds to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees that's going to help address some of the needs of these refugees caused by the fighting.

QUESTION: Is it your impression the African Union mediation has broken down, or do you still see some hope for that?

MR. TONER: I think we still see hope for it.

QUESTION: Can I stay on Africa?

MR. TONER: Yeah. Sure.

QUESTION: Assistant Secretary Carson and Carter Ham, the AFRICOM chief, are in Algeria today. Just – I was wondering if there's any readout on, specifically if they talked about Mali or --

MR. TONER: Yeah. I don't. I'll get you – I'll get your readout there. Johnnie's traveling is pretty hectic and frenetic, but I don't have an update on his whereabouts, so I'll get that for you.

QUESTION: Do you have the breakdown of the aid that you suspended to Mali?

MR. TONER: I do. How did you know that? I have a --

QUESTION: Because I haven't been asking about it for the last few briefs, so no one gave me a heads-up.

MR. TONER: You have been, yeah. I do. Let me make sure I have it in my book. I raced down here to – because I realized I was late. So I'm not sure I have it in my book. But we do have a figure for you. I'll get it for you afterwards.

QUESTION: All right. I'm very suspicious.

MR. TONER: I know. I'm so sorry.

QUESTION: Oh, I forgot it?

MR. TONER: I'm sure I put it in here somewhere. Hold on.

QUESTION: It's been ten days. I have it. Dog eat it?

MR. TONER: Hold on. Hold on. (Laughter.) Sorry. My dog ate my – exactly, my guidance. Sorry. If I find it, I will deliver it forthwith. Or I'm going to have my roadie hand it to --

QUESTION: To the rescue.

MR. TONER: But we don't have the – yes, we do. Yes. Okay. So we've determined – thank you – that a minimum of approximately 12.5 million of USAID assistance will be suspended, and we're continuing to assess the remainder. But we can, at this point, say that a minimum of 12.5 million will be actually suspended.

QUESTION: That's out of the total 140 something?

MR. TONER: Yes. And that's comprising 13 programs. That's correct.

QUESTION: But that --

QUESTION: What were those programs for?

MR. TONER: These activities include building the ministry of health's capacity to implement health programs, including activities in maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, and malaria, construction of public schools, supporting the government's efforts to increase agricultural production and building government capacity to spur commercial investment. So as you can see, these are worthwhile programs that are now suspended

because that aid is – goes directly to the Government of Mali. So there's a price to this. I mean, clearly there's a price, but (inaudible) have a price.

QUESTION: I thought that humanitarian aid was exempted.

MR. TONER: We did, but --

QUESTION: And therefore, I don't understand why health programs, building schools, and HIV/AIDS programs, all (inaudible) humanitarian --

MR. TONER: We do exempt humanitarian assistance, but I think we've been saying that we – any assistance that goes to the Government of Mali would be suspended. And that's what this hold-up was. We had to kind of look at these pots of money. So the rest of the assistance will continue but anything that was directly going into the government programs and ministries has to be suspended.

QUESTION: And that – just to confirm, that's on top of the FMF – this is how much you're going --

MR. TONER: That's on top of the – sorry, let me find that for you – the FMF and the IMET programs, which is about 600,000.

QUESTION: So total then we're looking at what – 13 – a little over 13 million.

MR. TONER: That's very good math.

QUESTION: (Sneezes.)

QUESTION: And the MCC --

MR. TONER: Sorry. God bless you.

QUESTION: The MCC grants are completely separate?

MR. TONER: I believe so, but I'll find out.

QUESTION: And Mark --

MR. TONER: Yeah.

QUESTION: Do you have a more – when Toria first began discussing this she said that it was approximately 135 to 140 million was the global figure of U.S. aid to Mali. Do you have an exact number for that?

MR. TONER: I don't. I'll have to double check on that. I don't have anything further. I'll take the question.

Yeah. Go ahead, Samir.

QUESTION: New topic?

MR. TONER: Sure.

QUESTION: Can you give us a readout about the Secretary's meeting with Mr. Barzani, the Iraqi Kurdish leader?

MR. TONER: Well, he was here – hold on one second – obviously in the building earlier today. He did meet with deputy secretary, and that meeting was earlier this morning. And as you note, the Secretary did drop by and greet President Barzani, welcomed him to Washington, and they discussed, obviously, all the issues in the context of the U.S.-Iraq relationship.

QUESTION: New topic?

MR. TONER: Yeah.

QUESTION: Syria?

MR. TONER: Syria.

QUESTION: It looks like the Syrian forces has started withdrawal from quiet city and town, as has been reported. Do you take that as a good beginning or --

MR. TONER: Well, I know you're speaking to some of the press reports, according to Syrian Government officials --

QUESTION: (inaudible) report.

MR. TONER: I have not seen any independent reporting of any withdrawal, and in fact, what we've seen, frankly, is an intensification of artillery bombardments in major population centers like Homs and Idlib. So we've yet to be convinced that they're -- have any intention of complying with the April 10 deadline.

Yeah. Go ahead. Yeah, Scott

QUESTION: The new arrests in Cuba after the Pope's visit, some people protesting previous arrests. Any comment on that?

MR. TONER: Correct. And I believe some of these arrests and detentions and harassment predated or were in the run-up to the Pope's visit. No, we're obviously extremely concerned about the detentions and harassment of scores of civil society activists during the last two weeks, predating the Pope's arrival in Cuba.

We understand that the wave of detentions that began prior to Pope Benedict's visit continues with the arrests of dozens of human rights activists and defenders in eastern Cuba in the last couple of days, which is what you just cited. We're concerned by the Cuban Government's attempts to silence reporting on these detentions. Apparently there's been selective shutdowns of human rights activists, cellular and internet connections.

We call upon the Cuban Government to release all peaceful society -- civil society activists immediately, and we particularly condemn the fact that most of these arrests took place during the Pope's visit and with the aim of preventing those arrested from attending the public masses that the Pope officiated.

QUESTION: And if I might, Cuba related --

MR. TONER: Yes.

QUESTION: The president of Ecuador says he's not going to the Summit of the Americas because Cuba is not invited. Any reaction?

MR. TONER: Well, look -- and I think Mike Hammer, assistant secretary, spoke to this a couple weeks ago. Of course, he did it in Spanish. But obviously, he was -- he said we would like to see widespread participation by the countries of the hemisphere. We believe the summit offers an opportunity for the leaders to discuss issues that concern all of the citizens of the hemisphere, but ultimately it's each country's own decision to decide whether to participate.

QUESTION: So you don't care?

MR. TONER: It's their own decision. We want to see --

QUESTION: It doesn't matter to you one way or another if he shows up?

MR. TONER: I think we just said we want to see as broad a participation as possible.

QUESTION: Yeah. But if --

MR. TONER: But --

QUESTION: Right. But if he decides he doesn't want to come, then it's not -- no skin off your nose?

MR. TONER: It's their decision. Correct.

QUESTION: No skin off your nose?

MR. TONER: It's their decision.

QUESTION: You don't care?

MR. TONER: No skin off our --

QUESTION: Yeah.

MR. TONER: You're putting words in my mouth. I simply said --

QUESTION: You said it just then.

MR. TONER: I said we want to see broad participation, but we can't make the decisions for other --

QUESTION: You're saying you don't think that the president of Ecuador is that important that you don't -- he doesn't need to show up to --

MR. TONER: That is not what I said.

QUESTION: Not what you said? All right.

MR. TONER: That is not what I said. Anyway, any other --

QUESTION: Just quickly --

MR. TONER: Yeah. Sure.

QUESTION: Do you have anything to say about the bombing today in Somalia?

MR. TONER: Oh, I do. Yeah.

QUESTION: The killing of the --

MR. TONER: No. Thank you for bringing that up, actually. I hope I have something to say about the bombing. I mean, obviously we condemn --

QUESTION: It's near the Mali --

MR. TONER: It's -- no. Thanks, Brad, for your help. Appreciate it. No, thank you.

In answer to your question, we're appalled by the vicious attack earlier today as well as the loss of life. We remain firm in our support for the efforts of the TFG, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and the Somali National Security Forces to return peace and stability to Somalia. And we stand with the people of Somalia as they are trying to build a normal and functioning society. And I think some of you probably have looked at some of the press stories about -- that civil society returning to Somalia, and Somalis everywhere had taken pride in the recent reopening of the National Theater as a sign that this normal life was returning to Mogadishu. It was a sign -- the theater's reopening is a result of progress made by the TFG and sacrifices made by AMISOM to bring peace and stability back to Mogadishu since al-Shabaab retreated there -- from there in August 2011.

So the fact that al-Shabaab chose this shows their true -- chose this site for their attack shows their true stripes. They also used young women as suicide bombers. In other places, they impress children to fight their battles. And the four people killed today include a Somali Olympic official, many more injured, including a deputy prime minister and minister of planning as well as a former deputy speaker of parliament. So this is a terrible tragedy for the people of Somalia.

Are we done?

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. TONER: Thank you.

(The briefing was concluded at 1:37 p.m.)

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(end transcript)

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State Department Daily Press Briefing

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(begin transcript)

U.S. Department of State

On-Camera Daily Press Briefing Index

Tuesday, April 03, 2012

12:31 p.m. EDT

Briefer: Victoria Nuland, Spokesperson

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

TUESDAY, APRIL 3, 2012

(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

12:31 p.m. EDT

MS. NULAND: All right. Happy Tuesday, everyone. I have a brief statement on Mali at the top, and then we'll go to what's on your minds. And we will also be putting this statement out right after the briefing.

The United States remains deeply concerned about the ongoing political crisis in Mali. Mali's territorial integrity is at stake, and its political institutions will be further weakened if Captain Amadou Sanogo and his supporters do not release their illegitimate grip on Mali and its people immediately. We commend the ongoing leadership of the ECOWAS group to restore full civilian and constitutional rule, and we echo ECOWAS's call – that's hard, echo ECOWAS's call – on Captain Sanogo and his supporters to return to power – return power to the civilian leadership, consistent with Mali's constitution.

At the same time, the United States urgently calls on all armed rebels in the north of Mali to cease military operations that compromise the Republic of Mali's territorial integrity, and we exhort all parties in the north to ensure the safety and security of Mali's northern populations. As civilian leadership is restored in Mali, we also urge all armed rebels to engage in dialogue with the civilian leaders in Bamako to find a nonviolent path forward for national elections and peaceful coexistence.

Let's go to what's on your minds.

QUESTION: Well, just on that, before, when this was a – before the coup, weren't you fully supportive of the fight against the Tuaregs? And now you're saying they should talk to the – they should talk to whoever's in control?

MS. NULAND: Well, the concern has been that as the security forces of Mali have split, some of them joining the junta leaders, some of them still supporting the elected government, they have stopped fighting the Tuaregs in the north. We've seen the result of that, that the Tuaregs have made a march not only on Gao but on Timbuktu, that the situation has become considerably worse. We have always said that the government in Mali needed not only to be fighting, but also to be providing an opportunity to address legitimate political grievances in the north.

So our call now is obviously not only for the civilian government to be restored, but for the Tuaregs to cease their violence, and once we get back to a civilian government, for that government and those with grievances in the north to engage in dialogue rather than to be trying to settle these issues by violence.

QUESTION: Did you ever figure out how much aid you suspended?

MS. NULAND: I have to say to you, Matt, that we are continuing to work through these programs one by one. It is relatively complicated because we want to continue the humanitarian aid while we cut off anything that provides support to the government. So we're still continuing to work through that, but we are also looking at other ways we can bring pressure to bear on Captain Sanogo.

QUESTION: Well, okay. Like what?

MS. NULAND: We will have more to say about that in coming days.

QUESTION: The French, for instance, are saying that they think it's time for the UN Security Council to get involved. Is that something the United States supports?

MS. NULAND: My understanding is that the Security Council is discussing Mali today, and in fact there may well be a presidency statement, whether it's today or in coming days, and we would strongly support that.

QUESTION: Syria?

QUESTION: No. Wait a sec. Just – you said relatively complicated? I mean, okay, relatively complicated I can understand – one day, two day, three days, four days, maybe even five days. But it's now been 10, at least. It's that complicated? That would seem to be more than relatively complicated. That would seem to be a, I don't know, a problem of such immense proportion that the entire building, or whoever's in charge of it, is unable to come up with this in 10, 12 days.

MS. NULAND: Well, my understanding is that the agencies that manage these programs were given about a week to report exactly what they're doing, what the programs, one by one, fund. So for about a week of this, we were waiting for accurate information to come in to Washington. Now we're going through the policy and the legal review, and we also have to notify the Congress. So I'm frustrated, I know you're frustrated, but that's what's happening.

Okay.

QUESTION: Just following up on that, ECOWAS, one of the things they've talked about is an embargo, an embargo on Mali in the wake of the coup. Is that something the United States supports, and is there anything the United States can do to make that a reality?

MS. NULAND: Well, my understanding is that ECOWAS, as you know, they had threatened sanctions about a week ago, that today they actually did impose their sanctions, including closing borders, suspending flights, those kinds of things. We very much support their efforts, as well, to pressure Captian Sanogo to relinquish power.

QUESTION: The AU also today imposed travel bans and various other sanctions --

MS. NULAND: Yes.

QUESTION: -- on Sanogo and others. Is that something the United States supports and will follow, or --

MS. NULAND: Those are the kinds of things that we're looking at.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: What would a presidential statement at this point do or achieve, from the Security Council?

MS. NULAND: Well, I think we have to see the text, but usually a presidency statement is the first step in the council expressing its concern. Let's see what the text says, but obviously, thereafter one can do more of a punitive nature.

Please.

QUESTION: Syria?

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: Yes. Today, the Foreign Minister Walid Muallem issued a statement that they are cooperating with the International Committee of the Red Cross and facilitating their access to all the areas that need to be accessed, and they are cooperating with them. Do you know anything about that?

MS. NULAND: Well, our understanding is that, throughout this crisis, the ICRC has had some limited access. You know that we had given an initial \$10 million in humanitarian aid. We decided to increase our aid on the humanitarian side -- we're up to some 25 million -- because we were seeing some of that aid flowing to the Syrian people in need. Our concern had been that the humanitarian organizations had not been getting to the areas in greatest need, particularly when they're under assault. I would refer you to the ICRC for their view of how they are doing, but our understanding is their access is far from complete.

More importantly, however, as you know, the assertion to Kofi Annan was that Assad would start implementing his commitments immediately to withdraw from cities. I want to advise that we

have seen no evidence today that he is implementing any of those commitments.

QUESTION: Although they did make a statement that they are, in fact, withdrawing from the cities. They're taking their mechanized units from certain areas in Homs and Idlib and many other areas. You have no way of verifying that?

MS. NULAND: In fact, our information is the opposite -- that nothing has changed.

QUESTION: So there has been more deployment into these areas, these crowded areas where the demonstrations are taking place?

MS. NULAND: I can't speak to whether there has been increased deployment, but certainly, through our own means, we have been able to verify no withdrawal of mechanized units, which is what he's claiming credit for today.

QUESTION: So you don't have confidence that the Syrian Government will fulfill its commitment to pull out by April 10th?

MS. NULAND: Well, as we've said consistently, including again tomorrow at the Security -- yesterday at the Security Council, we're going to judge this by -- this guy by his actions, not by his words.

QUESTION: One thing that came out yesterday in the discussion, the -- Kofi Annan's report to the Security Council was the Russian position, and Foreign Minister Lavrov has told Interfax that they now explicitly back the demand on Assad to take the first step in withdrawing his troops. Do you read that as a change in their position? And do you think that's an important sign, as the international community tries to sort of get a coherent view on this?

MS. NULAND: Well, I'll let the Russians speak for themselves as to whether their position has changed in the last 24 hours. I think you do know that we have been feeling convergence on the Security Council for some two weeks now. Certainly that was highlighted by the presidency statement that endorsed the Kofi Annan six-point plan. And everybody was together yesterday in agreeing that there needed to be this timeline, and that we were waiting for the regime to demonstrate its good faith.

Please.

QUESTION: But the plans to send 250 monitors after the -- April 10th is still on. Are you -- when are you going to decide to send this mission?

MS. NULAND: Well, I think as Ambassador Rice said yesterday in New York at her press

event, the DPKO, the peacekeeping arm of the UN, is preparing to be able to send monitors in the event that Assad keeps his word and we are able to get a ceasefire so that they could move immediately in and provide eyes and witness, et cetera, and give comfort to the people of Syria. So that -- we're at the preparatory

stage with DPKO, but obviously they can't deploy unless we have movement on the ending of the violence.

QUESTION: Could – just to follow up on your monitoring of the situation in Syria?

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: With the embassy not there, with people like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch have no presence in Syria, and all the diplomatic missions have really lowered their presence almost to nil, nothing, how do you keep on top of the situation? How do you stay – let's say – how do you get verifiable information on what's going on?

MS. NULAND: Well, as you know, we maintain broad contacts with folks inside Syria. Robert Ford, Fred Hof, speak to people in Syria every single day in different parts of the country. In addition, we work with our allies and partners who live in the same neighborhood and have their own contacts. And then, as you know, we have other means for evaluating things like troops movements.

QUESTION: What's the title of Mr. Hof?

MS. NULAND: He's special advisor to the Secretary for Syria. I'll get the precise title, Samir. Yeah.

QUESTION: Can we go to a different topic?

MS. NULAND: Yeah. Please.

QUESTION: Burma, Myanmar.

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: Following up on your response to Andy's question yesterday, is there a timeline for the United States to decide any further steps? Is the United States waiting, for example, for Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD supporters to actually enter parliament? Is there any timeline for when the U.S. could take further steps?

MS. NULAND: Well, first of all, as we said yesterday, we congratulate all who participated, and it does appear to be a big victory for the NLD in these elections. The – we have the preliminary results, and our statements were based on that. Our understanding is that over the next few days, those results will be confirmed in final. As we've said, we are prepared to match positive steps of reform in Burma with steps of our own. We are now looking at what might come next on the U.S. side. I don't have anything to announce, but I would look for more movement from us on this in the coming weeks.

