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Bangladesh takes stern steps to curb homegrown extremists: Ambassador Ziauddin

The Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA, Mohammad Ziauddin, today (Wednesday) said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has taken tough measures to weed-out homegrown extremists who have recently killed innocent people including foreigners in Bangladesh.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Mr. William J. Burns, the President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the oldest international affairs reputed Think Tank of the USA, today.

The Ambassador mentioned about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 'zero tolerance' stance against all forms of terrorism and violent extremism. He briefed the Carnegie President on various steps taken by the present government to curb the homegrown radical extremists.

He spoke about the Bangladesh-US cooperation on intelligence sharing as well as long-term government strategy of eliminating terrorism from its roots in Bangladesh by means of modern madrasa education and women empowerment.

The Ambassador also briefed him about the tragic past of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the assassination of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a number of assassination attempts on the Prime Minister and the rise of violent extremism during the government (2001-2006) of the BNP-Jamaat alliance.

Ambassador Burns retired from the U.S. Foreign Service in 2014 after a thirty three-year diplomatic career. He held the highest rank in the Foreign Service, a career ambassador, and is only the second serving career diplomat in history to become deputy secretary of state.

Ambassador Ziauddin spoke about various aspects of Bangladesh-US bilateral relations with particular focus on terrorism, women empowerment, climate change and duty-free quota-free market access of the LDCs to the American market.

The Ambassador informed that 90 percent of the garments workers of Bangladesh are women who make immense contribution to their families, especially temperate influence on their men folks. In this connection, he reiterated that the US Government should consider providing duty free quota free (DFQF) access of all LDCs including Bangladesh to the US market on the basis of justice. Currently USA, is providing DFQF access to only 34 LDCs out of 48 LDCs under AGOA, whereas the European Union provides DFQF facilities to all the LDCs. The Ambassador further added that the DFQF facilities for Bangladesh will ensure further growth of garments industry in Bangladesh, leading to more women workers and their empowerment and their positive influence on their men folks, thus containing and eliminating violent extremism in the long run from Bangladesh.

Ambassador Burns thanked Ambassador Ziauddin for the briefing. He said that the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has recently opened an office in New Delhi which will cover all South Asian countries. Ambassador Burns also said that he is well informed about various issues of Bangladesh including the workplace safety and the recent terrorist incidents of Bangladesh. He appreciated Bangladesh government's various initiatives to curb terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. Toufique Hasan, Counsellor (Political) accompanied the Ambassador during the meeting.

