

Remarks With President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan on Signing the Strategic Partnership Agreement in Kabul, Afghanistan

May 2, 2012

[President Karzai's remarks were joined in progress.]

President Karzai. —prosperity and peace for the people of Afghanistan.

Stability in Afghanistan and peace in Afghanistan—people will sleep, will be safe in their house, and also law-abiding citizens. Their life will be—will not threat their life by any forces. The people of Afghanistan in past three decades, they didn't have this, so now they want. This is the responsibility of Government of Afghanistan to fulfill the wishes of the people of Afghanistan to a better life, better future, and peace and prosperity and changing to reality for them.

For us, people of Afghanistan, as we know, this is a very important years in our life of our country and the people of Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan want the transition Afghanistan before the 2014—end of—we will get all the responsibility to—and the end of—take the responsibility for the people of Afghanistan as one of our responsibility to—we have to take to—*[inaudible]*.

With the—accepting this responsibility of this—all the forces who were in Afghanistan past 10 years, they worked with us, helped us, and support us—go back to their country. And of course, the people of Afghanistan will never forget their help and their support and also their relationship with this country. We will start a new start with this relationship, and we will continue with this relationship.

And, Mr. President, sir, I just want to say, and this—all the help and support the people of the United States and—to the people of Afghanistan did it, I thank you for that from the bottom my heart, sir. And I just—well, thank you. And also, we just want to thank you, sir, for the—all the—which is provide all the necessary to bring this strategic partnership for signing today—or tonight. And I just thank your—all your team, which is Ryan Crocker—Ambassador Crocker, General Allen. I thank them for the hard work that with our team worked together. They were—very patiently worked together and continue this dialogue. Today we will see the result of this talking and communication. Today we sign it.

And I just want to thank you. I just ask you to, sir, to give your speech, sir. Thank you very much.

President Obama. President Karzai, leaders of the Afghan Government and society who are here, and most of all, to the Afghan people, thank you so much for welcoming me here today, especially in these beautiful surroundings.

I too want to thank Ambassador Ryan Crocker and National Security Adviser Spanta and their teams for the extraordinary work that brought about this day.

I've come to Afghanistan to mark a historic moment for our two nations, and to do so on Afghan soil. I'm here to affirm the bonds between our countries, to thank American and Afghans who have sacrificed so much over these last 10 years, and to look forward to a future of peace and security and greater prosperity for our nations.

Neither Americans nor the Afghan people asked for this war. Yet for a decade, we've stood together to drive Al Qaida from its camps, to battle an insurgency, and to give the people of Afghanistan the possibility to live in peace and in dignity. The wages of war have been great for both our nations. But today, with the signing of the strategic partnership agreement, we look forward to a future of peace.

Together, we've made much progress. We've reached an agreement to transition detention facilities to Afghan control and to put Afghans in the lead on special operations. And today we're agreeing to a—to be long-term partners in combating terrorism and training Afghan security forces and strengthening democratic institutions and supporting development and protecting human rights of all Afghans. With this agreement, the Afghan people and the world should know that Afghanistan has a friend and a partner in the United States.

Mr. President, there will be difficult days ahead. But as we move forward with our transition, I'm confident that Afghan forces will grow stronger, the Afghan people will take control of their future. With this agreement, I am confident that the Afghan people will understand that the United States will stand by them, and they will know that the United States can achieve our goal of destroying Al Qaida and denying it a safe haven, but at the same time, we have the capacity to wind down this war and usher in a new era of peace here in Afghanistan.

Mr. President, I'm reminded of all who made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, including members of your own family. I pay tribute to those Afghans who have lost their lives alongside our men and women and sacrificed for their country. Of course, our hearts are heavy as we remember so many who have died in this war. I'm grateful that this agreement pays tribute to the sacrifices made by the American people here in Afghanistan.

As I've said before, the United States has not come here to claim resources or to claim territory. We came with a very clear mission: We came to destroy Al Qaida. And we have enormous respect for Afghan sovereignty and the dignity of the Afghan people. Together, we're now committed to replacing war with peace and pursuing a more hopeful future as equal partners.

To borrow words from this agreement, we "are committed to seeking a future of justice, peace, security, and opportunity." And I'm confident that although our challenges are not yet behind us, that the future before us is bright.

Thank you so much, Mr. President.

President Karzai. Thank you.

[*At this point, President Obama and President Karzai signed the agreement.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 a.m. at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to National Security Adviser Rangin Dadfar Spanta of Afghanistan. President Karzai referred to Gen. John R. Allen, USMC, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan. President Karzai spoke in Pashto and Dari, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Afghanistan, strategic partnership agreement with U.S., signing; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Afghanistan, President Karzai.

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Names: Crocker, Ryan C.; Karzai, Hamid; Spanta, Rangin Dadafar.

Subjects: Afghanistan : Afghan military and security forces; Afghanistan : Detention facilities, transfer of responsibility to Afghan forces; Afghanistan : Former regime; Afghanistan : Insurgency and terrorist attacks; Afghanistan : President; Afghanistan : President Obama's visit; Afghanistan : Relations with U.S.; Afghanistan : Relations with U.S. ; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Casualties; Brazil : Security cooperation with U.S.; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts.

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