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Kerry Remarks in Indonesia on Climate Change

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REMARKS

**Secretary of State John Kerry
On Climate Change**

**February 16, 2014
@america
Jakarta, Indonesia**

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you, Robert. Thank you very, very much. I don't know. I think some of you were cheering twice for the same university. I don't know. (Laughter.) It seemed to come from the same place anyway.

What a pleasure to be here at America, where we are looking at all of the air conditioning pipes running right through here. I love it. The spirit and feel of this place is very special and it's wonderful to see our friends up here from Kalimantan and also everybody from Sumatra. Thank you very much for being with us. Can you hear me? Yeah! Wave! (Laughter.) Do a few selfies, everybody will – (laughter.) Anyway, it's really a pleasure to be here. I see a lot of iPads up in the air sort of flashing away.

This is special. Ambassador Blake, thank you for doing this. Thank you all for coming here today. I want to welcome all of those of you who are tuning in elsewhere, some of you who are watching on a home webcast, and we're delighted to have you here. It's really a pleasure for me to be able to be back in Jakarta, back in Indonesia, where you have one of the richest ecosystems on Earth. And you live in a country that is at the top of the global rankings for both marine and terrestrial biodiversity, and you have a human ecosystem that includes some 300 ethnic groups, speaking at least 700 languages – extraordinary place.

But because of climate change, it is no secret that today, Indonesia is also one of the most vulnerable countries on Earth.

This year, as Secretary of State, I will engage in a series of discussions on the urgency of addressing climate change – particularly on the national security implications and the economic opportunities. And I want you to think about those. But I wanted to start right here, in Jakarta, because this city – this country – this region – is really on the front lines of climate change. It's not an exaggeration to say to you that the entire way of life that you live and love is at risk. So let's have a frank conversation about this threat and about what we, as citizens of the world, need to be able to do to address it.

Some time ago I travelled to another vibrant city – a city also rich with its own rich history – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. And I was there, sitting in a big room, surrounded by representatives from about 170 countries. We listened as expert after expert after expert described the growing threat of climate change and what it would mean for the world if we failed to act. The Secretary General of the conference was – he was an early leader on climate change, a man by the name of Maurice Strong, and he told us – I quote him: "Every bit of evidence I've seen persuades me that we are on a course leading to tragedy."

Well, my friends, that conference was in 1992. And it is stunning how little the conversation has really changed since then.

When I think about the array of global climate – of global threats – think about this: terrorism, epidemics, poverty, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – all challenges that know no borders – the reality is that climate change ranks right up there with every single one of them.

And it is a challenge that I address in nearly every single country that I visit as Secretary of State, because President Obama and I believe it is urgent that we do so.

And the reason is simple: The science of climate change is leaping out at us like a scene from a 3D movie. It's warning us; it's compelling us to act. And let there be no doubt in anybody's mind that the science is absolutely certain. It's something that we understand with absolute assurance of the veracity of that science. No one disputes some of the facts about it. Let me give you an example. When an apple separates from a tree, it falls to the ground. We know that because of the basic laws of physics. No one disputes that today. It's a fact. It's a scientific fact. Science also tells us that when water hits a low enough temperature, it's going to turn into ice; when it reaches a high enough temperature, it's going to boil. No one disputes that. Science and common sense tell us if you reach out and put your hand on a hot cook stove, you're going to get burned. I can't imagine anybody who would dispute that either.

So when thousands of the world's leading scientists and five reports over a long period of time with thousands of scientists contributing to those reports – when they tell us over and over again that our climate is changing, that it is happening faster than they ever predicted, ever in recorded history, and when they tell us that we humans are the significant cause, let me tell you something: We need to listen.

When 97 percent of scientists agree on anything, we need to listen, and we need to respond.

Well, 97 percent of climate scientists have confirmed that climate change is happening and that human activity is responsible. These scientists agree on the causes of these changes and they agree on the potential effects. They agree that the emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide contributes heavily to climate change. They agree that the energy sources that we've relied on for decades to fuel our cars and to heat our homes or to air condition our homes, to – all the things that provide us electricity like oil and coal – that these are largely responsible for sending those greenhouse gases up into the atmosphere. And the scientists agree that emissions coming from deforestation and from agriculture can also send enormous quantities of carbon pollution into

our atmosphere.