QUESTION: And is there something specific you're waiting for, or is it just an internal process to --

MS. NULAND: No. We're doing some internal work. We're also consulting with partners in ASEAN, partners in the EU who may be making similar steps to coordinate them.

QUESTION: Change of topic?

QUESTION: A follow-up?

MS. NULAND: Still on Burma? Anybody? No?

QUESTION: Yeah. Let me just follow up.

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: Thank you. Madam, this ruling party backed by the military government was shocked and surprised about the size of victory that Aung San Suu Kyi had in her party. Now, the situation is this time as it was in 1990, but her election in 1990 was annulled by the military government. Now, will – is she going to get some kind of place there so it will not be the situation of 1990? That's what many Burmese are asking there and here.

MS. NULAND: Well, our expectation is that the government will honor the results as they are certified. As you know, the initial reporting is that she won her own seat, so she'll be able to join the party. And then she has 42 other members of her party who appear to have won their seats. So our expectation is that these results will be honored and that the parliament will now reflect the results of these elections.

QUESTION: Is U.S. going to back or ask the ruling military party and government that they should have now – a kind of a free and fair general election, national election, so now she can have a place in – like as a prime minister or so?

MS. NULAND: Well, as the Secretary said – I think was on Sunday when we were in Istanbul – it's now going to be critical for Burmese authorities to continue to work on reform of the electoral system so that it fully meets international standards, including transparency, and it expeditiously looks into any irregularities. But we are obviously hoping for a continuing evolution of the Burmese political system heading towards the next scheduled elections, which I think are 2015, right?

QUESTION: And finally, a quick one. Have you spoken – or any action or reaction from India or China? Because they both were supporting the previous government in Burma.

MS. NULAND: Well, I think you know Under Secretary Sherman is in India today. I don't have a full report, but I'm expecting that she's obviously talking to Indian authorities about Burma, among other subjects.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Was there a – Palestinian issue --

MS. NULAND: Yeah. Ros.

QUESTION: Lashkar e-Tayyiba. The U.S. has put out a \$10 million reward for the arrest and prosecution of Hafiz Saeed, who is the head of the affiliated charitable organization. He's suspected of being the mastermind behind the Mumbai killings. Why now? That happened more than three years ago, and his organization, as well as Lashkar e-Tayyiba, have already been on this – the U.S.'s terrorist list.

MS. NULAND: Well, this effort to arrange a Rewards for Justice bounty, if you will, for Hafiz Mohammad Saeed and also for Abdul Rahman Makki has been in the works for quite a number of months. These things are somewhat complicated to work through all of the details. So the announcements were only able to be posted when the process was complete. But there was – we've been working on this for some time.

QUESTION: More than a few months? More, less than a year? Can you characterize?

MS. NULAND: I think less than a year but more than three or four months.

QUESTION: Can you explain exactly what it is about – what's so complicated about offering money for some of – what – printing the posters? What is it that's so complicated?

MS. NULAND: Well, there is a review process to determine, in the first instance, whether offering a bounty of this kind – in this case, it's \$10 million for Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, it's \$2 million for Abdul Rahman Makki – is likely to lead to any results in the case. So there has to be an intelligence evaluation, there has to be a policy evaluation, there has to be a discussion with Congress. This is a lot of money for the U.S. taxpayer to put up. And so that process takes some time. Things have to be correlated. There is an entire review process. There's an interagency rewards committee that has to look through this. And then the Secretary has to approve it.

QUESTION: Right. But if it's only started a couple months ago – Mumbai was quite a – when did the process begin?

MS. NULAND: I can't speak to whether, right after the bombing, we looked at this at that time. But I think sometimes what happens is intelligence and other information comes later with regards to whereabouts of individuals, which leads one to think that offering a reward might cause citizens who know where they are to come forward. And sometimes that isn't evident right at the time of the crimes. So sometimes it comes up later. As you may know, one of these individuals has been appearing on television and has been quite brazen. So I think the sense has been over the last few months that this kind of a reward might hasten the judicial process, if you will.

QUESTION: So you're saying --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) you know his television appearances, he did speak to Al Jazeera today about this bounty being placed on him. And he suggested that this is being done because he has been putting pressure on the government in Islamabad to not reopen the southern transport routes for supplies to NATO ISAF forces. Is there anything to that, or is this specifically because of his suspected involvement in the Mumbai attacks?

MS. NULAND: No, it has everything to do with Mumbai and his brazen flouting of the justice system.

QUESTION: Just to --

QUESTION: As he lives more or less openly in Pakistan, has there been communication with the Pakistani Government, the Pakistani authorities, seeking for his arrest?

MS. NULAND: Absolutely. We have been in communication with Pakistan on this issue.

QUESTION: And he is wanted --

QUESTION: Have they acceded to his placement on this list? Because there's been some analysis suggesting that doing so could put even more strain on the U.S.-Pakistani relationship. And to follow up on that, is that something that Deputy Secretary Nides would be dealing with in his meetings in Islamabad on Wednesday?

MS. NULAND: Well, on the latter question, the full range of issues related to international terrorism, terrorist threats in Pakistan internationally, is obviously one of the subjects that Deputy Secretary Nides will be talking about. We have continued to impress on the Government of Pakistan that we believe it has a special responsibility to fully investigate and bring those to – those responsible to justice, to the extent that it can. The Government of Pakistan has regularly, in our conversations with them, pledged its cooperation in the investigations. We fully expect that it will follow through on those commitments. I would guess that this case probably will come up.

QUESTION: Is this reward has been – in the consultation of the Indian Government?

MS. NULAND: My understanding is that the primary work that is done before we offer these rewards is internal, that we do advise affected governments that we intend to do this, but it's not a consultative process, per se.

QUESTION: Thank you, ma'am. Can we change topics?

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: No. It's – the reward is for information that leads to the conviction of – conviction where?

MS. NULAND: Wherever he can be found. It's not specific in the way that it goes --

QUESTION: You're trying to charge – has he been charged with the murder of the six Americans in Mumbai?

MS. NULAND: I don't have any back --

QUESTION: I guess I'm just trying to find out, why is it for the United States to offer a reward for this guy? Is that the reason?

MS. NULAND: Well, it's because we want to see him brought to justice. I believe that he has been charged, but I don't have the – I'll get you some more on that.

QUESTION: But do you – I mean, you want him brought to justice here? In India? In Pakistan? Where is it that – I mean,

what – if I gave you information that he was on such street corner and he gets picked up and arrested, how do I –

MS. NULAND: My understanding --

QUESTION: -- where does he have to be convicted so I can get the money?

MS. NULAND: Okay. Let us get you some more information. But my understanding of this – and I may have it wrong – is that he's actually been charged in India --

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. NULAND: -- in connection with this case, that he has been at large --

QUESTION: Right.

MS. NULAND: -- and has not been able to be either arrested --

QUESTION: Right.

MS. NULAND: -- or brought to trial.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. NULAND: So the precise formulation in the Rewards for Justice announcement is \$10 million for information leading to the arrest or the conviction of either – of this individual, \$2 million for the other individual.

QUESTION: How much are the Indians offering for this?

MS. NULAND: I don't know the answer to that.

QUESTION: Are they offering anything, do you know?

MS. NULAND: I do not.

QUESTION: I'm just curious as to why it's the U.S. job to offer a reward for this guy when --

MS. NULAND: Well, we have Americans killed and it's only cooperate --

QUESTION: I understand. Six Americans were killed.

MS. NULAND: Correct.

QUESTION: But you also have Americans killed in other places where you're not offering any rewards or --

MS. NULAND: Well this program, as you know, we have --

QUESTION: Well, it seems to be that the vast amount of damage that this guy and his group has done is to India, and I'm not aware that they're offering any rewards. So I want to know why the U.S. taxpayer is offering a reward. That's --

MS. NULAND: Well, I can't speak to whether India has its own Rewards for Justice-type program. I'm going to refer you to the Indians with regard to that. This is a program that we've had for a long --

QUESTION: I understand that, but --

MS. NULAND: Can I finish my point? We've had for a long time, when we are concerned that people who have killed Americans overseas are not being able to be brought to justice. So again, this is a case that's been going on for a long time. This is with regard to justice being served on people who have killed Americans --

QUESTION: Right. Can you --

MS. NULAND: -- so that there is no impunity for them anywhere in the world.

QUESTION: Can we – can you find out, though, where it is that this guy has to be convicted for the reward to be --

MS. NULAND: We will get you a little bit more information on that, Matt.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. NULAND: Okay.

QUESTION: One more about the overall program?

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: It's been noted that upwards of \$100 million have been paid. Is there a breakdown by amounts, since I understand that there's no revelation of the people who get the rewards? Is there a breakdown per case, how much was paid out, and when they were paid out?

MS. NULAND: I'm going to take that, Ros. As you know, to protect those who come forward, we don't generally advertise these things. How much – whether we do an accounting of how much has been authorized under the program and for what cases, I'm not sure. So let me take it.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. NULAND: Okay?

Said.

QUESTION: Can we go to the Palestinian issue?

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: Yesterday, there was a meeting between Deputy Secretary Burns and a member of the PLO Executive Committee Hanan Ashrawi. Could you tell us what has transpired as a result of the meeting?

MS. NULAND: I'm going to take that one too, Said. I don't have a debrief on that.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. NULAND: Okay. Please.

QUESTION: Egypt?

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: Members of the Freedom and Justice Party, which is the political arm of the Muslim Brothers, and one of them is a member of the parliament, are in town. It's the first level – this level visit to Washington that will meet different people. Is there any meeting going on – to take place in this building or not?

MS. NULAND: I don't know whether we're meeting this delegation at any level in this building. Let me take that one as well. We'll get back to you.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. NULAND: Please, Scott.

QUESTION: Can you speak today on the release of the hostages in Colombia? And what the United States hopes happens next between the government and FARC?

MS. NULAND: Yes. And thank you for your patience yesterday. As you know, the operation was ongoing and we wanted to be careful vis-a-vis the Colombians and the Brazilians, to let them complete the operation.

So the United States is pleased that these Colombian officials, some of whom were unjustly held for up to 14 years by the FARC, are now free and that they've been reunited with their families. We commend the ICRC, the Government of Brazil, for the positive roles that they played in this release.

As you know, President Santos of Colombia has welcomed this release and has, in addition, again called for the FARC to renounce all violence and lawlessness and to release all remaining hostages as essential conditions to move forward with a durable peace. I think he used the term that this was positive but insufficient, and we certainly want to see further progress in this regard as well.

QUESTION: Do you believe that the FARC continues to have support from other governments in that region?

MS. NULAND: Well, you know that we've had historic concerns about this. I don't think that those concerns have changed.

Anything else? Please.

QUESTION: On Pakistan?

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: Two questions, quick. One, are you worried about ongoing violence, especially in Karachi? And second, Pakistan is now deporting three wives of Usama bin Ladin, two to Saudi Arabia, one to Yemen. If – you had access to them because they had vital information about Usama bin Ladin's activities?

MS. NULAND: Well, I'm not going to speak to our intelligence relationship with Pakistan. I think it's now an internal matter between Pakistan and those governments about the disposition of the wives.

Elise.

QUESTION: And violence – ongoing violence in Karachi?

MS. NULAND: I don't have anything in particular on that. If we have anything to say, we'll let you know.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. NULAND: Elise.

QUESTION: There have been reports that North Korea is – in addition to the launch that you're expecting, is also preparing even bigger, long-range missile tests, and there have been some reports that U.S. officials are quoted that it could be even more concerning than originally thought. Do you have anything on this?

MS. NULAND: I don't have anything new on that. Any kind of missile launch of any kind is of great concern and would be a violation, in our view, of UN Security Council resolutions.

QUESTION: Iraq?

QUESTION: On the --

MS. NULAND: Yeah, Iraq.

QUESTION: On Iraq?

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: Yes. Massoud Barzani, the president of the northern region of Kurdistan, is in town. I asked Mark last week – he is to meet with Deputy Secretary Burns, I guess. Why is he not meeting with the Secretary of State?

MS. NULAND: Well, he's being hosted, as you know, by the Vice President, so his senior interlocutor will be the Vice President, and then in this building, he'll have a chance to talk with Deputy Secretary Burns.

Please.

QUESTION: Quick one on Iran, the Secretary in her comments at VMI today again references the expectation that there'll be these talks next month. Do you have any clarity yet on this?

QUESTION: This month.

QUESTION: This month, sorry.

MS. NULAND: This month, it's April, right?

QUESTION: Yes, we're --

MS. NULAND: We're -- life is ticking by.

QUESTION: I'm just wondering if that's actually been nailed down, when and where.

MS. NULAND: I think we are still where we were yesterday -- that we have made a proposal, we think it's an appropriate proposal, and we are awaiting Iranian confirmation.

QUESTION: On Russia?

MS. NULAND: Yes.

QUESTION: There was a new statement from a senior Russian official criticizing U.S. funding on democracy. Does the United -- I mean, arguing that it distorts the Russian domestic process -- does the United States have anything new to say to these charges leveled by the Russians?

MS. NULAND: Well, first, I would call your attention to the interview that the Secretary gave to Jill Dougherty of CNN over the weekend. I think we put out the transcript yesterday where she spoke very clearly about our support for Russians' right to work and speak openly about their interest in more freedom, more democracy, more transparency, more openness.

We have, as the Secretary affirmed, proposed to Congress the creation of a new fund to empower Russian civil society, to protect human rights, to enhance a free and diverse information environment to work with NGOs to create the -- increase the dialogue that they have with American NGOs to support the development of political leadership among young people. This would be a \$50 million fund that would be drawn from liquidated assets from the former U.S.-Russia Investment Fund. We're working with Congress on this.

And again, this is designed to support a vibrant civil society in Russia and to allow us to work with those Russian NGOs who want to work with us, to develop their skills and their voice and their ability to represent the aspirations of Russians to increasingly deepen and strengthen their democracy.

QUESTION: Quickly, going back to Iran P-5+1 --

MS. NULAND: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- in your proposal, did you also include Istanbul as a --

MS. NULAND: Yes.

QUESTION: -- venue?

MS. NULAND: Yes, yes.

QUESTION: Did you all take any position on the Palestinian bid for membership in the ICC?

MS. NULAND: With regard to the --

QUESTION: Criminal court -- International Criminal Court.

MS. NULAND: To the criminal court? Well, I think -- we've seen, obviously, the announcement by the prosecutor. This is within his mandate, obviously, to decide, so our focus is obviously, as it has been straight along, just to --

QUESTION: Oh, I know, but you know that countries take positions on things like this.

MS. NULAND: To my knowledge, we did not take any position.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. NULAND: Okay. All right. Thanks, everybody.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. NULAND: I will now be off. Have a great holiday week. Mark will be on the podium tomorrow and Thursday.

QUESTION: Oh, yeah.

MS. NULAND: (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Have a great trip.

(The briefing was concluded at 1:00 p.m.)

(end transcript)

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White House Press Briefing

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(begin transcript)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

April 4, 2012

PRESS BRIEFING

BY PRESS SECRETARY JAY CARNEY

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

1:58 P.M. EDT

MR. CARNEY: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for your patience. Anyone go out and see the geyser earlier?

Q Yes. You know, this would be a good chance for you to tell us what they're building over there. More than a year has gone by.

MR. CARNEY: We're drilling for oil. (Laughter.) It's part of all-of-the-above -- come on. (Laughter.)

Q You can't drill your way out -- (laughter.)

MR. CARNEY: You cannot, but it's part of --

Q I thought you weren't opening up national parks and you weren't opening up federal lands. (Laughter.)

MR. CARNEY: -- part of our all-of-the-above energy approach, which includes --

Q So you're drilling for oil and you hit water, right?

MR. CARNEY: -- expanding domestic oil and gas production, investing in renewables, approving the first nuclear power plant in 30 years, et cetera, et cetera. It was quite a sight. I could see it from my window -- from my office.

Q Is your office sinking?

MR. CARNEY: I don't believe so -- but perhaps.

I have no other announcements to make. (Laughter.) I will turn to the Associated Press. I'd refer you to the GSA. I don't honestly know. It looked like water. (Laughter.)

Q The President referred to Mitt Romney by name yesterday and criticized him. Today Mitt Romney accused the President of having -- running a hide-and-seek campaign and being disingenuous about his true agenda if reelected. Do you have any direct response to that? And more basically, are you running a risk here of some campaign fatigue if these two guys are going at one another by name so directly so many months before the election?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I know you all know because you listened to the speech or were there and watched it yourself -- the President yesterday gave a comprehensive, detailed, dare I say, wonky exposition of his views of what our budget priorities ought to be and his views on why the Republican budget put forward by Chairman Ryan is not the right solution to our problems, why it's wrong for America.

This was a policy speech that, again, had a great deal of detail attached to it, as he explained why the Ryan/Republican budget, if it were enacted into law, would be incredibly harmful to America's seniors, to the middle class, and to the absolute necessity of investing in areas like education, basic research and

infrastructure in order to ensure that America is strong economically in the 21st century.

As he mentioned, and one of the major points of the speech is, this is not a theoretical exercise. Everyone in this room knows that the Ryan/Republican budget would become the law of the land if someone else were to occupy the Oval Office next year and if Republicans continue to effectively control Congress -- because everyone supports this.

It's not the sort of idea, the rump idea -- the idea of a rump faction of the Republican Party. This is what now is mainstream Republican thinking -- which is to, instead of taking a balanced approach to our budget-deficit issues, a balanced approach to getting our fiscal house in order, we should give additional tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans -- virtually the only segment of society that saw their economic lot improve in the first decade of this century -- and to pay for those tax cuts we should end Medicare as we know it, we should reduce by an average of 19 percent our non-defense discretionary budget. That means cut dramatically our investments in education, basic research, innovation and the like. And the President simply believes that's the wrong approach. And this is not a theoretical exercise. This is real policy.

And he went on to talk about a concrete vote the Senate will take in the next few weeks on the so-called Buffett Rule, his principle, named after Warren Buffett, built around the idea that a billionaire should not pay a lower effective tax rate on his income than his secretary. So he certainly encourages the Senate to approve that.

Q So is that your direct response to the charge of a hide-and-seek campaign?

