

# Press Releases: Remarks at a Meeting With Employees and Family Members of U.S. Embassy Islamabad

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

U.S. Embassy Islamabad

Islamabad, Pakistan

October 24, 2017

---

**AMBASSADOR HALE:** Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us. I don't think that – if there's one person who does not need an introduction at an American embassy, it's the Secretary of State, so I feel a little superfluous. But just to take one moment, before you, Mr. Secretary, is an extraordinary team, one of – has to be one of the hardest working, most highly motivated and most disciplined groups under your command. And we're very grateful that you'd take time out of one of those three-country days to spend a few moments with all of us. Thank you.

(Applause.)

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Well, thank you. Thank you very much, Ambassador Hale, and thank you for the leadership that you provide over here to both our embassy here, but also the three consular offices. I think we have someone of theirs – some of them joining us, I think, by VTC back there. Yeah, okay. They're waving; they can see. Nice to see you.

Well, it is a – it's a real pleasure to have the opportunity to touch down here in Pakistan on what's a fairly torrid pace, if you've been following our travels over the last few days, but a very important stop as we're – we've come to the country to talk further with the leadership about President Trump's South Asia strategy. And Pakistan has an incredibly important role in that South Asia strategy. The country is very important to us. The security, the stability of the country is very important to us. And many of the solutions to the regional challenges are – have to be found here as well in dealing with the leadership in Pakistan, and so we're here to have further discussions about that.

This mission, obviously extremely important to us. We know the challenges

that you live with day in and day out. It's not an easy place. It's challenging from a work standpoint, we know, but it's also challenging from a personal standpoint. And I'm mindful of the situation that many of you are serving under here, long way away from family; you've got family members back home. And I know what it means to miss a lot of important events with families, whether it's birthdays or weddings or graduations. Regrettably, I missed a few over my life as well when I was in some locations that I could not take my family to live with me either. But really appreciate your service, your commitment, your willingness to provide what you do on behalf of the United States of America.

The most important thing you provide is that face of what the American people mean to the rest of the world, our commitment to the rest of the world, our commitment to a secure world, our commitment to a prosperous world, and most importantly, and what many of you do, is a commitment to a hopeful world. And so all the work you do, whether it be on educational, health, providing capacity around the country, just really speaks to the compassion of the American people, and the fact that we do care about this part of the world and we do care about Pakistan. And so how you go about that is extremely important to us.

Also want to recognize the importance of our locally employed staff. Many of you are the continuity of this place. As your colleagues from the U.S. come and go – and they do come and go on a fairly frequent basis – your continuity that you provide, you maintain a lot of the capability for us. You allow us to get the things done that are necessary to do, and you provide many of the continuity with important relationships as well. And so your value to our ability to achieve mission is something that I cannot overstate.

I think this is a – obviously, it's a very active mission with so many agencies represented here and in our consular offices around the country, a strong military relationship here and cooperation. And so the posture you're in here is extremely important, again, to the United States.

So we're looking forward to having productive discussions with the leadership of the country. We're going to be very open, very frank about the challenges that we see, how we need to work together to address those challenges, certain things we really need for the Pakistan leadership to undertake, but we also want them to understand we're here to work together as partners, and we should be working toward the same objective. I know everyone wants a peaceful, stable, secure Pakistan with great opportunity for economic growth. And we do see great opportunity for U.S.-Pakistan economic growth as well. And having a stable environment is really important to promoting the opportunities for U.S. businesses to come to Pakistan, invest, conduct business, and also to invite Pakistani businesses to invest in the United States.

So once again, I want to thank all of you for the important role that you play for us here in Pakistan. You'll recall, if you saw my address when I joined the State Department, the day I entered the building I had three things that I told you are important to me that I wanted to make important to all of you. And first is your safety and security, and the safety and

security that I want you to assume responsibility for yourself and for those standing around you. Each of us have a responsibility in that regard.

The second is accountability. We hold ourselves accountable for our results; we hold ourselves accountable for our mistakes; we hold ourselves accountable so that we can learn. And lastly, is respect for one another. We have to treat each other with respect every day, in every activity. If we hold ourselves accountable, we can hold others accountable that we're dealing with. If we treat each other with respect, it's a great habit of how to treat others with respect as we go about carrying out the important work here in Pakistan.

So I appreciate, again, the opportunity to just say a few words to you. I'd like to make the crowd and shake every hand in here. I don't know that I'm going to be allowed to do that, but again, thank you for everything you do. And again, thank you Ambassador Hale for your leadership.

(Applause.)

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*