And they agree that, if we continue to go down the same path that we are going down today, the world as we know it will change – and it will change dramatically for the worse.

So we know this is happening, and we know it with virtually the same certainty that we understand that if we reach out and touch that hot stove, we're going to get burned. In fact, this is not really a complicated equation. I know sometimes I can remember from when I was in high school and college, some aspects of science or physics can be tough – chemistry. But this is not tough. This is simple. Kids at the earliest age can understand this.

Try and picture a very thin layer of gases – a quarter-inch, half an inch, somewhere in that vicinity – that's how thick it is. It's in our atmosphere. It's way up there at the edge of the atmosphere. And for millions of years – literally millions of years – we know that layer has acted like a thermal blanket for the planet – trapping the sun's heat and warming the surface of the Earth to the ideal, life-sustaining temperature. Average temperature of the Earth has been about 57 degrees Fahrenheit, which keeps life going. Life itself on Earth exists because of the so-called greenhouse effect. But in modern times, as human beings have emitted gases into the air that come from all the things we do, that blanket has grown thicker and it traps more and more heat beneath it, raising the temperature of the planet. It's called the greenhouse effect because it works exactly like a greenhouse in which you grow a lot of the fruit that you eat here.

This is what's causing climate change. It's a huge irony that the very same layer of gases that has made life possible on Earth from the beginning now makes possible the greatest threat that the planet has ever seen.

And the results of our human activity are clear. If you ranked all the years in recorded history by average temperature, you'd see that 8 of the 10 hottest years have all happened within the last 10 years. Think about it this way: all 10 of the hottest years on record have actually happened since Google went online in 1998.

Now, that's how fast this change is happening. And because the earth is getting hotter at such an alarming speed, glaciers in places like the Arctic are melting into the sea faster than we expected. And the sea is rising – slowly, but rising – and will rise to dangerous levels. Scientists now predict that by the end of the century, the sea could rise by a full meter. Now, I know that to some people a meter may not sound like a lot, but I'll tell you this: it's enough to put half of Jakarta underwater. Just one meter would displace hundreds of millions of people worldwide and threaten billions of dollars in economic activity. It would put countries into jeopardy. It would put countless – I mean, come to the local level – it would put countless homes and schools and parks, entire cities at risk.

Now, climate change also tragically means the end of some species. The changing sea temperature and the increasing amount of acidity – the acidity comes from coal-fired power plants and from the pollution, and when the rain falls the rain spills the acidity into the ocean. And it means that certain species of fish like cod or sardines can no longer live where they once lived. This is devastating for the world's fisheries. And scientists predict that fisheries will be among the hardest hit. Just think about the fishermen who sell their fish catches at Pasar Ikan. Think about it. There are some studies that say that Indonesia's fisheries could actually lose up to 40 percent of what they currently bring in – so a fisherman who usually has about a hundred fish to sell one day would suddenly only have 60 or so for sale. The impact is obvious.

Climate change also means water shortages. And if you have these enormous water shortages, then you have a change in the weather – because of the weather patterns, you're going to wind up with droughts, the lack of water. And the droughts can become longer and more intense. In fact, this isn't something around the corner – this is happening now.

We are seeing record droughts right now, and they're already putting a strain on water resources around the world. We've already seen in various parts of the world – in Africa, for instance – people fighting each other over water, and we've seen more conflicts shaping up now over the limits of water. Back in the United States, President Obama just the other day visited California, where millions of people are now experiencing the 13th month of the worst drought the state has seen in

500 years. And no relief is in sight. What used to be a 100-year or a 500-year event is now repeating itself within 10 years.

Furthermore, climate change means fundamental transformations in agriculture worldwide. Scientists predict that, in some places, heat waves and water shortages will make it much more difficult for farmers to be able to grow the regular things we grow, like wheat or corn or rice. And obviously, it's not only farmers who will suffer here – it's the millions of people who depend on those crops that the farmers grow. For example, the British government research showed that climate change may have contributed to the famine that killed as many as 100,000 people in Somalia just back in 2010 and 2011.