MR. CARNEY: Look, the fact of the matter is, the President was explicitly talking about a policy debate that we have been engaged in here in many ways for years and years, but intensively for the past year. And this was a policy speech, I think pretty explicitly, delivered to an audience of your colleagues -- editors, reporters, publishers.

Q And one other quick one on a different subject. Do you have any response to a federal appeals court judge in Texas, Judge Smith, who criticized the President yesterday for his remarks about the Supreme Court and its power to overturn legislation, and has asked for a letter from the Justice Department affirming the federal courts' ability to do that?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I think as the Attorney General has said, the Department of Justice will be responding to the request for a letter. And I would simply refer you to what the President said and what the Attorney General said, that, of course, the Supreme Court and our federal courts have as their responsibility the right to rule on the constitutionality of laws passed by Congress. The President made clear yesterday in answer to a question that that is what he absolutely believes.

What the President said both yesterday and the day before -- well, what he did was make an unremarkable observation about 80 years of Supreme Court history -- the fact that since the Lochner era of the Court, since the 1930s, the Supreme Court has, without

exception, deferred to Congress when it comes to Congress's authority to pass legislation, to regulate matters of national economic importance such as health care -- 80 years plus. That is an observation and not a particularly remarkable one. It is a statement of fact. And he also expressed his faith that the Supreme Court would keep to that 85-year history of judicial precedent, and uphold the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act.

Yes.

Q On a similar theme, some of the -- the President's remarks about the health care case in the Supreme Court have been interpreted as challenging or putting pressure on the Court ahead of the decision. Can you speak to that, and why not just allow the Court to reach a decision and then --

MR. CARNEY: First of all, the President was asked a question and responded to it. Secondly, as I just said, he made an observation about why he believes that -- well, first of all, that he believes the Affordable Care Act is constitutional, why he believes it's constitutional, and why he believes that the Supreme Court will, in keeping with 80-plus years of judicial precedent and Supreme Court precedent, will defer to Congress on its authority to pass legislation to regulate issues of national economic importance like our health care system.

It's the reverse of intimidation. He's simply making an observation about precedent and the fact that he expects the Court to adhere to that precedent. It's obviously, as he made clear yesterday, up to the Court to make its determination. And we will wait and see what the Court does.

But I guess you could argue that circuit court judges who ruled on this were trying to intimidate or influence the Court when they issued opinions, including very prominent conservative judges on the circuit -- court of appeals, rather -- when they issued an opinion -- opinions that the Affordable Care Act is constitutional and that it is entirely constitutional, in keeping with 80-plus years of judicial precedent.

Q On a different topic -- the Pentagon said today that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four other accused people in the 9/11 attacks will go to the Guantanamo war crimes tribunal. Could you speak to that decision and why more time wasn't given to allow for a civilian court trial?

MR. CARNEY: Well, it has been more than 10 years since 9/11, first of all. And the President is committed to ensuring that those who are accused of perpetrating the 9/11 attacks against the United States be brought to justice. The President remains committed to shutting down Guantanamo Bay. In that commitment, he is of the same opinion as his predecessor, as his opponent in the 2008 presidential election, as the senior leadership of the United States military, and many, many others who believe that Gitmo ought to be closed. There have obviously been obstacles in achieving that, but he remains committed to doing that.

In the meantime, we have to ensure that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and others who are accused of these heinous crimes

are brought to justice. And this procedure is now underway to ensure that that happens.

Q Isn't it contradictory to be committed to closing Guantanamo Bay also proceeding with something --

MR. CARNEY: The fact of the matter is, in part because of the system and the situation that -- the system that was put in place and the situation that existed under the prior administration, we have now -- 11 years almost have passed since 9/11 -- or 10 and a half -- and it is important to see that justice is done.

The President's commitment to closing Guantanamo is as firm as ever. He agrees with our uniformed military leadership. He agrees with John McCain and George W. Bush that it ought to be closed. And we'll work to see that done. Unfortunately, as you know we've had -- we've encountered obstacles in getting that done from Congress. But he will continue to work to do that.

Yes, Jessica.

Q Does the administration view the Fifth Circuit's request as intemperate?

MR. CARNEY: I would refer you to the Justice Department. The Attorney General said that he would -- or that the Department of Justice would respond appropriately.

Q But you just suggested that in some ways it was an effort by them to intimidate.

MR. CARNEY: No, no, I didn't at all. I certainly -- if you interpreted what I said that way, you were mistaken. No, I was referring to a question about the President's remarks. The attorney representing the United States in that court said at the time that the administration, the President, the Attorney General believe obviously that the federal courts have their authority to rule on the constitutionality of laws passed by Congress. The President obviously believes that and said so again yesterday. That was my point. And I'm sure that that's what the response will make clear, that the Department of Justice provides.

Q Yesterday, the President clearly, for the first time in a campaign-themed speech, singled out Mitt Romney. He has said that he will not weigh in until there is a nominee. By doing so does the White House -- does the President feel that he now has his opponent in the general election?

MR. CARNEY: I will go back to my first answer simply to make the point that the President gave a very detailed, fact-laden speech about budget policy yesterday. He made clear his opposition to the recently released, new-but-not-improved Ryan/ Republican budget, and what his budget priorities are.

It is also true -- and this is part of the overall issue here -- that this budget is supported not just by a small group of ideologues within the House of Representatives but broadly by the Republicans in Congress and by virtually all of the contenders for president in the Republican Party. So this is a matter of -- this is a real debate, because the outcomes at the policy level are quite serious. It's not a theoretical debate. That's the point he was making.

You can be sure that he won't choose as a venue to launch -- to give a campaign speech, especially his first campaign speech or official campaign speech, an audience of editors, reporters, and publishers who are professionally obligated to sit on their hands.

Q Okay. It sounded pretty campaign-themed to me.

MR. CARNEY: Again, I want to just take issue with how talking about the budget and how talking about it in terms that -- I mean, there are themes in that speech and specifics in that speech that are directly pulled from speeches he's been giving for the past three years.

Q Okay. In any case, one last question. On February 8th, you were talking about the STOCK Act and said that you were shocked to learn that elements of it has been pulled and watered down by Eric Cantor from the House -- House Republican Eric Cantor.

MR. CARNEY: This was the Grassley amendment?

Q Yes.

MR. CARNEY: Yes.

Q Is the White House satisfied with the act as passed?

MR. CARNEY: Well, the President signed it into law --

Q Correct. But is this --

MR. CARNEY: -- not too long ago.

Q Why is the White House now pleased with this bill when you weren't pleased --

MR. CARNEY: Well, it was improved by the Senate amendments that passed that gave greater protections to investors. And we will monitor the implementation of this law very closely to make sure that it is implemented in a way that's effective. But, yes, the President supports it. The overall STOCK Act represents some of the very key elements from the President's American Jobs Act speech back in September of 2011.

Q Would the White House prefer that there -- it includes disclosure for financial advisors who --

MR. CARNEY: Well, there's no question that we would -- if we were issuing an executive order there would be some things that might be different or improvements. But we definitely support the act, the bill. The President signed it into law. It represents some initiatives that he was the first to put forward as President, last fall. So absolutely, he supports it.

Yes.

Q As part of Mitt Romney's response today to the President's comments yesterday, he said what the President was trying to do in his remarks was to deflect criticism from the fact that the debt has increased more under President Obama than all the previous

Presidents combined. Is that incorrect, that statement about the size of the debt?

MR. CARNEY: I'd have to look at his numbers. The fact is, as you know well, Norah, that a huge portion of the debt that the United States of America now carries on its books is attributable to the fact that -- certainly the deficits that we've seen is attributable to the fact that in the previous administration, two massive tax cuts, two wars, and an unpaid-for Medicare -- expansion of Medicare through the prescription drug benefit went on the books without, again, being paid for. We can get you the specific numbers, but it is a massive contribution to our federal deficit and our debt.

Another contributor to that was the fact that when the President took office, President Obama, we were in the midst of the worst financial and economic crisis in our lifetimes here, most of us I think, since the 1930s. And that required a response in order to prevent a great recession from becoming a Great Depression.

The response that the President took was effective in preventing a depression -- the response the President and Congress took. And we have been, and are now, recovering from the worst financial crisis in 70-plus years.

The fact of the matter is, the President has embraced and has put forward a balanced approach to dealing with our deficits and our long-term debt. A balanced approach has been endorsed by every bipartisan commission that has looked at this -- Democrats and Republicans. It has been supported by and endorsed by Democratic legislators in the Senate and the House. As of yet, it has not received support in any significant way or at any significant level by Republicans. This is the problem with the Republican budget the President talked about yesterday.

We don't need to cut education and basic research and innovation and transportation by an average of 19 percent, in addition to the \$1.2 trillion in cuts the President has already signed into law, bringing our non-defense discretionary spending to its lowest level since Dwight Eisenhower was President.

The Ryan budget, the Republican budget would go further than that by another 19 percent. Why? Not to reduce the deficit, but to give more tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires. That's a losing argument and it's the wrong prescription for America's economy.

Q Given the President's detailed description about what's wrong with the Republican and the Ryan budget that's been endorsed by Mitt Romney, why then doesn't the President want to offer people a different choice? Why doesn't he have his own party put forward a budget in Congress?

MR. CARNEY: Norah, you know that the President has put forward a budget. You know that --

Q I said Democrats --

MR. CARNEY: Well, I had this discussion yesterday in an interview that I did. What everyone knows is that in a situation where Washington is divided, the only way to get to a budget agreement that represents a compromise that can be passed into

law and signed by the President is if it enjoys bipartisan support. Passing a bill with only Republican support in the House --

Q -- 51 votes.

MR. CARNEY: No, I know. And passing a bill in the House that garners only Republican support and passing a bill in the Senate that garners only Democratic support does not achieve that and does not bring you any closer to a resolution.

What you need -- I can see Ed getting all worked up over here -- but what you need is a balanced approach that has been supported by bipartisan commissions, that is -- I mean, again, there's a lot of talk about the Simpson-Bowles commission, which, as the President noted yesterday, he created, and had to create through his executive authority because Republicans --

Q Has he endorsed it? Has he endorsed the Simpson-Bowles --

MR. CARNEY: The President endorses the approach that the Simpson-Bowles commission took. And in fact, his budget proposal is different from the Simpson-Bowles approach. How? It doesn't raise as much revenue, which you would think would appeal to Republicans, and it doesn't cut defense spending by as much, which you would think would appeal to Republicans. And yet, the three House Republican members on the Simpson-Bowles commission voted no, including Representative Ryan.

So what does that tell you about how they view the need for a balanced approach? Throughout this debate in the past year you have seen Democrats, led by the President, do really hard things. Democrats aren't supposed to like cuts in discretionary spending, basically domestic programs. And yet, this President has signed into law the deepest discretionary spending cuts in recent memory that have brought our discretionary spending levels to their lowest level since Dwight Eisenhower was President.

Democrats generally do not like and do not support cuts in entitlement programs, and yet this President put forward difficult reforms in entitlement programs because he believes that you have to have a balanced approach, you have to include entitlement reform in any effort to reduce our deficit and bring down our -- reduce our debt. And the President also believes you have to include revenue, as does the vast majority of the American people.

So who hasn't moved here? Where is the Republican proposal that includes revenue as an element of a balanced approach? It's certainly not the Republican budget.

Q I'll let Ed follow on that in a minute. (Laughter.) But on the Supreme Court -- just one more question on the Supreme Court and the President's comments Monday. Does he regret using the word "unprecedented"?

MR. CARNEY: Not at all, because, as I've said a couple of times now, the President was referring to making the unremarkable observation about 80 years of Supreme Court history. Since the Lochner era --

Q -- made it clarified.

MR. CARNEY: Well, only because a handful of people didn't seem to understand what he was referring to. Of course, he was referring to the fact that it would be unprecedented in the modern era of the Supreme Court, since the New Deal era, for the Supreme Court to overturn legislation passed by Congress designed to regulate and deal with a national economic -- a matter of national economic importance like our health care system.

That is a fact. Since the Lochner era, which ended when the Court began to defer to Congress on New Deal legislation, the Supreme Court has not done that, has not broken the precedent set there. And that's a number of years now. That's what would be unprecedented about it.

He did not suggest -- did not mean and did not suggest that the Court -- it would be unprecedented for the Court to rule that a law was unconstitutional. That's what the Supreme Court is there to do. But it has, under the Commerce Clause, deferred to Congress's authority in matters of national economic importance.

Q But on that point, Republicans --

MR. CARNEY: Ed. (Laughter.)

Q Thank you, Jay. At the risk of being intemperate, I just wanted to ask --

MR. CARNEY: Never.

Q Eighty years of precedent you keep talking about, but Republicans are pointing to I think it's 159 different times in the history of America where the Supreme Court has decided that something is not unconstitutional [sic] -- obviously, not all of those times involving the Commerce Clause, which is the --

MR. CARNEY: None of them in the last 85 years -- and that's what the President was talking about.

Q But there's 159 times where the Court has said it's unconstitutional --

MR. CARNEY: So if they are citing times when the Court rules as unconstitutional something under the Commerce Clause that Congress did, they're basically saying they shouldn't have passed some of the New Deal legislation and perhaps they want to revisit that. But the precedent we're talking about here, as I've made clear -- I mean, you can say that they make this argument about precedent based on something the President didn't say or mean, or we can talk about --

Q But to be clear, he didn't specify what you're specifying now.

MR. CARNEY: He did yesterday.

Q?? Yesterday, but in his original comments he did not draw that caveat. He just said the whole thing would be unprecedented.

MR. CARNEY: That's not what he said, Ed. That's not certainly what he meant. And it was clear to most folks who observe this and understand what is at issue here --

Q Jay, that's not true. The President said, on Monday, that it would be an unprecedented, extraordinary step of overturning a law that was passed by a strong majority of a democratically elected Congress. It took him yesterday to talk about the Commerce Clause and on an economic issue --

MR. CARNEY: But, Norah --

Q There are two instances in the past 80 years where the President -- where the Supreme Court has overturned stuff: U.S. v. Lopez, and U.S. v. --

MR. CARNEY: Norah, what I'm telling you --

Q These are very specific legal issues. It's not evident to everybody.

MR. CARNEY: Well, it may not be evident to you. It is clear that the President was talking about matters like this that involve the Commerce Clause, that involve Congress passing legislation to deal with issues of national economic importance -- national economic matters like health insurance, which is clearly a national economic issue. That's what he was referring to.

And again, he spoke to this yesterday. It is obvious and clear, and nobody would ever contend in his office -- and he certainly was not contending -- that the Supreme Court doesn't have as its right and responsibility the ability to overturn laws passed by Congress as unconstitutional. He was referring to 85 years of judicial precedent, of Supreme Court precedent, with regard to matters like the one under consideration. And it's maybe fun to pretend he meant otherwise, but everyone here knows that that's what he meant.

Ed.

Q Okay, but -- (laughter.) What Norah just --

MR. CARNEY: But.

Q Back to Norah.

MR. CARNEY: For the sake of argument we're going to pretend he didn't mean that.

Q No, okay, but --

Q He had to clarify.

MR. CARNEY: I'm telling you --

Q He did clarify it the next day.

Q He did clarify it. And also when you said to Norah or me maybe we didn't know those cases -- do you think most average Americans know about a Supreme Court case from 75 years ago? Come on, I mean we're not --

MR. CARNEY: But what's your point, Ed? Are you suggesting -- I just want to know, are you suggesting that he --

Q Because the President left the impression that the whole thing would be unprecedented. He did not have --

MR. CARNEY: And I'm telling you, and he told you, and others like me have said actually on the day of as well as after that what he meant, and what he made clear yesterday --

Q Okay, so what did --

MR. CARNEY: And he was a law professor.

Q Right.

MR. CARNEY: And he understands constitutional law and constitutional precedent and the role of the Supreme Court --

Q Okay.

MR. CARNEY: -- was a reference to the Supreme Court's history in its rulings on matters under the Commerce Clause.

Q On what Norah quoted about the President saying Monday, a strong majority of the democratically elected Congress -- as you know, the House passed the health care bill 219 to 212.

MR. CARNEY: There you go.

Q And the Senate -- it's a fact. I know, here we go -- here we go with a fact. Imagine that. (Laughter.) It was not -- it was not a strong majority. I mean, the Republicans just pushed through the Ryan budget with Republican votes. You guys would not call that a strong majority, would you?

MR. CARNEY: No. But here's the environment that we live in, Ed. In order for a budget agreement to become law, right -- the Republicans don't control both the executive branch and the legislative branch, and the Democrats don't control both. In order for the absolute necessity of dealing with our deficit and debt challenges, we need a bipartisan compromise. The only path, as evident to anyone who thinks about this matter, the only path to that is a balanced approach. There is -- Republicans in the House know that. Democrats in the Senate know that. The President knows that. That's why he has embraced a balanced approach.

Q Okay, but back --

MR. CARNEY: But what the Republicans haven't --

Q -- 217 to 212, so that's a strong majority, you're saying, factually?

MR. CARNEY: You're talking about apples and oranges here.

Q No, no, I'm talking about votes on health care --

MR. CARNEY: That passed --

Q -- 219-212, that is a strong majority factually?

MR. CARNEY: Ed, that passed Congress and was signed into law. You know that there is no way -- look, you're making the President's point. You know that there is no way to achieve a balanced approach -- to achieve a significant compromise on deficit and debt reduction in a budget compromise without a balanced approach. You know that. That's not going to happen right now, right? Without --

Q I'm talking about health care. We can go back to --

MR. CARNEY: Okay.

Q Okay.

MR. CARNEY: Right? You're absolutely correct if, as some hope happens, someone else occupies the Oval Office next year and Republicans control Congress, that the Ryan/Republican budget could well become law. That's exactly what the President was talking about yesterday. This is not a theoretical debate.

What will become law -- because this is not the conservative fringe of a Republican Party now talking, it is the entire party -- is a bill -- is a budget that would decimate discretionary spending on education and innovation, and research and development, would end Medicare as we know it -- I keep getting throwbacks to the 1990s -- end Medicare as we know it by creating a voucher system for Medicare where -- and a two-tiered system where healthy people go to the cheaper, private insurance options, and then Medicare is populated only by the older and sicker members of our senior population, driving up costs, costs that will be shifted to seniors. And that's simply not fair. That's not what the President believes is right.

