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# Transforming the India-U.S. Relationship

The conventional view in the United States as well as in India is that our relations were bad during the Cold War and improved only after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. This is not true. There were good times in our relations, never difficult times, but for much of the time, until recent years, there was benign neglect by both countries of the other. This was particularly true in the decade which followed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the former Soviet Union. A new boost was given to India-U.S. relations by President Clinton's visit to our country. Yet it is indisputable that this relationship reached unprecedented heights during the current administration of President Bush. I would say, without any hesitation, that our relations are better today than they ever were and they are getting better with each passing year—indeed, with each passing month.

The change of perception about India was brought about by the realization of the reality of the slow, gradual, but inevitable emergence of India as a nation and global power. It was in the U.S. national interest as much as in India's interest to establish a strategic partnership.

I'm convinced that the transformation of this relationship, though at an incredibly rapid pace, is irreversible. I say this since this relationship is not based on transient or tactical considerations, but on a convergence of strategic interests in the long term perspective. I say this since this relationship is one of the few where ideals and interests can be reconciled. I also say this because this relationship is to the benefit of India and the United States and also for the larger benefit for the world as a whole.

It is to the benefit of the United States and India in many respects. In strategic terms we have concluded one of the next steps in strategic partnership, which brings out the commonalities of our perspectives. It has been brought out in the critical field of defense cooperation where we concluded the Defense Relationship Agreement and we're increasing interaction between the armed forces of our countries—armies, navies, air forces, special forces. This was manifested quite dramatically after the tsunami where basically we took care of not only ourselves—and we were the third largest victim—we took care essentially of Sri Lanka and the Maldives and with the United States took care of Indonesia and Thailand, and we coordinated that very carefully. This worked in a very efficient and seamless manner because of the frequent exercises which had taken place between our armed forces.

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Our bilateral trade which is still very small—just about \$40 billion, roughly \$27 billion in merchandise trading and goods and services, is growing very rapidly and I think it can double every three to four years. My job in the United States is not just promoting exports to the United States, but promoting U.S. exports to India and that's why I worked quite hard to see that a U.S. company, Boeing, got its biggest deal last year—an Indian contract. There will be more of that. The same will apply to the field of investment; I am trying to promote not just U.S. investment in India but Indian investments in the United States. Technology also should be two-way traffic, and we have set up recently an endowment fund, with a very small token amount of \$30 million, but much more is coming from the private sector, to identify projects and get them started and then they can get financing on their own to take off. I say this because it has to be a two-way relationship, which is ultimately stable and ultimately resilient.

California has made a lot of progress in agriculture. I remember when I had a conversations with President Reagan. Whatever we talked about, whether it was defense, Russia, the Cold War—whatever it was—ultimately I waited and sure enough every time California always figured into the conversation. We have a new initiative on agriculture which hopefully will bring what you call an “evergreen” revolution—a new stage of cooperation in agriculture. We have put in a small amount, \$100 million over a three year period, to get people from the research community, universities, farmers

and private companies to look at high-technology solutions to common problems and to increase the well-being of our farmers.

In the field of energy there's been a tremendous amount of cooperation, not just in the field of nuclear cooperation,

eral trade economy and cooperation, not just in atomic energy, but also in space. Just recently we had a visit from the head of NASA and an agreement was signed where the Indian space vehicle which would be our first mission to the moon would carry U.S. pilots on the space ship.

States and India have launched an initiative on natural disaster management and we are helping other countries to build up capacities. We hope there won't be such tragedies, but if such tragedies do take place we are equipping them to respond in a more effective manner. We're already in the advanced stage of setting up a weather system against tsunamis. We had one in place for cyclones, but we were not prepared for the tsunamis—because I at least don't remember when the last tsunami hit India. I don't remember because it happened approximately 10,000 years ago but we no longer take things for granted. We've already got a satellite linkup, we have sensors on the sea surface, but we are putting them on the seabed, linking up the two, creating software, and we will have them in place pretty soon.

I said that our cooperation is not only to our mutual benefit but to the world. Just to give you some examples: both our countries are major victims of international terrorism, we are both extremely concerned about proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and our worst national security nightmare is a combination of the two. Both our countries, as democracies, are aware that democracies are inherently vulnerable to terrorism coming to threaten us and to take advantage of our open societies. But we also know that democracies are also the best defense in the long-

We are also looking at new threats, not just of terrorism, but new threats from pandemics, like HIV/AIDS and the avian flu. A lot of people do not know, perhaps, that there are more FDA-approved pharmaceutical companies in India than in any other country in the world outside the United States. I don't think many people know that eight out of the ten main drugs which are used for HIV/AIDS are made in India. So, we have this partnership between our two governments to find solutions to tackle this menace, not just in India but also in Asia and Africa and elsewhere in the world.

We are doing the same on the problem of environmental protection. We are very active members of the Asia-Pacific partnership in clean development on climate. We're doing the same for maritime security, preventing crime, search and rescue operations, and also to take care of emerging situations. As I said earlier, India is cooperating very actively to promote energy security. We have set up a new forum called the India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum and we're looking not just at bilateral issues but international trade and, hopefully, we're collaborating more



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which is vitally important in energy security in which both our countries are interested. Both our countries are interested in stabilizing oil prices at lower levels, both our countries are interested in not being held hostage to developments in some other part of the world, which is unfortunately inherently unstable at the moment. Also in other areas of technology like oil and gas, clean coal, there is the possibility of a project which is known as Fitiregen which involves zero emissions, coal projects, energy efficiency, new and renewable areas of technology.

We have set up a forum of ten very prominent American CEOs together with ten prominent Indian CEOs to suggest ways in which we can revitalize our bilat-

term against terrorism. Therefore we have taken the initiative. India and the United States have launched the Global Democracy Initiative. This was done by President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who have put up a small amount of money each to get this initiative started, about \$30 million. We have decided to be represented on the advisory board of the International Center for Democratic Transition which is based in Hungary to help pool together all our experiences as democracies to help countries to transition. We have very active members in the new forum called Communities For Democracies.

I referred to the tsunami. For us it's not just one event where we collaborated and then forgot about it. The United

closely together to see that the trade talks which are supposed to conclude this year arrive at a successful conclusion.

So, this is just to give you a glimpse of what India and the United States are doing together for the betterment of the future of our two peoples, but also what we're doing together to make the world a little more safe and secure and, hopefully, more prosperous.

Thank you very much.

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