And scientists further predict that climate change also means longer, more unpredictable monsoon seasons and more extreme weather events. Now, I'll tell you, I can't tell you – no weatherman on TV or anybody is going to be able to look at you and tell you – that one particular storm was absolutely the result of climate change. But scientists do predict that many more of these disastrous storms will occur if we continue down the current path. Ladies and gentlemen, I saw with my own eyes what the Philippines experienced in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan and I will tell you it would be absolutely devastating if that kind of storm were to become the normal thing that happens every single year in many places.

On top of the unspeakable humanitarian toll, the economic cost that follows a storm like that is absolutely massive. I don't mean just the billions that it costs to rebuild. We've seen here in Asia how extreme weather events can disrupt world trade. For example, after serious flooding in 2011, global prices for external computer hard drives rose by more than 10 percent. Why? Because electronic manufacturing zones around Bangkok were out of commission, wiped out by the weather. So it's not just about agriculture – it's also about technology. It's about our global economy. It's about potentially catastrophic effects on the global supply chain.

Now, despite all of these realities – despite these facts – much of the world still doesn't see or want to see the need to pursue a significant response to this threat. As recently as 2011, a survey of city officials here in Asia found that more than 80 percent of the population said they

did not anticipate climate change hurting their cities' economies.

And despite more than 25 years of scientific warning after scientific warning after scientific warning – despite all that, the call to arms that we heard back in Rio back in 1992 – despite that, we still haven't globally summoned the urgency necessary to get the job done. And as a result of this complacency, last year the amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere reached the highest point in human history – despite all the warnings.

Now, I know that these are some dramatic scientific facts – statistics. But think of it this way: If the worst-case scenario about climate change, all the worst predictions, if they never materialize, what will be the harm that is done from having made the decision to respond to it? We would actually leave our air cleaner. We would leave our water cleaner. We would actually make our food supply more secure. Our populations would be healthier because of fewer particulates of pollution in the air – less cost to health care. Those are the things that would happen if we happen to be wrong and we responded. But imagine if the 97 percent of those scientists are correct and the people who say no are wrong. Then the people who say no will have presented us with one of the most catastrophic, grave threats in the history of human life. That's the choice here.

Notwithstanding the stark choices that we face, here's the good thing: there is still time. The window of time is still open for us to be able to manage this threat. But the window is closing. And so I wanted to come to Jakarta to talk to you because we need people all over the world to raise their voices and to be heard. There is still time for us to significantly cut greenhouse emissions and prevent the very worst consequences of climate change from ever happening at all. But we need to move on this, and we need to move together now. We just don't have time to let a few loud interests groups hijack the climate conversation. And when I say that, you know what I'm talking about? I'm talking about big companies that like it the way it is that don't want to change, and spend a lot of money to keep you and me and everybody from doing what we know we need to do.

First and foremost, we should not allow a tiny minority of shoddy scientists and science and extreme ideologues to compete with scientific

fact. Nor should we allow any room for those who think that the costs associated with doing the right thing outweigh the benefits. There are people who say, "Oh, it's too expensive, we can't do this." No. No, folks. We certainly should not allow more time to be wasted by those who want to sit around debating whose responsibility it is to deal with this threat, while we come closer and closer to the point of no return.

I have to tell you, this is really not a normal kind of difference of opinion between people. Sometimes you can have a reasonable argument and a reasonable disagreement over an opinion you may have. This is not opinion. This is about facts. This is about science. The science is unequivocal. And those who refuse to believe it are simply burying their heads in the sand.

Now, President and I – Obama and I believe very deeply that we do not have time for a meeting anywhere of the Flat Earth Society. One of the arguments that we do hear is that it's going to be too expensive to be able to address climate change. I have to tell you, that assertion could not be less grounded in fact. In fact, it's exactly the opposite. Serious analysts understand that the costs of doing nothing far outweigh the costs of investing in solutions now. You do not need a degree in economics or a graduate degree in business in order to understand that the cost of flooding, the cost of drought, the cost of famine, the cost of health care, the cost of addressing this challenge is simply far less – the costs of addressing this challenge are far less than the costs of doing nothing. Just look at the most recent analysis done by the World Bank, which estimates that by 2050, losses – excuse me one second – losses from flood damage in Asian ports – fishing ports, shipping ports – the losses in those ports alone could exceed \$1 trillion annually unless we make big changes to the infrastructure of those ports.