Q I was talking -- just for Monday -- I know we're talking, as well, about the budget, but just to be clear on health care. The President when he defended what he was saying on the Supreme Court Monday on health care was saying that a strong majority passed this in both chambers of Congress -- health care, not the budget, but health care. Is that -- 219 votes is a strong majority, factually?

MR. CARNEY: A majority passed, Ed. Look, it was -- the point the President was making is that under the past 80 years of Supreme Court history, the Supreme Court has shown deference to the legislature to deal with matters under the Commerce Clause of national economic importance like health care. And he is confident that both the Affordable Care Act, under the 80-plus years of precedent, is constitutional, and that the Supreme Court will agree with him, as did lower courts in opinions put forward by very prominent, conservative judges.

Q And the last thing -- when Jessica and Ann were asking about the budget -- back on the budget -- you kept saying it was a policy speech and that it was wonky. And there were wonky elements to it, no doubt, because he was talking about facts. However, he also called it a laughable budget. He said it was a Trojan Horse, social Darwinism. How can you suggest that he wasn't playing politics as well? We get that he was talking about substance, too, but he was playing politics yesterday.

MR. CARNEY: I'm saying that he could have --

Q He called it a Trojan Horse.

MR. CARNEY: -- and did, in many ways, give the same speech last year at this time. He gave a speech in response to the original Ryan budget that was very clear about why he felt that it was not the right answer to our challenges economically. And there really is no difference between that and this, except that we now know that all of the would-be leaders of the Republican Party, virtually, those who would be President, support the Ryan/Republican budget and think it's the right way to go. The President disagrees.

Yes. And then I'm going to move around. Sorry for the front row. (Laughter.)

Q Does he regret the -- the issue that the judge seemed to have is this issue of the unelected job that the President used on Monday, referring to the judiciary, using what was clearly sort of hot political rhetoric in reference to the judiciary when he referred to them as an "unelected" body. That's something that's a sort of tried and true political attack on the judiciary that we've seen for years. Does the President regret that? I mean, is that why he seemed to walk things back a little bit yesterday?

MR. CARNEY: No. Look, he -- as has been demonstrated here, I guess other folks didn't know we were talking about a piece of legislation that would be ruled on under the Commerce Clause, and that that's what he was referring to, so I accept that some of the expansion that the President offered, and I and others offered, might have helped people understand exactly what he was talking about and referring to.

But I think his point about Congress was simply that the Supreme Court, since the New Deal, has deferred to the legislature, those who are elected by people around the country to write laws for them, and in this matter, on matters of national economic importance, to pass laws that regulate the economy and regulate areas of the economy like our health care market. So that is the point he was making, is that the Court, as a matter of precedent, has deferred on matters like this to --

Q -- that it's a bunch of unelected -- he goes, I would remind them that they're unelected. I mean, that's been the way the judiciary was set up from the very beginning.

MR. CARNEY: Again, he was making an unremarkable observation about --

Q Is that an unremarkable thing to use a political --

MR. CARNEY: Well, I mean, they aren't elected. It's, again, a statement of fact, just like members of Congress aren't judges -- well, some of them may have been, but they're not largely judges. So -- and they are elected. The point of the matter is, is as a matter of Supreme Court precedent, they have -- the Supreme Court has deferred to the legislature in matters dealing with the national economy.

Q So we shouldn't -- should we interpret his remarks yesterday as a walk-back of sorts from the tougher rhetoric on Monday?

MR. CARNEY: No. It was --

Q Not at all?

MR. CARNEY: He was asked again, and he offered more expansive comments on it. Again, I take the point here, I guess some folk didn't know that we were talking about the Commerce Clause and that's what he referred to. I accept that and hope now it is clear, as, again, would be evident to anyone since he's a constitutional law professor as well as the President of the United States, that he believes the Supreme Court can and has and should rule on the constitutionality of laws passed by Congress.

Q Two things I want to follow up on, on the answers that you gave. You referred just now about -- when you were talking about the budget -- first, isn't there a -- you say that the only way -- that there's no other way to get a budget done -- one passes the House with just Republican votes. Isn't there a way? I mean, the House and Senate work this way all the time. The Senate passes a bill, the House passes a bill, and they try to merge them together. What's wrong with trying to do that?

MR. CARNEY: Well, look, it is always our preference for Congress to work efficiently and effectively, and that would certainly be a good thing. But we have seen in the past year-plus of very intense negotiations between the Senate and the House, between Republicans and Democrats, between leaders in Congress and the White House, that the only way to accomplish, in an environment like this, significant compromise that can be passed out of this Congress and signed into law by the President is to take an approach that is balanced.

And that's how we averted a government shutdown last spring, and that's how we in the summer, late summer, while failing to get the comprehensive, balanced approach that is required to deal with our long-term deficits and debt, we were able to pass into law the Budget Control Act -- which, by the way, which is again designed by Congress, voted on by Congress, passed by Congress, and now Republicans in Congress want to violate that agreement for the Ryan Budget.

Q Would you object to the conference committee approach being used if Democrats passed a budget -- and they got into a room and --

MR. CARNEY: Chuck, all I'm saying is that it's -- we would not object to that. But what I'm saying is it's not -- given what we have seen over the past 11 months, the way that we have come closest to achieving bipartisan compromise is through the kinds of negotiations that we had to go through last year.

And, unfortunately, the point is, is that what the President has put forward, what Democrats have agreed to in these negotiations represents a significant compromise by the President and Democrats on issues that are sacred cows, if you will, to the Democratic Party. What we have not seen --

Q Have you put out a plan on Social Security reform?

MR. CARNEY: No. The President has made clear his position on Social Security reform. He has made it clear in his State of the

Union address; he made it clear again when he put out his budget proposal in the fall. And I would note that the Ryan Budget contains no Social Security reform.

Q So when you say entitlement reform, you're saying -- you're excluding Social Security -- You're just only talking about Medicare and Medicaid.

MR. CARNEY: I'm not saying that we don't need to deal in the long term with our Social Security matters -- I'm talking about Medicare, Medicaid and other mandatories. But the fact of the matter is, as you know, you reported on it, the President led his party to agree to significant reforms in our entitlements -- our health care entitlements -- as part of what could have been a bipartisan grand bargain, and that was not achieved because Republicans would not go along with the idea that it had to be balanced. It had to include --

Q -- never would have passed --

MR. CARNEY: It had to include -- it is funny to hear Republicans talk about how there is no plan, and then describe it in detail. But that's another matter.

Q Neither side released their final plans, publicly.

MR. CARNEY: It was part of the negotiating process that you know well is the only way to potentially achieve this -- what would have been a very difficult compromise. Separately, as you guys know and I know from your reporting, on the super committee that dealt with the -- as a result of the Budget Control Act, Democrats went extremely far in making significant compromises on issues like entitlements. And the whole thing broke down -- why? Because Republicans refused to include revenues as part of an overall process. And that's the only way to do it. Everybody knows that.

April.

Q Jay, on a couple of topics. Gallop Poll has come out with the new job approval rating for President Obama: 48 percent approve and 45 percent disapprove. What are your comments?

MR. CARNEY: There are polls every day. I don't really have a comment.

Q It's not moving.

MR. CARNEY: Is that your -- that's your comment. I mean, look, we -- the President is focused on the job he needs to do as President, and he is focused especially on the need to take every action he can, working with Congress or through his executive authority, to continue to help this economy to grow and recover, to continue to see job creation, and to continue to ensure the security of the American people both at home and abroad. Those are his focuses as President at this time. The campaign and polls -- there's plenty of time for that and --

Q Eight months out from --

MR. CARNEY: That's a long time. That is a long time. And as I've said for a long time now, as this year progresses, the President will, of course, by necessity, be more engaged in the campaign. At this point, we still do not have a Republican nominee. And that time will come, and you will see him engage when it's appropriate.

Q And on another topic -- the hoodie movement has made its way to the White House. AME Bishop John R. Bryant came to the Prayer Breakfast this morning with a hoodie on, in response to the Trayvon Martin issue. And what do you say as the CBC now is calling for legislators to look at the Stand Your Ground law, and as the Justice Department is investigating still?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I would refer you to the last part of your question, which is that the Justice Department is investigating a particular case in Florida, as is -- as obviously are Florida authorities. And so I wouldn't really -- I do not have a specific comment on that. The President, as you know, made remarks about the case and the tragedy of the loss of life here. But I don't have any further comment on it.

Q But everything comes to the White House from -- (inaudible) and everything in between. And now this hoodie movement has come. The President didn't say anything. According to Bishop Bryant, he did not acknowledge, he just welcomed him. What does the White House feel about that strong movement making its way here?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I haven't spoken to the President about this, so I don't have anything to express on that issue. And again, I don't think it's appropriate, and I won't, therefore, comment on something that's under ongoing investigation by both the Justice Department and Florida authorities.

Q Okay, but I'm not talking about the investigation.

MR. CARNEY: I just don't have a comment on that, sorry.

Yes, Julianna, and then -- sorry.

Q The President -- tomorrow he's going to sign the Jobs Act, which provides -- it helps small businesses get investors early on. And there are some concerns that it actually dismantles some investor protections, and it might be more prone to get-rich-quick kind of schemes. Does the President share those concerns?

MR. CARNEY: Well, as you know, the President insisted on and was pleased to see the adoption in the overall legislation of the amendments put forward by Senate Democrats that offer further protections for investors. And we will be mindful, as this law is implemented, to ensure that it's implemented in an effective way and that those protections are upheld.

So the President strongly supports it. Again, as I was I think saying to Jessica, it includes at its heart provisions that the President initially put forward for consideration by Congress. And he's pleased that even in an environment where getting bipartisan cooperation is very, very difficult, we have seen enough of it to enable us to pass two pieces of legislation that the

President called for, the STOCK Act today and the JOBS Act tomorrow.

Yes.

Q Jay, ahead of these P5-plus-1 talks in a couple of weeks, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak released today the Israelis' goals of how they want to proceed forward with these talks, saying that transferring uranium to 20 percent -- that it's enriched to 20 percent -- needs to go out of the country; that leaving only enough enriched uranium for energy purposes; the third being that they need the closure of the Fordow enrichment facilities and also the transfer of fuel rods. Is this the same agenda the White House has for these talks? Are these the same benchmarks? Are you guys working in tandem on this?

MR. CARNEY: Well, we're working with our P5-plus-1 partners when those talks --

Q What particular benchmarks would you --

MR. CARNEY: I haven't seen -- I haven't seen the proposals that you --

Q Does it sound something along the ballpark of what the White House --

MR. CARNEY: Look, our policy is very clear, together with our partners -- we remain determined to prevent Iran from attaining a nuclear weapon. And as the President has said, we believe that diplomacy coupled with strong sanctions and increased isolation is the both available and best means of achieving and ensuring that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon in the near or longer term. But he takes no options off the table.

We are very mindful of Iranian behavior in the past and how they've approached negotiations in the past, and we are in a mode where actions are what speak loudest here. But our insistence is -- and again, I'm not going to get into specifics -- I'm not going to negotiate on behalf of the P5-plus-1 what the particulars of an agreement would look like, but it would absolutely insist on Iran not obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Q But isn't there anything you can say going forward, entering these talks, that here are our red lines; if it looks like they're running out the clock, that no progress is being made, here's when we walk away?

MR. CARNEY: Look, the President has said -- and it is a fact -- that time is running out. There is time. There is time and space to allow for a diplomatic solution, but it is not time without end. And again we --

Q What does that mean, time without end? Are we --

MR. CARNEY: Well, I'm not going to give a --

Q -- talking months? Are we talking till the end of the year?

MR. CARNEY: Well, we've made very clear as a matter of what we know about the Iranian nuclear program and the fact that there

are inspectors on the ground and we have visibility into it, what that process would look like. I don't have a specific time frame to attach to that, but we do have time.

But it is important to move seriously, and we will insist that the Iranians move in a serious way if they are serious about engaging with the P5-plus-1 and finding a solution here that, one, ensures that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon, and, two, therefore allows Iran to end its isolation and rejoin the community of nations.

Q Jay, following on that, you haven't said much in public lately about the possibility or risk of an Israeli military strike. Do you feel that you have made some progress there in persuading the Israelis to hold off for a while, or do you think that that is still a live possibility in the next couple of months?

MR. CARNEY: I have no updates for you on that specific issue. We spoke a lot about this around the time that Prime Minister Netanyahu was here and the President gave his remarks at AIPAC.

We believe that the best way of ensuring that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon is through the approach that the President has taken. There is time and space for that approach to continue to be pursued, and it is an approach that has united the international community, that has isolated Iran, that has brought to bear the harshest sanctions in history against Iran. And those sanctions, as you know, have had a significant impact on the Iranian economy and the Iranian regime.

But it remains to be seen whether the Iranian leadership will choose the right path, will go through the door that remains open to them, which is to forsake their nuclear weapons ambitions and, by doing so and in demonstrating and in proving to the world that they have done so, create for themselves the opportunity to reduce their isolation, to reduce the significant impact on the economy of these sanctions, and to rejoin the community of nations.

Q But when Prime Minister Netanyahu was here, the President made a point of saying out loud that he respected Israel's right to self-defense.

MR. CARNEY: Well, that hasn't changed.

Q Well, the obvious "but" there was that he was making a case, don't do this.

MR. CARNEY: I really -- I don't have -- nothing has changed, if that's what the essence of your question is. Our position remains the same. We have made clear what we believe is the appropriate path to take now, and we're working with our P5-plus-1 partners, as well as allies and partners around the world in this effort, and we'll continue to that.

Yes.

Q Jay, can you tell us which members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the group that's visiting right now in Washington -- which members might have met with White House officials?

MR. CARNEY: I don't have names. I don't have names for you. It is a matter of fact that the Muslim Brotherhood will play a prominent role in Egypt's political life going forward. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood met with John McCain when he visited -- and Lindsay Graham, two senators, when they visited Egypt. And again, I don't have the names of folks who are having meetings here in Washington. But lower-level officials here at the NSC did have meetings with them.

Q A question on Pakistan. As you know, the head of Lashkar-e-Taiba, in a news conference there, where he basically said give me the money, give me the reward money, and a Pakistani government spokesman said that they need concrete evidence to have the charges withstand judicial scrutiny. What's the response to that kind of a statement from Pakistan in terms of --

MR. CARNEY: I haven't seen that, so I don't -- I don't think I have a response for you.

Yes.

Q Thank you, Jay. First I want to go back to the Monday summit between -- with President Calderón and Prime Minister Harper. Did the situation in Syria come up in the conversation?

MR. CARNEY: I don't know. I'll have to check. It would certainly be possible given that Syria is a major topic of conversation right now among the world's leaders with the President. But I don't know for sure.

Q Has the President started to build up some sort of support from the allies to a greater involvement in the region?

MR. CARNEY: Well, we are working with -- by "the region" you mean Syria?

Q Syria, yes. And allies implied Canada, notably.

MR. CARNEY: Well, certainly. I mean, look, we are part of the "Friends of Syria." We have worked through that group. The Secretary of State has participated in that group and we are working through that group to provide assistance to the Syrian people and to further pressure the Syrian regime to cease and desist. And I think we have seen Kofi Annan on his mission put forward a plan. I note that the Syrian regime said it would adhere to it, and then we've seen reports of terrible, terrible violence continuing in Syria.

So we're focused on actions, not words. We've seen -- there have been many, many occasions where the Assad regime has made promises that it has failed to keep. So we will continue to watch very closely what Assad does, and work with our allies through the "Friends of Syria" to continue to put pressure on that regime.

Q Last question. On Keystone, I don't know if -- we haven't been able to know if the topic was touched on at that summit. But I just want to -- when the Prime Minister, after at the Woodrow Wilson Center, was asked if what's called the Northern Gateway, sending oil to Asia since it's so complicated through the U.S., he answered if the Keystone pipeline was approved, if he could change his mind -- and he said, we cannot be as a country in a

situation where really our one, in many cases, almost only energy partner could say no to our energy products.

How do you react to the idea -- the fact that Canada sees the President in this precise situation -- the Prime Minister sees the President in this situation having said no to Canadian products?

MR. CARNEY: Well, first of all, I didn't see those comments. Secondly, you're -- and I think probably with eyes wide open -- misrepresenting what happened. But the fact of the matter is the pipeline proposal that was delayed because of the opposition of people in Nebraska, led most prominently by the Republican governor of Nebraska -- the process of allowing for a new route to be submitted and considered and approved was abruptly brought to a halt by the insistence, for political and ideological reasons, of the Republicans to put -- to insert in a piece of legislation the non-germane -- utterly non-germane element of forcing a decision on the Keystone pipeline, forcing a decision on a pipeline route that did not exist and as yet does not exist.

The President has made clear that when a new route is submitted it will be reviewed in accordance with all the standards that have been in place for many, many years now. And hopefully, without any undue ideological efforts from the sidelines, it will be reviewed and considered and decided upon accordingly.

In the meantime, as you know, because the President visited Cushing, Oklahoma, the President has called on federal agencies to expedite the permitting process for the portion of that pipeline that would run from Cushing, Oklahoma down to the Gulf of Mexico, the approval of which and the building of which would relieve a bottleneck that exists in Oklahoma in the transporting of oil down to refineries in the Gulf. And the President, as you know, I'm sure, and have reported on, has approved many pipelines, including international pipelines, including pipelines from Canada that cross the border with the United States.

That's the accurate history of what happened here. I don't have any readout for you on the conversation between the President and the Prime Minister on that subject.

Thank you very much.

Q Is there any change in our standing with Burma that's being announce today?

MR. CARNEY: I have nothing for you on that. The President and the Secretary of State have made clear that we would meet positive actions taken by the government there with a positive response. But I have no specific update for you.

Q She has a statement supposedly at three o'clock.

MR. CARNEY: Well, we'll all watch with interest.