Finally, if we truly want to prevent the worst consequences of climate change from happening, we do not have time to have a debate about whose responsibility this is. The answer is pretty simple: It's everyone's responsibility. Now certainly some countries – and I will say this very clearly, some countries, including the United States, contribute more to the problem and therefore we have an obligation to contribute more to the solution. I agree with that. But, ultimately, every nation on Earth has a responsibility to do its part if we have any hope of leaving our future generations the safe and healthy planet that they deserve.

You have a saying, I think, here in Indonesia, "Luka di kaki, sakit seluruh badan". (Laughter.) I – for those that don't speak as well as I do – (laughter) – it means "when there's a pain in the foot, the whole body feels it." Well, today in this interconnected world that we all live in, the fact is that hardship anywhere is actually felt by people everywhere. We all see it; we share it. And when a massive storm destroys a village and yet another and then another in Southeast Asia; when crops that used to grow abundantly no longer turn a profit for farmers in South America; when entire communities are forced to relocate because of rising tides – that's happening – it's not just one country or even one region that feels the pain. In today's globalized economy, everyone feels it.

And when you think about it, that connection to climate change is really no different than how we confront other global threats.

Think about terrorism. We don't decide to have just one country beef up the airport security and the others relax their standards and let bags on board without inspection. No, that clearly wouldn't make us any safer.

Or think about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It doesn't keep us safe if the United States secures its nuclear arsenal, while other countries fail to prevent theirs from falling into the hands of terrorists. We all have to approach this challenge together, which is why all together we are focused on Iran and its nuclear program or focused on North Korea and its threat.

The bottom line is this: it is the same thing with climate change. And in a sense, climate change can now be considered another weapon of mass destruction, perhaps the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction.

Now I mentioned earlier, a few minutes ago, that last December I went to Tacloban in the Philippines, not long after Typhoon Haiyan. I have to tell you: I've seen a lot of places in war and out of war and places that have been destroyed, but in all the time of my life, I don't think I've ever seen devastation like. We saw cars and homes and lives turned upside-down, trees scattered like toothpicks all across a mountainside. And most devastating of all, so quickly, that storm stole the lives of more than 5,000 people – women, and children who never saw it coming.

The fact is that climate change, if left unchecked, will wipe out many more communities from the face of the earth. And that is unacceptable under any circumstances – but is even more unacceptable because we know what we can do and need to do in order to deal with this challenge.

It is time for the world to approach this problem with the cooperation, the urgency, and the commitment that a challenge of this scale warrants. It's absolutely true that industrialized countries – yes, industrialized countries that produce most of the emissions – have a huge responsibility to be able to reduce emissions, but I'm telling you that doesn't mean that other nations have a free pass. They don't have a right to go out and repeat the mistakes of the past. It's not enough for one country or even a few countries to reduce their emissions when other countries continue to fill the atmosphere with carbon pollution as they see fit. At the end of the day, emissions coming from anywhere in the world threaten the future for people everywhere in the world, because those emissions go up and then they move with the wind and they drop with the rain and the weather, and they keep going around and around and they threaten all of us.

Now, as I've already acknowledged, I am the first one to recognize the responsibility that the United States has, because we have contributed to this problem. We're one of the number – we're the number two emitter of greenhouse gas emissions. The number one is now China. The fact is that I recognize the responsibility that we have to erase the bad habits that we have, which we adopted, frankly, before we understood the consequences. Nobody set out to make this happen. This is the consequence of the industrial revolution and the transformation of the world, and many of the advances that we made that have changed the world for the better came from these steps. But now we do know the attendant consequences that are linked to these actions.

President Obama has taken the moral challenge head on. Over the past five years, the United States has done more to reduce the threat of climate change – domestically and with the help of our international partners – than in the 20 years before President Obama came to office.

Thanks to President Obama's Climate Action Plan, the United States is well on our way to meeting the international commitments to seriously cut our greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, and that's because we're

going straight to the largest sources of pollution. We're targeting emissions from transportation – cars trucks, rail, et cetera – and from power sources, which account together for more than 60 percent of the dangerous greenhouse gases that we release.

The President has put in place standards to double the fuel-efficiency of cars on American roads. And we've also proposed curbing carbon pollution from new power plants, and similar regulations are in the works to limit the carbon pollution coming from power plants that are already up and already running.

At the same time, Americans have actually doubled the amount of energy we are creating from wind, solar, and geothermal sources, and we've become smarter about the way we use energy in our homes and in our businesses. A huge amount of carbon pollution comes out of buildings, and it's important in terms of the lighting, in terms of the emissions from those buildings, the air conditioning – all these kinds of things thought through properly can contribute to the solution. As a result, today in the United States, we are emitting less than we have in two decades.

We're also providing assistance to international partners, like Indonesia. This year the Millennium Challenge Corporation launched the \$332 million Green Prosperity program to help address deforestation and support innovation and clean energy throughout the country. We also implemented what we called "debt for nature" swaps, where we forgive some of the debt – and we have forgiven some of Indonesia's debt – in return for investments in the conservation of forests in Sumatra and Kalimantan.

But the United States – simple reality: just as I talked about the scientific facts in the beginning, this is a fact – the United States cannot solve this problem or foot the bill alone. Even if every single American got on a bicycle tomorrow and carpooled – instead of – or carpooled to school instead of buses or riding in individual cars or driving, or rode their bike to work, or used only solar powers – panels in order to power their homes; if we each, every American, planted a dozen trees; if we eliminated all of our domestic greenhouse gas emissions – guess what? That still wouldn't be enough to counter the carbon pollution coming from the rest of the world. Because today, if even one or two economies

neglects to respond to this threat, it can counter, erase all of the good work that the rest of the world has done. When I say we need a global solution, I mean we need a global solution.

That is why the United States is prepared to take the lead in bringing other nations to the table. And this is something that President Obama is deeply committed to. And as Secretary of State, I am personally committed to making sure that this work is front and center in all of our diplomatic efforts. This week I will be instructing all of the chiefs of our missions at American embassies all over the world to make climate change a top priority and to use all the tools of diplomacy that they have at their disposal in order to help address this threat.

Now I have just come here today, I arrived last night from China, where I met with government leaders and we discussed our cooperation, our collaboration on this climate change front at length. The Chinese see firsthand every single day how dangerous pollution can be. I recently read that an 8-year-old girl was diagnosed with lung cancer because of all the air pollution that she was inhaling. Eight years old. And the devastating human toll pollution, it takes comes with a very hefty price tag: Air pollution already costs China as much as 8 percent of its GDP because two things happen as a result of the pollution: healthcare spending goes up and agricultural output goes down.

Now I am pleased to tell you that the leaders of China agree that it is time to pursue a cleaner path forward. And China is taking steps, and we have already taken significant steps together through the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group that we launched in Beijing last year.

Just yesterday, we announced a new agreement on an enhanced policy of dialogue that includes the sharing of information and policies so that we can help develop plans to deal with the UN climate change negotiation that takes place in Paris next year, in planning for the post-2020 limit to greenhouse gas emissions. These plans are a key input into UN negotiations to develop a new global climate agreement, and we have hopes that this unique partnership between China and the United States can help set an example for global leadership and global seriousness.

Now make no mistake: this is real progress. The U.S. and China are the

world's two largest economies. We are two of the largest consumers of energy, and we are two of the largest emitters of global greenhouse gases – together we account for roughly 40 percent of the world's emissions.

But this is not just about china and the United States. It's about every country on Earth doing whatever it can to pursue cleaner and healthier energy sources. And it's about the all of us literally treating the pain in the foot, so the whole body hurts a little less.

Now this is going to require us to continue the UN negotiations and ultimately finalize an ambitious global agreement in Paris next year. And nations need to also be pursuing smaller bilateral agreements, public-private partnerships, independent domestic initiatives – you name it. There's nothing to stop any of you from helping to push here, to pick things that you can do in Indonesia. It's time for us to recognize that the choices the world makes in the coming months and years will directly and substantially affect our quality of life for generations to come.