END 2:50 P.M. EDT

(end transcript)

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Secretary Clinton on Support for Burma's Democratic Reforms

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesperson

April 4, 2012

REMARKS

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

Recognizing and Supporting Burma's Democratic Reforms

April 4, 2012

Treaty Room

Washington, D.C.

SECRETARY CLINTON: From the beginning of this Administration, we have pursued a policy of engagement to support human rights and reform in Burma. We knew that the challenges were great, but we also believed that a new approach was needed to support the aspirations of the people. And this week, the government and the people made further progress in advancing those aspirations.

The results of the April 1st parliamentary by-elections represents a dramatic demonstration of popular will that brings a new generation of reformers into government. This is an important step in the country's transformation, which in recent months has seen the unprecedented release of political prisoners, new legislation broadening the rights of political and civic association, and fledgling process in internal dialogue between the government and ethnic minority groups.

These elections and the progress that we have seen are precisely the kind of step that the President and I envisioned when we embarked on this historic opening. President Thein Sein and many of his colleagues inside the government helped launch their country on a historic new path. And while there is much to be done and significant tests lie ahead, we applaud the president and his colleagues for their leadership and courage, and we congratulate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for her election to the parliament as well as the election of many of her colleagues.

The United States is committed to taking steps alongside the Burmese Government and people as they move down the road of reform and development. In light of the by-election and the other progress of recent months, we are consulting actively with the Congress as well as our allies and friends in Europe and Asia on our response to these recent developments. We are prepared to take steps toward: first, seeking agreement for a fully accredited ambassador in Rangoon in the coming days, followed by a formal announcement of our nominee; second, establishing an in-country USAID mission and supporting a normal country program for the United Nations Development Program; third, enabling private organizations in the United States to pursue a broad range of nonprofit activities from democracy building to health and education; fourth, facilitating travel to the United States for select government officials and parliamentarians; and fifth, beginning the process of a targeted easing of our ban on the export of U.S. financial services and investment as part of a broader effort to help accelerate economic modernization and political reform. Sanctions and prohibitions will stay in place on individuals and institutions that remain on the wrong side of these historic reform efforts.

Now, this reform process has a long way to go. The future is neither clear nor certain. But we will continue to monitor developments closely and meet, as I said when I was there, action with action. We will continue to seek improvements in human rights, including the unconditional release of all remaining political prisoners and the lifting of conditions on all those who have been released. We will continue our support for the development of a vibrant civil society, which we think will greatly add to the reform of the economy and society. We will continue to urge progress in national reconciliation, specifically with ethnic minority groups. And we will continue to press for the verifiable termination of the military relationship with North Korea.

Yet even as we urge these further steps, we fully recognize and embrace the progress that has taken place, and we will continue our policy of engagement that has encouraged these efforts. The leadership has shown real understanding and commitment to the future of their country. That development, we hope, will be sustainable and produce even more results.

As we have done over the last several months, the United States will stand with the reformers and the democrats, both inside the government and in the larger civil society, as they work together for that more hopeful future that is the right of every single person.

Thank you all very much.

(end transcript)

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WPD310 04/04/2012

Clinton, Kosovan Prime Minister Thaci After Their Meeting

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(begin transcript)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesperson

April 4, 2012

REMARKS

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

And Kosovan Prime Minister Hashim Thaci

After Their Meeting

April 4, 2012

Treaty Room

Washington, D.C.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, good afternoon, everyone. It's a great pleasure for me to welcome Prime Minister Thaci back to Washington and here to the State Department. The prime minister has shown great leadership, and he has helped to promote democracy, stability, and the rule of law in Kosovo. And he is leading his country toward the future that the people of Kosovo desire and that the United States wants to see for them, full partnership in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

The prime minister and I had the opportunity to discuss the progress that Kosovo is making in promoting its European future. The United States strongly supports the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, facilitated by the European Union, and we welcome the agreements that have been reached to date. It's a credit to the leaders of both countries that they are able to compromise to find the best way forward.

And the United States remains absolutely committed to Kosovo's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The agreements reached in the dialogue reinforce these while setting the conditions for Kosovo's participation in forums with its neighbors in which Kosovo will finally have an equal voice on regional concerns. We urge both countries to stay committed to the dialogue and to fully implement what has been agreed to.

I'm going to go in English, and then we'll translate for you. Okay? Is that all right?

PRIME MINISTER THACI: It's okay.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Okay. I also want to applaud the EU on its decision to launch a feasibility study for a stabilization and association agreement with Kosovo. This represents a step toward European Union membership for Kosovo, and it shows that leaders in Kosovo and in the EU are committed to strengthening their relationship.

Finally, the International Steering Group for Kosovo recently announced the start of preparations to end supervised independence for Kosovo in 2012. Although more work remains, the government is enacting the legislation and building the institutions that will promote democratic reform and effective rule of law for all the people of Kosovo. This decision signals that a stable and independent Kosovo is ready for full participation and partnership in the international community.

Again, Prime Minister, the United States is standing side by side with the people of Kosovo as they chart the course for their country's future, and I want to thank and applaud you for all that you have done for the progress that we celebrate today.

PRIME MINISTER THACI: Madam Secretary Clinton, members of the press, as always it is a great pleasure to be in D.C., especially now in April with the cherry blossom, it is so beautiful. (Laughter.) The United States of America and you personally have always inspired Kosovar people with the values of freedom, democracy, and justice.

Kosovo is a young democracy. We still have a long way ahead with reforms – strengthen the institutions and economy, good governance, fight against corruption, and other affirmative agenda – in order to transform our society and make positive changes. But some things will never change. That is our freedom, our independence, our territorial integrity and sovereignty, our right to exist as a proud nation in the big family of the nations.

I use this opportunity to thank Madam Secretary Clinton for her personal role and contribution in reaching the latest agreements between Kosovo and Serbia on regional representation and IBM, integrated border management. My vision for Kosovo and the region is a future with open borders and good neighborhood relations.

Today, we discussed also about many important bilateral issues. I am proud of our eternal friendship between our two nations. We both believe that the latest agreements help open a new chapter in the relationship between Kosovo and EU as well.

All countries in the region share the same goal and the same vision for the European integration and NATO membership. But to make that happen, we still need the strong focus and presence of the United States of America and EU, not only in Kosovo but also in the rest of the Western Balkans.

Madam Secretary Clinton, thank you very much.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you so much.

MR. TONER: We have time for two questions today. The first goes to Brad Klapper of Associated Press.

QUESTION: Thank you. In the last couple of days, Iranian officials have floated alternative venues to Istanbul as the possible site for future P-5+1 talks: Baghdad, Beijing, even Damascus. (Laughter.) Are the United States and its P-5+1 partners willing to go to any of these places to hold the talks? And more importantly, what does this weeks-long haggling over dates and venues instead of substance suggest about the seriousness of

Iran's intentions, especially at a time when many officials, including yourself, have suggested that time is running short for a peaceful diplomatic solution?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Bradley, the EU High Representative Lady Ashton and her team are consulting with their Iranian counterparts. We understand that these consultations are at an advanced stage, and we expect that Lady Ashton will formally announce the date and place of the talks once it is finally confirmed.

Now in its response to Lady Ashton's letter, Iran expressed its readiness to resume negotiations and engage in a sustained dialogue. And as I've said before, we are not interested in talks for the sake of talks. We want to engage in serious discussions that will lead to concrete results. So I want again to urge the Iranian Government to take this opportunity to begin addressing the international community's concerns about the possible military dimensions of the Iranian nuclear program.

As I said just Sunday in Istanbul, there is still time and space to pursue the objectives that we seek through diplomacy. We want to see a peaceful resolution of the international community's concerns. But the time for diplomacy is not infinite, and all options remain on the table to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. And until Iran comes into compliance with its international obligations and demonstrates the peaceful intent of its nuclear program, they will continue to face strong pressure and isolation. So the sooner that we can begin talks, the better it will be, and I await Lady Ashton's confirmation of the details.

MR. TONER: All right. Our next questioner on the Kosovo side is (inaudible) of Radio Television Kosovo.

QUESTION: The question is for Secretary Clinton. The United States with the EU countries help Kosovo to be independent. Will you continue to support in Kosovo in the future for process of integration in Euro-Atlantic institution here?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Yes. I believe strongly in Kosovo's independence and territorial integrity and in its aspiration to become a full partner in the international community and a member of the European Union, and eventually, NATO. The United States will continue to support Kosovo and work with the European Union to resolve the outstanding issues that exist between Kosovo and Serbia.

But I am encouraged by the progress that Kosovo has made, not only with respect to European integration, but economically. The prime minister told me Kosovo has grown 5 percent this year. That's a very strong signal of the kind of progress that Kosovo is making, and we want to help fully integrate, particularly the young people of Kosovo, into Europe and the international community.

Thank you all very much.

(end transcript)

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WPD311 04/04/2012

Joint Statement from 2012 NAFTA Commission Meeting

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(begin text)

Office of the United States Trade Representative

April 4, 2012

Joint Statement from 2012 NAFTA Commission Meeting

Ambassador Ron Kirk, United States Trade Representative; the Honorable Edward Fast, Canada's Minister of International Trade; and Bruno Ferrari, Mexico's Secretary of the Economy, are pleased to release the following Joint Statement, which outlines the overall results of the April 3, 2012 meeting of the NAFTA Free Trade Commission (FTC), in Washington, DC.

Our meeting today follows the North American Leaders' Summit, where our Leaders agreed that "[b]road-based, sustainable economic growth and job creation remains our top priority." Since its entry into force in 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has contributed to increased trade and investment between us and to greater economic competitiveness in each country. From 1993 to 2011, trade among the NAFTA countries has more than tripled, from \$288 billion to \$1 trillion. This historic figure underscores the daily \$2.7 billion trade between our countries. As we share in the NAFTA's ongoing benefits, today, we agree on actions to expand trade and investment, reduce administrative costs, and thereby further strengthen North American competitiveness.

Yesterday our three Leaders agreed to "introduce timely and tangible regulatory measures to enable innovation and growth while ensuring high standards of public health, safety, and environmental protection." The United States, Mexico and Canada engage in regulatory cooperation through two bilateral mechanisms. We asked officials to continue to contribute meaningfully to both the bilateral and trilateral initiatives, with a view towards facilitating trade and reducing unnecessary administrative costs.

We also asked the NAFTA Committee for Standards-Related Measures (CSRSM) to continue its work to enhance cooperation on the development, application and enforcement of standards-related measures, and to provide a forum for the Parties to consult on issues relating to standards-related measures. We also asked the CSRSM and other relevant NAFTA committees to explore additional opportunities for trilateral cooperation in multilateral fora.

At our last meeting we reaffirmed our commitment to enter into bilateral mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) that establish procedures for each country to accept test results from laboratories or testing facilities in the territory of another NAFTA country, for use in the conformity assessment of telecommunications equipment. In November 2011, Canada and Mexico signed such an MRA. The United States and Mexico signed a separate agreement in May 2011. The United States and Canada have had mutual recognition since 2003 under the APEC-TEL MRA. These MRAs will allow a manufacturer to test a product only once and then have the test results accepted in other NAFTA countries. We reiterate our commitment to the respective confidence-building work programs and look forward to the full implementation of the 2011 MRAs immediately following the conclusion of the confidence-building period.

The FTC acknowledges the continuous work of the North American Steel Trade Committee (NASTC) in drawing attention to issues of importance to the manufacturing sector and promoting cooperation between North American industry and governments in areas of mutual interest. For instance, in June 2011 the NASTC hosted an Infrastructure Round Table that brought together North American infrastructure experts to explore the commercial importance of infrastructure in North America and raise awareness of infrastructure needs, challenges and opportunities going forward. Furthermore, NASTC has helped foster coordination between the North American governments in their efforts to increase the transparency and accountability of the international trade regime, through international forums such as the WTO and OECD.

We are pleased to note that the Working Group on Rules of Origin (WGRO) has reached agreement on a fourth set of changes to the NAFTA rules of origin that will further facilitate the free trade among our countries. Annual trilateral trade in these goods is approximately \$135 billion. We will each undertake our respective domestic procedures for consultation in order to implement these changes as quickly as possible. We have instructed the WGRO to begin work on a fifth set of changes to the NAFTA rules of origin, including for areas of interest that were not covered under this fourth set of changes.

Since all of the tariff cuts under NAFTA were implemented either on time or ahead of schedule, we have developed additional new and creative ways to increase trade. We agreed to pursue closer sectoral cooperation to enhance trade in chemicals, beginning with exploring work on rules of origin, customs procedures and classification. In this regard, we asked the relevant NAFTA working groups and committees to address issues in these areas and seek means to reduce unnecessary differences in regulations and procedures with a view towards reducing transaction costs and facilitating trade.

In 2009, we established an ad hoc working group composed of senior trade officials to explore areas of potential collaboration between the FTC and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). Today we approved that group's work plan to ensure ongoing cooperation and communication between the FTC and the CEC to involve Joint Ad Hoc Working Group participation in CEC project planning and implementation; to foster the environmental goals of the

NAFTA Work Plan and its committees, and to undertake initiatives that address linkages between trade and the environment, such as exchanging information on the trade flows and cross-border supply chains in used electronics within North America; and exploring opportunities to facilitate the efforts of partner transport and environmental departments in the United States, Mexico and Canada to green transportation at the borders.

We will continue to support efforts by our designated senior trade officials to improve coordination between the FTC and the Commission for Labor Cooperation (CLC), and more broadly, our labor and trade ministries. We also support on-going discussions among the CLC Council Designees to improve the functioning of the NAFTA labor side agreement to develop a robust plan of cooperative activities on labor matters of mutual interest. We take note of the collaboration among the three labor ministries as part of the G20 Labor and Employment Ministerial hosted this year by Mexico.

Our three countries have cooperated closely to more effectively combat the challenges of IPR infringement, in the context of piracy and counterfeiting. In 2007 we joined together with other countries to launch negotiations of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). The United States, Canada and six other countries signed the ACTA in October 2011. Mexico will continue to work on a comprehensive reform to its legal system to achieve the high standards pursued under the ACTA.

We had a robust discussion on the experiences of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in North America. Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) in the United States and Mexico are already linking SMEs for trade opportunities through an interactive platform, SBDCGlobal.com. Following on the 2011 FTC, Canada began exploring the potential to join the SBDCGlobal.com network. In the coming year, Canada will engage stakeholders in consultations regarding the possibility of joining the SBDCGlobal network.

One of the main challenges that SMEs face is access to information. To address this, we released "The NAFTA Certificate of Origin: Frequently Asked Questions," a publication designed to answer basic questions about completing that form. This document will be available on each of our websites. As instructed by the Commission last year, the NAFTA SME task force was created to propose several action items that would help SMEs reap the benefits of our integration and the development of regional supply chains. The Commission instructed officials to identify additional means, including the production of informational materials and existing platforms such as Mexico's upcoming SME Week, to meet the distinct requirements of SMEs to allow them to take advantage of export opportunities.

We reaffirm our commitment to the effective operation of the NAFTA's Dispute Settlement provisions.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) provides an opportunity to further deepen our trade relationship and create jobs. The United States welcomes Canada's and Mexico's interest in joining TPP as ambitious partners.

Reiterating our concern with recent expressions of trade protectionism in some parts of the world, which can affect trade flows and have an impact on growth and employment, we look forward to the outcomes in this regard of the G20 Trade Ministerial conference in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, the 19th and 20th of April.

We acknowledge the work of our three national sections of the NAFTA Secretariat in developing a pilot system of electronic filing and archival of documents in Chapter 19 proceedings. We encourage the Chapter 19 Working Group to continue with testing the pilot project and report its results to the FTC. We will ask our officials to explore the possibility of whether any clarifications with respect to Chapter 11 may be appropriate and report back to the FTC.

We recognize the importance of the NAFTA committees and working groups as they carry out the NAFTA Work Plan and sustain our working relationship. We encourage our officials to ensure a strong working relationship that will allow us to address effectively issues of mutual interest.

Finally, we agreed that Canada will host the next NAFTA Commission meeting.

(end text)

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WPD312 04/04/2012

White House on Attack on National Theater in Somalia

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(begin text)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

April 4, 2012

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Attack on the National Theater in Mogadishu, Somalia

The United States strongly condemns the outrageous attack today in Mogadishu that resulted in a tragic loss of life. We offer our condolences to the Somali people, particularly those who lost family and loved ones. Somalia, with the support of African Union peacekeepers, has made great strides in the past months to improve security and rebuild Mogadishu after two decades of civil strife. Al-Shabaab's attack on the newly reopened National Theater is another sign that it is standing in the way of Somalia's path to peace and stability, and demonstrates why it is being rejected by the Somali people. We remain committed to the

people of Somalia and assisting them in countering al-Shabaab's violence and in returning peace to their country.

(end text)

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WPD313 04/04/2012

Private Sector Role in Millennium Challenge Corporation Compacts

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(begin fact sheet)

Millennium Challenge Corporation

April 2, 2012

Fact Sheet

Private Sector Participation in MCC Compacts

Enhancing Sustainability and Mobilizing Capital

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is an innovative and independent U.S. foreign aid agency that is helping lead the fight against global poverty. Created by the U.S. Congress in 2004 with strong bipartisan support, MCC is changing the conversation on how best to deliver smart U.S. foreign aid by focusing on good policies, country ownership, and results.

MCC forms partnerships with some of the world's poorest countries, but only those committed to good governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens. MCC provides these well-performing countries with large-scale compact grants to fund country-led solutions for reducing poverty through sustainable economic growth. MCC compacts range from \$65 million to nearly \$700 million per country.

Incorporating private sector participation into MCC compact investments can help ensure sustainability and mobilize additional sources of funding. MCC's Private Sector Toolkit (available at <http://www.mcc.gov/privatesector>) details four models of private sector participation in MCC compacts: private finance of infrastructure, outsourced management, social service franchising, and output-based aid.