Now I tell you, I'm looking out at a young audience here. All of you are the leaders of the future. And what we're talking about is what kind of world are we going to leave you. I know that some of what I'm talking about here today, it seems awful big, and some of it may even like it's out of reach to you. But I have to tell you it's not. One person in one place can make a difference – by talking about how they manage a building, how they heat a school, what kind of things you do for recycling, transportation you use. What you don't – I think what you don't hear enough about today, unfortunately, and I've saved it for the end, because I want you to leave here feeling, wow, we can get something done. There's a big set of opportunities in front of us. And that's because the most important news of all: that climate change isn't only a challenge. It's not only a burden. It also presents one of the greatest economic opportunities of all time.

The global energy market is the future. The solution to climate change is energy policy. And this market is poised to be the largest market the world has ever known. Between now and 2035, investment in the energy sector is expected to reach nearly \$17 trillion. That's more than the entire GDP of China and India combined.

The great technology – many of you have your smart phones or your iPads, et cetera, here today – all of this technology that we use so much today was a \$1 trillion market in the 1990s with 1 billion users. The energy market is a \$6 trillion market with, today, 6 billion users, and it's going to grow to maybe 9 billion users over the course of the next 20, 30, 40 years. The solution to climate change is as clear as the problem. The solution is making the right choices on energy policy. It's as simple as that. And with a few smart choices, we can ensure that clean energy is the most attractive investment in the global energy sector.

To do this, governments and international financial institutions need to stop providing incentives for the use of energy sources like coal and oil. Instead, we have to make the most of the innovative energy technology that entrepreneurs are developing all over the world – including here in Indonesia, where innovative companies like Sky Energy are building solar and battery storage and projects that can help power entire villages.

And we have to invest in new technology that will help us bring renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro power not only to the communities where those resources are abundant –but to every community and to every country on every continent.

I am very well aware that these are not easy choices for any country to make – I know that. I've been in politics for a while. I know the pull and different powerful political forces. Coal and oil are currently cheap ways to power a society, at least in the near term. But I urge governments to measure the full cost to that coal and that oil, measure the impacts of what will happen as we go down the road. You cannot simply factor in the immediate costs of energy needs. You have to factor in the long-term cost of carbon pollution. And they have to factor in the cost of survival. And if they do, then governments will find that the cost of pursuing clean energy now is far cheaper than paying for the consequences of climate change later.

Make no mistake: the technology is out there. None of this is beyond our capacity.

I am absolutely confident that if we choose to, we will meet this challenge. Remember: we're the ones – we, all of us, the world – helped

to discover things like penicillin and we eradicated smallpox. We found a way to light up the night all around the world with a flip of the switch and spread that technology to more than three quarters of the world's population. We came up with a way for people to fly and move from one place to another in the air between cities and across oceans, and into outer space. And we put the full wealth of human knowledge into a device we can hold in our hand that does all of the thinking that used to take up a whole room almost this size.

Human ingenuity has long proven its ability to solve seemingly insurmountable challenges. It is not a lack of ability that is a problem. It is a lack of political resolve that is standing in our way. And I will tell you as somebody who ran for elected office, when you hear from the people, when the people make it clear what they want and what they think they need, then people in politics respond.

Today I call on all of you in Indonesia and concerned citizens around the world to demand the resolve that is necessary from your leaders. Speak out. Make climate change an issue that no public official can ignore for another day. Make a transition towards clean energy the only plan that you are willing to accept.

And if we come together now, we can not only meet the challenge, we can create jobs and economic growth in every corner of the globe. We can clean up the air, we can improve the health of people, we can have greater security; we can make our neighborhoods healthier places to live; we can help ensure that farmers and fishers can still make a sustainable living and feed our communities; and we can avoid disputes and even entire wars over oil, water, and other limited resources. We can make good on the moral responsibility we all have to leave future generations with a planet that is clean and healthy and sustainable for the future.

The United States is ready to work with you in this endeavor. With Indonesia and the rest of the world pulling in the same direction, we can meet this challenge, the greatest challenge of our generation, and we can create the future that everybody dreams of.

Thank you all very much for letting me be with you. Thank you.
(Applause.)

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