MCC's overall objective is to improve developmental outcomes by pursuing alternative aid assistance approaches that move beyond projects that are identified, developed, financed, executed, and operated by the public sector. Private sector participation in MCC's existing portfolio is concentrated in outsourced management of assets constructed or rehabilitated with compact funding. Examples include:

- Leases and management contracts for water supply networks in Mozambique following compact-funded construction.
- A private concession of Benin's Port of Cotonou South Wharf following compact-funded landside and waterside improvements.
- Co-financing, construction, and operation of new rural electricity lines, connections, and extensions in El Salvador with Arlington, Virginia-based AES Corporation.

MCC expects future compacts to increasingly mobilize private debt and equity finance while incorporating increased risk transfer to the private sector.

Leveraging Resources for Economic Growth

MCC's strategic vision is to: (1) increase the supply of well-structured projects that can attract commercial debt and equity financing and (2) to help foster capital market development by mobilizing banks and institutional investors. Furthermore, MCC may fund improvements to the enabling environment through support for sector policy reforms and institutional strengthening.

Accordingly, MCC's operating strategy for private sector participation in MCC compacts is three-fold:

- Partners: Enhance MCC's strategic operational collaborations with development partners, based on respective institutional comparative advantages.
- Platforms: Explore alternative approaches to project origination (e.g., challenge grants), development (e.g., outsourcing to developers), and implementation (e.g., output-based aid).
- Products: Use grants for viability gap funding to buy down capital expenditures, and facilitate downstream project financings by using credit enhancements like partial risk/credit guarantees.

Through private sector participation in compacts, MCC hopes to draw more broadly on partners to leverage MCC resources and to stimulate new investment and new development practices. These partnerships, although often complex and challenging to structure, offer the possibility of mobilizing additional resources for development and promoting greater program effectiveness and sustainability—providing an opportunity to substantially increase the impact of MCC-funded projects.

To learn more about private sector participation in MCC compacts, please visit www.mcc.gov (<http://www.mcc.gov/>) or send an email to info@mcc.gov.

(end fact sheet)

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WPD314 04/04/2012

State's Nides After Meeting with Pakistani Finance Minister

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(begin transcript)

U.S. Department of State

Remarks by Thomas Nides

Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources

Islamabad, Pakistan

April 4, 2012

Remarks After Meeting With Pakistani Finance Minister Hafeez Shaikh

I'm pleased to be here, as the Minister said, at this pivotal time between the United States and Pakistan to engage in discussions about the future of this very, very important bilateral relationship. The United States, as I told you in our meeting, remains committed to our bilateral relationship, and we respect the parliamentary review process that is going on currently.

As President Obama said last week when he met Prime Minister Gilani in Seoul, we believe that we can achieve a balanced approach to our relationship with Pakistan as it relates to their sovereignty and interests but also respects U.S. interests.

One interest we share is the growth of our economies to create jobs and prosperity for all of our citizens, as you so articulately pointed out. As I discussed with the Minister, our futures are truly linked and we have significant work to do together.

We continue to cooperate, as you mentioned, on the Kerry-Lugar-Berman funding. Since October of 2009, we have provided, as you know, over \$2.6 billion in civilian assistance to Pakistan, including more than \$800 million in emergency assistance to respond to the floods and the conflict.

To be honest, I couldn't be prouder of the significant accomplishments we have achieved together. Because the relationship with Pakistan is so important to both of our countries. For example, we know you have significant energy needs. So, the United States has collaborated with the Pakistani Government to fund work on the Tarbela Dam, and other major energy projects which you and I have discussed have expanded Pakistan's electricity-generation capacity to over 400 megawatts to bring electricity to over 6 million Pakistanis. By the end of 2013, our goal is to have another 900 megawatts to the national grid to provide electricity to over 10 million Pakistanis, which you have told me over and over again is critically important to the people of Pakistan.

We also continue to sponsor the world's largest Fulbright program in Pakistan, which brought more than 1,000 Pakistani scholars traveling to the United States since 2005. I couldn't be prouder, because having your kids and your students coming to the United

States, and having our students coming to Pakistan is a way we build long-term trust between our two countries.

I am here because we need to work together to accomplish these goals, and I want to thank you. You've become a very good friend not only of the U.S. Government, but of mine personally, and I am glad that we can have honest and frank discussions. You do not shy from expressing your views, which I greatly appreciate.

I look forward to more of these conversations, because the relationship between the United States and Pakistan is vital to our shared security and economic prosperity, so thank you very much.

(end transcript)

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WPD315 04/04/2012

Clinton at World Affairs Council 2012 NATO Conference

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(begin transcript)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesperson

April 3, 2012

REMARKS

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to the World Affairs Council 2012 NATO Conference

April 3, 2012

Sheraton Waterside Hotel

Norfolk, Virginia

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much for that introduction. And in this fast-changing world, we need leaders with a steady hand and a clear vision for the future. General, you have demonstrated both, and I very much appreciate that.

I also want to thank Larry Baucom – thank you, Admiral, for your leadership of the World Affairs Council of Greater Hampton Roads – Mayor Paul Fraim and the city council for helping to host this event. I'm delighted that Congressman Bobby Scott and Congressman Scott Rigell could join us, and I thank them for that.

It is for me a great pleasure to be back in Norfolk. When I was representing New York in the United States Senate, I was asked to serve on a committee advising the Joint Command. It was a

fascinating experience, and I have many very wonderful memories of the meetings and the hospitality that we were afforded here. And it's especially timely that we would meet, since tomorrow marks the 63rd anniversary of the signing of the Washington Treaty, when 12 countries pledged to safeguard each other's freedom and committed to the principles of democracy, liberty, and the rule of law.

From those earliest days, Norfolk served as a crucial naval base and training facility for the alliance and our partners. And today it is home to ACT, where staff from every nation in NATO are taking on one of the most important challenges we face together – how to continue transforming our alliance so that it can champion those principles just as effectively in the 21st century as we did in the 20th century. And there can be no better place and no better time, as you celebrate another Norfolk NATO Festival, to discuss the greatest alliance in history and the future we are shaping together.

This morning, I had the great privilege of going to VMI and addressing the cadets and members of the community there. And I talked about General Marshall, an extraordinary American whose life of service still is unique, not only as a military leader but as the secretary of state and the secretary of defense. And I was reminded, as I looked through the pictures in the George Marshall Museum after speaking with the cadets about George Marshall and our vision of how to take those eternal values that he so well represented and bring them forward into today's time and then projected into the future, of the challenges faced by that generation when they began this great enterprise known as NATO. There was nothing certain about it. NATO and the Marshall Plan were extraordinarily visionary. They were smart power, the original form of that phrase, in action. And it set the future on a firm foundation.

So I think we live in a similarly challenging time. And it therefore is incumbent upon us, citizens and leaders alike, to chart a similarly firmly-founded future, based on the values we cherish and the direction that we seek for the kind of country and world we want to leave to our children.

It was extraordinary, 63 years ago, when this enterprise known as NATO started. Now, some will say the world was a simpler place, divided into that bipolarity of freedom and communism, the West and the Soviet Union and others. And it was dangerous; there was no doubt about that. I grew up during that period and can still remember those drills of going under our desks in case we were attacked by a nuclear weapon. (Laughter.) Looking back now, it seems a little strange – (laughter) – but at the time, we all understood that we were in a battle, a battle for the future.

Well, we are now in a battle for the future. And one of the great attributes of our country has always been how we preferred the future, how we planned and executed in order to achieve tomorrow what we hoped to see happen, and also how we came together for the common good around common goals, and therefore representing in a historic arc the success of this remarkable nation.

Well, as we live in this period of breathtaking change, we are called upon to respond similarly. Democratic transitions are

underway in North Africa and the Middle East, whose outcomes are not known. Syrians are undergoing horrific assault by a brutal dictator. The end of the story has not yet been written. The United States has ended combat operations in Iraq, but the future of Iraq is not secure. And in Afghanistan, NATO and our ISAF partners have begun transitioning responsibility for security to the Afghan people.

Now, these and other shifts are taking place in the context of broader trends – the rise of emerging powers, the spread of technology that is connecting more people in more places, and empowering them to influence global events and participate in the global economy like never before. And this is all occurring against the backdrop of a recovering economy from the worst recession in recent memory.

Now, amid all this change, there are some things we can count on. One is the unbreakable bond between America and Europe, a bond created by shared values and common purpose. In virtually every challenge we face today, Europe is America's partner of first resort. We're working together in the Middle East and North Africa, in Afghanistan, and reaching out to emerging powers and regions, like those nations in the Asia Pacific.

Now, we will always work together, Europe and America. That won't change. But the way we work together must change when the times require it. We have to test ourselves regularly, making sure we are focusing on the right problems and putting our resources where they're needed most. At the State Department and USAID, I started a process designed to do just that: the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, modeled on a similar review that the Defense Department undertakes every four years. We finished that first review more than a year ago, and it continues to drive our effort to become more adept at responding to the threats and opportunities of our time.

Now all of this should sound familiar to those of you who are following the transformation of NATO. This alliance is no stranger to change. Fifty years ago, it was created to lay that foundation for the reemergence of Western Europe and to stand as a bulwark against Soviet aggression.

After the Cold War, NATO's mission evolved to reforming and integrating Central and Eastern Europe as they rose from decades of Communism. Then two years ago in Lisbon, the leaders of NATO set another new course for our alliance by adopting a strategic concept that takes on the security threats of the 21st century from terrorism to cyber attacks to nuclear proliferation. Next month, we will take another step in this evolution when President Obama hosts the NATO Summit in Chicago. Now, we are both eager to show off Chicago – I was born there, and he of course calls it home, and we're looking forward to making concrete progress on a number of important issues.

First, is the ongoing transition in Afghanistan. I understand that your own and Maria Zammit came back yesterday from leading a WAC mission to Afghanistan and will be reporting to your fellow group members throughout the country on what she saw there, and I'm glad the State Department could help make that trip happen.

In Lisbon, we set a goal of transitioning full responsibility for security to Afghan security forces by 2014, and they're making real progress toward that goal. Al-Qaida senior leadership has been decimated and its relationship with the Taliban is fraying.

Meanwhile, the Afghan National Security Forces are becoming stronger and more capable. Today, roughly 50 percent of the Afghan population lives in an area where they are taking responsibility for security. And this spring, the number will go up to 75 percent.

Now, I'm well-aware we've had a very difficult period in that relationship. And there is certainly a lot to be learned from the incidents that we have watched unfold. But it should not (inaudible) the fact that we have made progress and are continuing to do so. In Chicago, we will work to define the next phase in this transition, in particular, we will look to set a milestone for 2013, when ISAF will move from a predominantly combat role to a supporting role, training, advising and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces while participating in combat operations when necessary.

This milestone is consistent with the commitments we made in Lisbon because it will ensure that ISAF maintain a robust troop presence and combat capability to support the Afghan people as the transition completes. By the end of 2014, Afghans will be fully responsible. In Chicago we will discuss the form that NATO's enduring relationship with Afghanistan will then take. We also hope that, by the time we meet in Chicago, the United States will have concluded our negotiations with Afghanistan on a long-term strategic partnership between our two nations. We anticipate that a small number of forces will remain, at the invitation of the Afghan Government, for the sole purpose of training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces and continuing to pursue counterterrorism operations. But we do not seek permanent American military bases in Afghanistan or a presence that is considered a threat to the neighbors, which leads to instability that threatens the gains that have been made in Afghanistan.

It is also essential that the Afghan National Security Forces that we have worked so hard to train have sufficient, sustainable funding for the long run. We're consulting with allies and partners to reach a unified vision for how we can support these forces. We want to make it clear to the Afghan Government and the Afghan people, as well as to the insurgents and others in the region that NATO will not abandon Afghanistan.

Now, clearly our relationship with Afghanistan has its share of challenges, from the killing of American and allied troops by Afghan security personnel to the unintentional mishandling of Qu'rans and the tragic murder of Afghan civilians by Americans. People on all sides are asking tough questions about whether we can work past our differences. And while these such incidents have tested our relationship, they have also shown how resilient it is. So the transition remains on track and Afghan officials have worked with us to lower tensions. We have maintained communications at the highest levels and continue having productive discussions on complex issues, like a plan to transition detention operations. We believe a stable Afghanistan is in

America's interest, in NATO's interest, and we remain committed to working to achieve it.

We also remain committed to supporting Afghan reconciliation. Our goal is to open the door for Afghans to sit down with other Afghans and work out the future for their country. The United States has been clear about the necessary outcomes of any negotiation. Insurgents must renounce violence, abandon al-Qaida, and abide by the laws and constitution of Afghanistan, including its protections for women and minorities. If Afghanistan is ever going to reach its full potential, the rights of women, minorities, and all Afghans must be protected, and their opportunities to participate in their society must be preserved.

We've also been clear about the steps the Taliban must now take to advance the process. They must make unambiguous statements distancing themselves from international terrorism and committing to a peace process that includes all Afghans.

So the Taliban have their own choice to make. We will continue to apply military pressure, but we are prepared to work with Afghans who are committed to an inclusive reconciliation process that leads toward peace and security.

Now, as we proceed on these diplomatic and security fronts, we're also promoting economic development. Afghanistan's political future is inextricably linked to its economic future, and in fact, the economic future of the entire region. That is a lesson we have learned over and over all over the world: People need a realistic hope for a better life, a job and a chance to provide for their family. And to that end, last year in Bonn, ISAF partners adopted a vision for what we call the Transformation Decade – the period stretching from 2014 through 2024, when international assistance will encourage growth and development in the Afghan private sector. Part of that effort is an idea we call the New Silk Road, a web of economic and transit connections that will bind together a region too long torn apart by conflict and division. We're partnering with the World Bank and others to help Afghanistan integrate its economy with others in the region, to begin trading and investing with one another, and developing new sources of growth. The private sector will be crucial role in this effort.

On each of these fronts – security, diplomatic, and economic – we are helping the people of Afghanistan strengthen their country and ensure that it never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists.

Our second goal in Chicago touches on a subject that is at the center of ACT's work, our shared effort to update NATO's defense capabilities for the 21st century. Two years ago in Lisbon, our leaders laid out a vision for the alliance for the next decade. That vision commits us to ensuring that NATO can deter and defend against any threat. Yet we are taking on this challenge at a moment when the budget of every member country is stretched especially thin. So in Chicago, we will outline a clear vision of how NATO will maintain the capabilities we need in line with the resources we have. This approach works hand-in-hand with Secretary General Rasmussen's concept of smart defense, which is designed to make sure our alliance remains agile and efficient as well as strong. And I appreciate the work that has

been done from ACT in building political support throughout NATO for this innovative approach.

Here's an example of how it works in practice. We are collaborating on a new Alliance Ground Surveillance system, which uses drones to provide crucial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance information to our forces. If each country in NATO had to buy this system separately, it would be prohibitively expensive. But by pooling our resources and sharing the burden, we can provide better security for every ally at a lower cost. And in Chicago, we'll decide how to use this system as a hub for joint operations.

There are other ways we will look to strengthen our work together. In Lisbon, for example, we agreed to deploy a missile defense system to provide full coverage and protection for NATO European territory, population, and forces against the growing ballistic missile threat. In Chicago, we will look to advance that goal by developing our plans for NATO to exercise command and control of missile defense assets. We will also seek a commitment to joint exercises and training programs that deepen the habits of cooperation we have developed through our work together in Afghanistan. And we will highlight NATO's decision to extend the Baltic Air Policing Program, which reassures our Baltic allies and frees up resources they can contribute to other NATO efforts, including Afghanistan.

Finally, our third goal in Chicago will be to cement and expand our global partnerships. Now of course, NATO is and always will be a transatlantic organization, but the problems we face today are not limited to one ocean, and neither can our work be. More than 20 non-NATO countries are providing troops and resources in Afghanistan. Elsewhere, we work with non-NATO partners to fight piracy, counter violent extremism, keep peace in Kosovo. And when NATO moved to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians in Libya, it did so in lockstep with non-NATO partners from Europe and the Middle East.

And let me pause here for a moment to celebrate the role so many of you at ACT played in that effort. Operation Unified Protector was a massive and complex undertaking. It succeeded because our allies and partners collaborated smoothly, and that cooperation was made possible by the training and interoperability planning that you do here. It's no exaggeration to say that thousands of Libyans are alive today because of your work.

In Chicago we will build on these partnerships, as promised. We'll recognize the operational, financial, and political contributions of our partners across a range of efforts to defend our common values in the Balkans, Afghanistan, the Middle East, and North Africa. We want to learn what worked and what didn't, and I do believe in evidenced-based planning. And what we see in NATO is a very impressive example of that. It's not only the planning that looks forward, but it's the lessons learned that help us look backward to make that forward planning even better.

Now, the three areas I've outlined today – defining the next phase of the transition in Afghanistan, outlining a vision for addressing

21st century challenges in a period of austerity, and expanding our partnerships – shows just how much NATO has evolved over the past six decades. But they should also remind us that we must continue to evolve. Transforming any institution isn't easy, and it doesn't happen overnight. In fact, it is a project that never really ends. But we have strong leaders and the right strategies in place. And everything we have accomplished so far points toward how much we can achieve in the days and years to come. If we stay nimble and work together, we can continue to make the world more peaceful and secure.

So let me end where I started, with George Marshall. Now, I'm not sure that even someone as visionary as he could have imagined that NATO would be working together in Afghanistan, or protecting civilians in Libya from a ruthless dictator, or keeping the peace in the Balkans, but I don't think he would've been surprised. Remember, this was a man who played a part in preparing the United States for war in the First World War, rebuilding the Army between the wars, and then rebuilding it again for Korea. This is a man who always understood that our military strength was necessary but not sufficient, that what America stands for, the values that we've all (inaudible) and practiced, are really what is most attractive to the rest of the world about us.

And he was also someone who took on himself the task of selling the Marshall Plan to a country exhausted from war. I often just wonder with great admiration how he pulled it off. Here was this idea that he and President Truman and Dean Acheson and Senator Vandenberg and others decided was crucial to America's future. But just put yourself back into the mindset of someone like my father, who had finished his time in the Navy and was really only interested in getting back to business, raising a family, just having a peaceful future. And all of the sudden, the leaders of his country are saying, you know, we've just spent our blood and treasure defeating enemies that we now want to tap you to help rebuild. What an astonishing idea.

And it took visionaries (inaudible) both parties who understood what was at stake in the world that existed after the end of that horrific spasm of violence that took so many lives. And George Marshall went about the business of making the case, coming to organizations like this, speaking to civic clubs across the country, explaining why it was in America's interest. And thankfully, I would argue, he made that case. And in today's dollars, it cost about \$130 billion, so that people like my father, a small businessman, kept paying taxes that went to rebuilding countries that he had trained young men to go and fight in.

So as we look at the future before us, as complex and unpredictable as it is, we need to be guided by our own very clear-eyed view of what is in America's interests, and then to chart a path along with our partners in NATO and other nations who share the values that we believe represent the best hope for humanity – freedom and democracy, respecting the dignity and human rights of every person. And as we do that, we of course will have no guarantee of what the future holds. That's never been possible. But we will once again make the right bet, a bet on America's leadership and strength, just as we did in the 20th century, for this century and beyond.

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

(end transcript)

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WPD316 04/04/2012

State's Nides After Meeting with Pakistani FM Khar

() (382)

(begin transcript)

U.S. Department of State

Remarks by Thomas Nides

Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources

Islamabad, Pakistan

April 4, 2012

Remarks After Meeting With Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina
Rabbani Khar

I'm very pleased to be here at this pivotal time between the United States and Pakistan to engage in discussions about the future of this very, very important relationship. I am here to build upon the important conversations that have taken place over the last 10 days – including between President Zardari and Ambassador Grossman in Dushanbe and between President Obama with Prime Minister Gilani in Seoul.

As President Obama said last week when he met Prime Minister Gilani, we believe that we can achieve a balanced approach in a relationship that respects Pakistan's sovereignty and interests but also represents our concerns about our national security.

We are committed to the people of Pakistan. And, we recognize how challenging this past year has been. And, I am heartened that we are working through our differences very constructively.

Being here today proves that a sustained engagement is the most productive way forward and a hallmark of the way in which mature democracies operate. Too much is at stake for us to turn away from each other, so we must work through all of these challenges.

The United States shares an interest in the stability and prosperity of Pakistan and the region. We share the goal of growing our markets and increasing trade; and the desire for a stable, secure, and peaceful Afghanistan; and the belief in a strong, responsible civilian government.

The fight against violent extremism has claimed so many innocent lives, Pakistani lives in particular. And so, I bring a consistent message for the Pakistani people: We greatly appreciate your support and sacrifice.

The completion of the parliamentary review offers an important opportunity to ensure the relationship is enduring, strategic, and more clearly defined. And again, the United States respects Pakistan's sovereignty and interests and desires to achieve a balanced approach in our bilateral relationship.

We have different perspectives. And we will where we have those, seek to find solutions that respect each others' interests. I believe we will come out of this with a relationship that benefits both our nations.

Thank you very much.

(end transcript)

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WPD317 04/04/2012

State's Sherman on U.S.-India Partnership

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(begin transcript)

U.S. Department of State

Remarks by Wendy Sherman

Under Secretary for Political Affairs

American Center

New Delhi, India

April 2, 2012

The United States and India: An Indispensable Partnership for the
21st Century

Under Secretary Sherman: When you have that kind of
introduction, you should stop.

I am very very grateful, Tarun, for that introduction and as Tarun knows, for years I have coveted his former title as Chief Mentor. Who wouldn't want to be a Chief Mentor? And Tarun has been that for me. A Chief Mentor about the U.S.-India relationship, about diplomacy. I spent a decade in the private sector and through CII Tarun has been a leader in understanding how important the private sector is to the development of sustainable democratic market economies. Also I cannot hesitate to mention,

since we just finished Women's History Month and you've seen all the great exhibits here at the Center, I'm the first woman Under Secretary for Political Affairs in U.S. history. But Tarun has understood for a long time what many of us know, and that is to get things done takes great women. There are two, both CII and Aspen, sitting here, and my good friend Kiran who we miss dearly in Washington and are only happy that she is here now in Delhi. It's so good to see you.

Before I make my remarks I want to acknowledge one other really extraordinary professional and that is our Charge D'Affaires, Peter Burleigh.

As many of you in this audience know, also apropos Women's History Month, America is about to send to India the first woman ever to be an Ambassador to India, Nancy Powell. She was just confirmed by the Senate a few days ago and will be here, I hope, later this month. But we are indeed privileged and honored and ever so grateful that Ambassador Burleigh, who understands and knows and has so many friends here in India, came to serve as the Charge D'Affaires for these last many months. He came here only for two or three. He gets teased mercilessly that he has to go buy more suits because he's been here longer than he expected. But he is dapper as usual and ready to do whatever is necessary. And I know that all of you will join me in applause for this wonderful man who has led our Embassy and led U.S. interests, and most importantly, led the deepening of the partnership and the friendship between the United States and India for all these many months. He is not gone yet, but when he goes I know you will have him back often because we will all miss him being here.

[Applause].

I want to do an official thanks to Aspen India. As a former Aspen Strategy Group member I applaud the visionary ethos that defines the Strategy Group Track II diplomatic efforts, and I see some of my former Track II colleagues here.

Aspen's vital U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue is just one example of all of those Track II efforts. Speaking to you now as the Under Secretary for Political Affairs and now a practitioner of decidedly more Track I efforts, I can't even begin to commend the work that Aspen does and the importance of that Track II work. Both Kiran and of course Tarun and all of the members of the Aspen Strategy Group, all of the colleagues that are here today, are old friends with whom I have learned much if not most of what I know about India.

I'd also like to thank the Confederation of Indian Industry for co-sponsoring this event. CII's tireless advocacy in improving business and trade ties between our nation is lost on no one. Their vital work 117 years on makes them a force for good in India and across the world, cultivating the very people-to-people linkages that so poignantly define our relationship.

I've also had the privilege of witnessing India's stunning economic transformation from the perspective of a businesswoman for the last decade before I came back into public service. My travels have taken me to your beautiful villages, and your very bustling cities. Through these disparate journeys there

is one constant that endures for me -- my admiration for India and for its people.

I speak to today you from our American Center here in the heart of New Delhi. From where we sit roads fan out across this great and ancient land to the thriving high-tech hubs of Bangalore and Hyderabad, to the growing manufacturing centers of Pune and Chennai, and to east-west trade bridges of Kolkata and Amritsar. Few places better symbolize the vibrant ties between the United States and India than the American Center, a place where Indians come each day to meet, discuss, debate, and research, all while improving their understanding of the world and United States. I hope very soon there will be a similar venue for American students and travelers from around the United States to learn and appreciate India's rich history and culture, at the now agreed-to Indian Cultural Center in Washington, DC. I hope you all come visit that cultural center when you visit the U.S. as you are here today visiting the American Center.

As Under Secretary for Political Affairs, my portfolio covers the entire the globe -- which involves everything from dealing with challenges like Iran to maintaining our close friendships with friends and partners. Our partnership has undergone a spectacular transformation since I was last in government as Counselor at the State Department during the tenure of Secretary Albright.

I recall President Clinton's visit in 2000, which laid the foundation for our renewed engagement that culminated in the historic U.S.-India civil nuclear deal. My predecessors -- Nicholas Burns and William Burns. I probably should be Wendy Burns, but that was not to be -- both played an instrumental role in shepherding this relationship over what I like to call the transformational decade. With their indefatigable Indian counterparts -- Nirupama Rao, Shankar Menon, Shyam Saran -- they built the framework for the robust partnership we see today. I know that Dr. Henry Kissinger was just here in Delhi a few weeks ago and we should all consider how far this relationship has come from when he was in charge! He is a dear and good friend and I have read his remarks about his visit here and as always with great insight and understanding.

But despite all the progress we've witnessed, we still hear today talk of the relationship somehow being adrift. The commentariat may never be satisfied in either of our countries, but let me assure you what I know you know to be true. This is a partnership built on substance, not just rhetoric. Ask our diplomats around the world who are forging new levels of cooperation, our scientists and educators who are engaging in cutting edge research at top universities, our military personnel conducting joint exercises in the deserts of Rajasthan and the shores of Alaska.

Today, I'd like to take stock of the bilateral relationship and where we stand nearly two years after President Obama's historic visit here. At a time when observers of this relationship have some questions about its depth, I want to be frank about where our challenges lie. I want to also be equally open about the amazing opportunities I see before us and outline an ambitious agenda for the future.

Since Secretary Clinton and Minister Krishna established our bilateral Strategic Dialogue in 2009, which will take place again

in June in Washington, we have seen unprecedented levels of cooperation across the gamut of global and regional issues; economic, trade and investment; clean energy and climate change; education and development; and science and technology, health and innovation. Our cooperation is very strong and will only grow further when the Strategic Dialogue takes place again in June.

Here are just a few things we've accomplished over the last few months:

In trade and investment, the ties between our countries are strong and growing stronger. Bilateral trade topped 90 billion dollars in 2011, and will undoubtedly pass 100 billion dollars this year. That's an extraordinary sum that I think most of our citizens in both of our countries simply are not aware of.

We've had two cabinet level visits this year. Secretary of Commerce Bryson was in India just last week to support trade and investment opportunities in India's fast-growing infrastructure development. During her January visit, Secretary Sebelius of our Health and Human Services Department commemorated the Indian Global Disease and Detection Center, the 7th regional center in a global network, as a concrete example of a very extraordinary health partnership. Dr. Shah of USAID also visited in December and announced an agreement between USAID the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry to establish a platform that would support innovators from both countries to develop creative solutions to global problems.

The newly launched Open Government platform draws on the talents and accomplishments of one of the key sectors in our business and people-to-people relationships — the leading role of Indian and American software and technology innovators and developers. It also reflects the desire of both countries to make government more transparent, more accountable, more efficient and better serve our people. The decision to share this platform with third countries, for free, shows the promise of the U.S.-India relationship to promote our common values and our vision around the world.

In educating the next generation of leaders, the Fulbright-Nehru scholarship program has expanded, thanks to equal funding from the Government of India and the U.S. government, to become the largest exchange of Fulbright scholars in the world with over 80 awards each year. In June, the new Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative will announce its first eight grants, totalling 2 million dollars, which will strengthen collaboration and build partnerships between American and Indian institutions of higher learning.

Reinforcing our ongoing engagement in the Asia-Pacific, India and the U.S. launched a trilateral dialogue with Japan in December. The next round of this dialogue will take place in the months to come.

Our defense cooperation continues to expand. We just completed joint Army exercises last month that were unprecedented in their complexity and scale. Later this month, our respective navies will participate in the MALABAR exercise that will literally involve thousands of sailors and more than a dozen ships.

Following through on a joint U.S.-India initiative announced during President Obama's visit, a group of 49 Afghan women recently completed vocational training here in India. As Minister Krishna stated at the Bonn Conference, both our countries have a deep interest in an enduring presence in Afghanistan and ensuring its emergence as regional hub for trade and commerce, which I'll discuss in a moment.

The Partnership to Advance Clean Energy announced by Secretary Clinton and Minister Krishna in 2009 has set the standard for our whole-of-government approach to bilateral problem solving. In four years, we have mobilized over \$4 billion for clean energy development and deployment. That number stands to increase.

The relationship, as you can see, is on a strong and positive trajectory. But I am not just a cheerleader nor am I Pollyanna. It is a reasonable question for Indians or Americans to ask, why? Why does this partnership matter? And the answer is because on nearly every matter of strategic importance the fundamental interests of the United States and India converge. This is not a formula for alignment. It is, however, the basis for a sustained, productive strategic partnership between our two countries — one based on shared prosperity, democratic values, and solving global and regional problems in a complex and interconnected world.

I don't want to paper over what I consider to be tactical more than substantive differences on some of our key challenges, so let me try to outline American policies and priorities on some key regional issues.

Recently the press has asserted that our two countries have divergent views on Iran. I want to correct the record. Our countries share the same fundamental goals -- preserving regional stability and preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Achieving these goals requires making hard choices. We do recognize India's historical linkages with Iran and Persian culture and understand its interest in developing Iran as a gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

But we must also accept that the international community including and often a leader, led by India in its nonproliferation concerns, has serious and legitimate concerns about the nature of Iran's nuclear activities, and India and the United States have voted together four times at the International Atomic Energy Agency on resolutions expressing these concerns. India recognizes that it does not need and does not want another nuclear armed state in the region, especially one that supports proxy groups.

We are serious about our efforts to seek a diplomatic resolution and our Government has made clear publicly and privately that we believe there is time and space for diplomacy, though that time is not unlimited. Engagement is at the core of the dual-track policy we are pursuing with our P5+1 partners, but we are also applying pressure to bring about the space and the will for engagement. We do not and never seek to undermine India's energy security. India's partnership and willingness to press Iran in whatever ways are appropriate for India to fulfill its international obligations, that's Iran's international obligations, is essential for international efforts to be successful.

With regard to Afghanistan, there's no denying that this has been a difficult year so far. But no one -- neither in the United States nor in India -- doubts the importance of our mission and what is at stake. As India full well understands, we cannot allow Afghanistan to again become a safe haven for international terrorism. This means adhering to the transition process established at Lisbon; supporting Afghan-led reconciliation efforts consistent with international redlines; building Afghan capacity; expanding regional trade and commerce; and ensuring Afghanistan's neighbors respect its sovereignty and security. We welcome and applaud the developmental support India has provided from investing in Afghanistan's natural resources to training civil servants. India's vision of an integrated and prosperous region -- articulated eloquently by Prime Minister Singh nearly five years ago -- is one we wholeheartedly share and support.

At the Chicago Summit in May, the United States in partnership with NATO partners hopes to solidify long-term international support for Afghanistan's security forces. This will send a powerful signal about our collective commitment to Afghanistan's future. The United States is also working toward completing a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan that will outline the long-term parameters of that relationship. Let there be no doubt, we remain committed to Afghanistan through transition in 2014 and in many ways beyond.

I'd also like to take a moment to note the extraordinary events taking place next door in Burma. As Secretary Clinton's visit underscored, we are committed to supporting Burma on its new path. The elections which took place yesterday and were so utterly extraordinary, we believe and I know India has long believed mark an important step forward for democracy and national reconciliation. Though only a small number of parliamentary seats are at stake, with the inclusion of Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD yesterday's events mark the first opportunity for many Burmese voters to participate in what appears to have been a genuine multi-party election. Despite our past differences on how to approach Burma, I hope we can and I know we will work with India to foster this opening to Burma and build a brighter future for its citizens.

With regards to the U.S.-India partnership, what I think you can take away from this brief review is that we essentially share the same objectives. I think one might also conclude that there is a substantial role for the United States in many of India's own foreign policy priorities, as we understand them. Our foreign policy goals increasingly require a strong, prosperous, and active India, and India needs the same from the United States. Sometimes I think that is overlooked in the context of strategic autonomy. Every country wants strategic autonomy to do what is in its own national security interests. In today's world of global markets and unconventional security challenges, I would argue that India's close partnership with the United States and the United States' close partnership with India actually gives each of us greater autonomy in the international system, not less, by furthering the rise of India as a global stakeholder and maintaining the United States' role as a global power.

So what are the big differences I would ask? They are matters of perspective and tactics. Differences that can be overcome through steady and sustained consultation and engagement, which is what we are doing, which is why I am here only two months after my counterpart Foreign Secretary Mathai came to Washington.

What does the future then hold for our partnership? To speak about the future requires us to acknowledge some of the shared challenges we will face. For instance both nations face growing resource constraints. In short, we must do more with less. Even with the growth in your economy, the demands for industrialization are enormous. But we must also seize new opportunities so that when we look back from 2025 -- I hope to still be here in 2025 -- I want us to be in a place to say the world is safer, more prosperous, and greener because of the U.S.-India relationship.

We support a bilateral relationship that maximizes our commonalities and builds upon our potential. I assure you that the problems that we'll face in the next 5, 20, and even 100 years can only be solved by a United States and India that enjoy strategic, people-to-people, economic, and entrepreneurial interconnectivity.

We must work together to strengthen global economic and financial institutions. As Secretary Clinton noted last year, our foreign and economic relations remain indivisible. The United States is fully committed to a bilateral economic relationship that is mutually beneficial for both countries. Ambassador Rao is right to say that one of India's foremost priorities must lie in "intensified economic engagement with the world." Economic growth is a necessity for both our nations. Entrepreneurs in the United States and in India consistently push the envelope of what we think is possible, whether it's the \$35 tablet or innovations in manned space flight, and it is for their sake our respective governments must do all that we can not to limit full potential. We seek an ambitious economic partnership that will deliver the long-awaited benefits of a bilateral investment treaty, expanding opportunities for investors in both our countries, and doubling trade within the next decade.

We seek a robust multi-faceted relationship that gives officials outside Delhi and Washington a stake in the relationship, so that the mayor of Fresno, California can discuss new agricultural seed varieties with his counterpart in Punjab; or the Chief Minister of Rajasthan can exchange strategies for alternative energy with the Governor of Texas. My own home state has already sent Governor O'Malley here to India to develop relations as well. Over the last decade growing relations between our states and cities have further incubated the vast people-to-people ties that are the foundation of our partnership. In the fields of education, business, or innovation, more connectivity is happening actually outside of Delhi and outside of Washington than ever before.

We envision an energy relationship where American-designed nuclear plants power homes in Andhra Pradesh and Atlanta alike, and our scientists work together to develop alternative energy sources that will meet the demands of tomorrow. A future where both our countries are high performing, low carbon, and energy secure economies.

We support Indian leadership in Asia. As the Secretary stated in her Chennai address last year, we view India as a pillar of economic and political stability in the Asia Pacific. India's growing commercial ties with Bangladesh; its historic progress in fostering trade with Pakistan; strategic investments in Afghan mining; or tapping Central Asian energy resources, India's Asia strategy of supporting open markets and open societies will reap enormous benefits for all segments of its society. And engagement in Asia means across all of Asia, including the Indian Ocean region. As my counterpart Foreign Secretary Mathai said recently, "the Indian Ocean is central to India's economy and its security -- a region of growing strategic attention."

We believe in the power of technology to create new opportunities for our citizens. I can't think of an area where there is more potential for cooperation and co-investment. Innovative technologies have the power to change in a single generation the way we travel, commute, communicate, work, and live.

People ask me what's changed most since I left the department a decade ago, and I can say it in one word -- Blackberries. Nothing is the same, and that will change ten years from now in ways none of us can even imagine.

Our private sectors must drive these efforts. Our governments must remove the barriers and impediments that constrain their progress. We have no choice in the matter. From power generation and resource management, to road development and smart growth, India can rely on the United States to be a partner in finding the technological solutions of tomorrow.

We want a defense relationship where at a moment's notice our militaries could plan a joint peacekeeping operation or a humanitarian evacuation. Where our scientists and industry leaders ask not only how much or how many, but why not? The next level in our relationship will require bureaucratic changes in both our governments, but this is an area of the relationship where we cannot afford to be unambitious. To soldiers, sailors, airmen, businesspersons, scientists in both countries, what is our next great project that takes advantage of talented citizenry and contributes to our common defense?

We believe in the power of the New Silk Road, or the Grand Trunk Road, or traditional trading routes -- whatever title you want to give it. We envision a network of economic and transit connections running throughout Central and South Asia. Road and rail networks, power grids, gas pipelines -- these are the physical manifestations of the New Silk Road and we hope to see them realized by 2025.

India's role in this transformation is of course vital and in many ways you were there long before we started talking about it. It will take time before we see Turkmen gas flowing to South Asia or iron ore being mined from Hajigak, but each small step moves us closer towards realizing a grand vision for the future of the region -- a future where Afghanistan will have its best chance to be stable, secure, and increasingly prosperous. This is not news to the government of India or the Indian private sector, both of which have been actively investing in Afghanistan for years. Whether in agri-business, energy, textiles, extractive industries, construction, transport, logistics -- I could go on and on. Current estimates

suggest India-Afghanistan trade could double to \$1 billion by 2012. Even today, India accounts for one-quarter of Afghanistan's exports. Prime Minister Singh has said that he dreams of a day when one can have breakfast in Amritsar, lunch in Lahore, and dinner in Kabul. We have begun to see the region implement the logistics of that vision.

Finally, we seek to build a wide ranging security relationship at the local, state, and federal level that can address the unconventional security threats our two countries face in the 21st century. Whether it's a Lashkar-e-Taiba operative plotting a terrorist attack against our citizens, a pirate endangering freedom of navigation on the high seas, or an internet hacker seeking to exploit sensitive information through a cyber attack, governments, private industry, and civil society must be able to work together in real time to address these asymmetrical threats.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is an ambitious agenda. But I'm confident that our partnership -- what President Obama has called one of the defining relationships of the 21st century, is up to the task. Our indispensable partnership with India -- based on equity, mutual respect, and close dialogue -- will be essential to ensuring that the 21st Century is one of open markets, free societies, and global transparent norms.

I want to close by speaking directly to the young people in this audience. Generations before you, in both of our great nations, fought hard and made great sacrifices to achieve freedom, diversity, and a respect for human dignity. The United States and India today share having fought for these core values, embody them, and our citizens live them, in practice and in spirit.

It's been said that the biggest risk to our bilateral ties is complacency. Only because we have come so far, and brought our two countries so close, might people assume that we can shift our relations into cruise control. In fact such a pause would be a grievous error. We must take a lesson from our best companies in both countries. You can be sure that GE, Boeing, or Intel along with Tata, Reliance, or Biocon aren't going to sit back and rest on their laurels. We shouldn't either.

Over the course of this century your generation, whether in Boston or Bangalore, has a chance to build a society that lifts your fellow citizens out of poverty, provides economic growth unparalleled in human history, where you can be agents for positive, democratic change in some of the toughest places in the world. I challenge all of you as your parents and your grandparents did, to be driven and selfless, entrepreneurial and yes, diplomatic, in order to enact positive change in your local community, your nation, and in the global society.

Thank you very much.

Moderator: Ambassador Sherman, thank you so much.

We have a little bit of time for a few questions and answers. I would ask our co-sponsor, Mr. Tarun Das to start us off.

Question: Thank you, Michael.

Wendy, you gave a great vision of the relationship and also a very comprehensive review of what we are doing together.

I wanted to ask you about one issue which troubles me a little bit. It touches the lives of 600-700 million people in this country. It could involve all the states of our country, but many of the states of your country. It involves going back in time because you were our partner in the '60s, and this is not about aid. This is about technology and this is about productivity and this is about food and agriculture.

I think that we are going to now pass a new food law, a food security law which will create a huge pressure on our system to provide for the 1.2, 1.3 billion people. I know there is an Indo-U.S. agricultural initiative and I was involved with the Indo-U.S.-EU forum work. But it's not getting that level of attention. It's not getting the priority. But this could be a big thing, a big thing that touches the federal governments of the two countries, the state governments, the companies, the universities, the people who are doing research, and connect the two into a huge movement to upgrade our agricultural technology, our agricultural production, and I think there would be an expansion of the market and the economy. It's a win/win all around. Would you like to comment on that?

Under Secretary Sherman: I think we've found the next project that Tarun Das is going to co-lead. [Laughter].

I couldn't agree with you more. It's an easy answer because those 600 million people who are dependent upon often subsistence agriculture, subsistence farming, need to know that there is food security ahead. I congratulate India for taking what is a very difficult step to try to ensure that for all of its citizens.

Everywhere I go in the world this is the crux of any country that is facing a trajectory of greater development. Many of those countries do not have the resources even that India has to tackle this. And if indeed India perhaps working in partnership with the United States and maybe others could put together such an example of how to achieve food security using both technology, new ways of transport, new ways of retain, new ways of getting food to markets, creating new export markets, new import trajectories.

India was obviously a leader in the Green Revolution and there's been a lot of discussion about whether we need a second Green Revolution when it comes to food. But I think it's much more complicated than that. I don't think it is just about the next seed variety, although that certainly may be part of the answer. It is also about the movement to urbanization. It's about really the entire fabric of the society.

So Tarun, I think it's a terrific project. I think it takes extraordinary leadership because it is a very complex undertaking, but I would be glad, and I know Ambassador Burleigh would, and Ambassador Powell to follow him, to talk about ways that we could work on such a project together. And the reason I volunteered you is because I think it is absolutely a public/private partnership. This is not something that government alone can do, and actually will have to be driven enormously by the private

sector because they have so much at stake in it and so many of their interests are tied up in it.

We all know about the political choices that have to be made about agricultural subsidies around the world, not just here in India or in the United States, but worldwide. So this is a complex market dynamic as well as a day-to-day issue for people about whether they're going to eat or not.

So it's from the top to the bottom of the food chain, literally, so I agree with you, this is a very big and important objective here in India and around the world and I think it would be great if the U.S.-India partnership could help lead the way. So thank you for asking the question.

I should note, it's not public yet, but I'm sure I won't be surprised if even food security becomes a topic for many of the G8 discussions that take place around the world -- the G8, the G20 -- food security is a top priority worldwide. Thank you.

Question: Thank you, Ambassador, while we are continuing with the core values of democracy and the rest, is it possible to think of a paradigm change in our relationships, not only the national issues but also the global issues? Because now we are in a situation that everything has become global. Poverty as well as wealth; security and insecurity. So when we want to win over the people and do something to the people, can we transcend the limitations of borders and the nationhood, and in place of [inaudible] can we have more [inaudible]? In place of security concerns, can we have assured capability strategies? And in place of threat by power, can we replace that with [inaudible] and win over the poorest of the poor? Not only in India, but also in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, in other places so that the two democracies, two great democracies of the world, can really think through the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King?

Under Secretary Sherman: Thank you. I think that's a vision we share. Exactly the values that you set out, exactly the desire to focus on the opportunities rather than the threats. To get to that place however, one has to deal with some of those threats, whether we wish to or not. And part of that is in fact to try to change the paradigm, as you suggest, to a place where people think about the positive as opposed to the negatives. But we have a ways to go before we get there, and it is why exactly as I said in my remarks, it's important to use this tremendous partnership that we have with each other to try to achieve those objectives. So thank you very much.

Question: Thank you very much. It's been a very profound and enlightening presentation by you. A very important factor that would help our bilateral relationships is the capacity building. We have such a huge manpower of young people, and you made good references to them, and there has been a lot of discussion and talk about American education system coming into India, and greater opportunities for Indians to acquire the best of American education and technology, scientific.

How to forge ahead on the greater capacity building of both the populations is crucial. I feel this deserves also a greater amount of

priority apart from what you have already addressed about resource sharing, about bilateral trade, about security.

So I feel that some mechanism has to be forged ahead whereby there will be a smoother progress made in this field.

Secondly, as a member of the Bahá'í community I'm always thankful to the U.S. government for the resolutions it passes condemning the violations of the Bahá'í community in Iran. Recently Senator Kirk spearheaded a resolution and the Bahá'í of India as well as the world is always thankful to the U.S. government for recognizing this aspect of human rights.

So I feel the capacity building aspect needs to be also given greater priority because otherwise such a huge young population in this country is neglected because our own educational infrastructure with just 300 to 400 universities, the U.S. with 3,500 plus universities, there can be some better systems, towards looking to this aspect.

Under Secretary Sherman: Thank you. Several comments.

One, when Secretary Clinton became Secretary of State one of the priorities she set was to address youth around the world and to put a focus on young people. Not only their educational needs but their aspirations, and what we owe to the next generation. So we do a lot of youth training all around the world.

Here in India I think experts say by 2030 India will be the largest everything. The largest population, the largest middle class, probably still the largest poor in the world, but also the largest cohort of young people, as well as you'll probably have the largest cohort of older people. You're just going to have the largest everything. So you're quite right to focus on young people which is why that's where I ended in my address.

When we have the Strategic Dialogue in June we are going to alongside of it continue a terrific education dialogue, and your Minister of Education, our Minister of Education, will be building on many initiatives between our countries, including India's efforts to build its university system so that that higher education is there for your young people as they come up in the world.

So I think this capacity building is quite crucial. There are many societies around the world that 40, 50 percent of the population is under 18, and many many many more countries where more than half the population is under the age of 30. So investments in education are crucial.

I'm going tomorrow to Patna, and obviously one of the things that Nitish Kumar has done is to put in place a greater focus on education and I'm happy to say also girl's education to make sure the kids go to school and stay in school and get literacy skills, and all of these kinds of efforts that India has started to do in just tons and tons of new ideas. It's useful here in India. We want to support that where we can. And very useful for countries all over the world.

Question: [Inaudible] Madame, on security. [Inaudible]. What do you come to know at the diplomatic level about increasing our cooperation between two countries? When you go to the people at

the ground level, but I've collected the feedback from the people, [inaudible] restaurant, [inaudible] also, because I belong to the village. [Inaudible]. What is [inaudible] security [inaudible]? I hope you are getting my hint as what I mean. [Inaudible]. The people of India [inaudible]. Why? And when you will start calling a spade a spade. Unless we do that the people [inaudible]. [Inaudible], yes, this is what has happened in America, this is what has happened in India, in Parliament, [inaudible].

When I go back to [inaudible].

Under Secretary Sherman: Thank you for your comments and for your question.

I think that the United States and India are working very well together on counterterrorism. And India and the United States are both part of the Global Counterterrorism Forum that has met already and will meet again in June; and both the United States and India I think will be present at that forum which will take place in Istanbul this time. The first meeting was at the UN General Assembly last year. And it is quite crucial that we continue to work in this regard.

We have just posted on our website as part of our rewards program a 10 million dollar reward and a 2 million dollar reward for leaders of Lashkar-e-Taiba. And I think that we are very committed to this effort, as is India. And it is very crucial whether it is in India where the United States also lost 6 Americans in the attack in Mumbai or it is anywhere else in the world because there are acts of terror elsewhere always in the world. I was just in five countries in Africa which face constant threats as well. That we all use these global forums to try to deal with this asymmetric threat which is crucial for all of us. And it is something that India brings skills and capabilities to the table, we bring skills and capabilities to the table, as do other countries. And we must all join together to deal with this threat, so thank you for raising the concern.

Moderator: Thank you all very much -- Ambassador Sherman, Mr. Das, Mr. Ambassador Burleigh and all of you. We really appreciate your time and your thinking and your thoughtfulness.

I apologize, I know there are so many questions left. I would encourage you to stay in touch with us as we continue this dialogue with our visitors from Washington as well as on-line through our Facebook page as well as through our web sites and our Twitter feeds.

Again my gratitude to you, ma'am, and to all of you for being here. Thank you very much.

(end transcript)

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U.S. Elections: 2012 Primary Schedule

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The 2012 Republican primary/caucus schedule below is based on the most current information available from state election boards. (President Obama's nomination by the Democratic Party is not contested.)

For those states holding primaries, voters go to polling places and cast their ballots. In caucus states, voters gather in meeting places throughout the state to discuss candidates and reach a consensus on which candidate they will support.

DATE	STATE	OUTCOME (top three finishers)
January 3	Iowa (caucus)	Rick Santorum, 25 percent Mitt Romney, 25 percent Ron Paul, 21 percent
January 10	New Hampshire (primary)	Mitt Romney, 39 percent Ron Paul, 23 percent Jon Huntsman, 17 percent
January 21	South Carolina (primary)	Newt Gingrich, 40 percent Mitt Romney, 28 percent Rick Santorum, 17 percent
January 31	Florida (primary)	Mitt Romney, 46 percent Newt Gingrich, 32 percent Rick Santorum, 13 percent
February 4	Nevada (caucus)	Mitt Romney, 59 percent Newt Gingrich, 21 percent Ron Paul, 19 percent
February 4-11	Maine (caucus)	Mitt Romney, 39 percent Ron Paul, 36 percent Rick Santorum, 18 percent
February 7	Colorado (caucus)	Rick Santorum, 40 percent Mitt Romney, 35 percent Newt Gingrich, 13 percent
February 7	Minnesota (caucus)	Rick Santorum, 45 percent Ron Paul, 27 percent Mitt Romney, 17 percent
February 7	Missouri (primary)	Rick Santorum, 55 percent Mitt Romney, 25 percent Ron Paul, 12 percent
February 28	Arizona (primary)	Mitt Romney, 47 percent

		Rick Santorum, 27 percent Newt Gingrich, 16 percent
February 28	Michigan (primary)	Mitt Romney, 41 percent Rick Santorum, 38 percent Ron Paul, 12 percent
March 3	Washington (caucus)	Mitt Romney, 38 percent Ron Paul, 25 percent Rick Santorum, 24 percent
March 6	Alaska (caucus) (Super Tuesday)	Mitt Romney, 33 percent Rick Santorum, 29 percent Ron Paul, 24 percent
March 6	Georgia (primary)	Newt Gingrich, 47 percent Mitt Romney, 26 percent Rick Santorum, 20 percent
March 6	Idaho (caucus)	Mitt Romney, 62 percent Rick Santorum, 18 percent Ron Paul, 18 percent
March 6	Massachusetts (primary)	Mitt Romney, 72 percent Rick Santorum, 12 percent Ron Paul, 10 percent
March 6	North Dakota (caucus)	Rick Santorum, 40 percent Ron Paul, 28 percent Mitt Romney, 24 percent
March 6	Ohio (primary)	Mitt Romney, 38 percent Rick Santorum, 37 percent Newt Gingrich, 15 percent
March 6	Oklahoma (primary)	Rick Santorum, 34 percent Mitt Romney, 28 percent Newt Gingrich, 27 percent
March 6	Tennessee (primary)	Rick Santorum, 37 percent Mitt Romney, 28 percent Newt Gingrich, 24 percent
March 6	Vermont (primary)	Mitt Romney, 40 percent Ron Paul, 26 percent Rick Santorum, 24 percent
March 6	Virginia (primary)	Mitt Romney, 59 percent Ron Paul, 41 percent
March 6-10	Wyoming (caucus)	Mitt Romney, 44 percent Rick Santorum, 28 percent Ron Paul, 12 percent
March 10	Guam (caucus)	Mitt Romney, 100 percent

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March 13	Alabama (primary)	Rick Santorum, 35 percent
		Newt Gingrich, 29 percent
		Mitt Romney, 29 percent
+-----+		
March 13	Hawaii (caucus)	Mitt Romney, 45 percent
		Rick Santorum, 25 percent
		Ron Paul, 18 percent
+-----+		
March 13	Mississippi (primary)	Rick Santorum, 33 percent
		Newt Gingrich, 31 percent
		Mitt Romney, 30 percent
+-----+		
March 20	Illinois (primary)	Mitt Romney, 47 percent
		Rick Santorum, 35 percent
		Ron Paul, 9 percent
+-----+		
March 24	Louisiana (primary)	Rick Santorum, 49 percent
		Mitt Romney, 27 percent
		Newt Gingrich, 16 percent
+-----+		
April 3	District of Columbia (primary)	Mitt Romney, 70 percent
		Ron Paul, 12 percent
		Newt Gingrich, 11 percent
+-----+		
April 3	Maryland (primary)	Mitt Romney, 49 percent
		Rick Santorum, 29 percent
		Newt Gingrich, 11 percent
+-----+		
April 3	Wisconsin (primary)	Mitt Romney, 43 percent
		Rick Santorum, 38 percent
		Ron Paul, 12 percent
+-----+		
April 24	Connecticut (primary)	
	Delaware (primary)	
	New York (primary)	
	Pennsylvania (primary)	
	Rhode Island (primary)	
+-----+		
May 8	Indiana (primary)	
	North Carolina (primary)	
	West Virginia (primary)	
+-----+		
May 15	Nebraska (primary)	
	Oregon (primary)	
+-----+		
May 22	Arkansas (primary)	
	Kentucky (primary)	
+-----+		
May 29	Texas (primary)	
+-----+		
June 5	California (primary)	
	Montana (primary)	

to select convention delegates, and who the delegates choose will be announced after events in May and June.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/iipdigital-en/index.html>)

Missouri held a nonbinding primary on February 7 that did not select delegates to the 2012 Republican National Convention. Instead, the Missouri Republican Party held a caucus on March 17