

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India in New Delhi, India

November 8, 2010

Prime Minister Singh. Your Excellency, President Barack Obama, distinguished representatives of the media, I'm delighted to welcome President Obama and his gracious wife on their first visit to our country. I welcome the President as a personal friend and a great charismatic leader who has made a deep imprint on world affairs through his inclusive vision of peace, security, and welfare for all peoples and all nations.

The President and the First Lady have made an abiding impression on the people of India with their warmth, with their grace, and with their commitment to promoting the relationship between our two great democracies.

President Obama yesterday characterized the India-U.S. partnership as one of the defining and indispensable partnerships of the 21st century. In my discussion with the President, we have decided to accelerate the deepening of our ties and to work as equal partners in a strategic relationship that will positively and decisively influence world peace, stability, and progress.

We welcome the decision by the United States to lift controls on exports of high-technology items and the technologies to India and support India's membership in multilateral export control regimes such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This is a manifestation of the growing trust and confidence in each other.

We have agreed on steps to expand our cooperation in space, civil nuclear defense, and other high-end sectors. We have announced specific initiatives in the areas of clean energy, health, and agriculture. These include a joint clean energy research and development center, the establishment of a global disease detection center in India, and an agreement for cooperation in weather and crop forecasting.

We have decided to hold a higher education summit next year. Cooperation in the field of education holds great promise because no two other countries are better equipped to be partners in building the knowledge economy of the future.

The United States is one of our largest trading partners. Our trade is balanced and growing. India is among the fastest growing sources of investment in the United States. Indian investments have helped to increase the competitiveness of the U.S. economy. We welcome increased U.S. investments and high-technology flows in key sectors of our economy, including the sector of nuclear energy.

We have agreed to facilitate trade and people-to-people exchanges, recognizing that protectionism is detrimental to both our economies.

I conveyed our gratitude to the President for the cooperation we have received in our counterterrorism measures post-Mumbai. We will start a new homeland security dialogue to deepen this cooperation.

We had a detailed exchange on the situation in our extended region, including East Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and West Asia. We have a shared vision of security, stability, and prosperity in Asia based on an open and inclusive regional architecture. We have agreed to

broaden our strategic dialogue to cover other regions and areas and initiate joint projects in Africa and Afghanistan.

As states possessing nuclear weapons, we have today put forth a common vision of a world without nuclear weapons and decided to lead global efforts for nonproliferation and universal and nondiscriminatory global nuclear disarmament. This is a historic and bold bilateral initiative.

We also decided to strengthen cooperation to tackle nuclear terrorism, and we welcome U.S. participation in the Global Center of Nuclear Energy Partnership, which will be set up in India.

President Obama is a sincere and a valued friend of our country, and our discussions have led to a meeting of minds. Ours is a partnership based on common values and interests, a shared vision of the world, and the deep-rooted ties of friendship among our two peoples. I look forward to working with the President to realize the enormous potential of this partnership of our two countries.

I now invite President Obama to make his remarks. And I thank you.

President Obama. Thank you very much, Prime Minister Singh, and good afternoon, everyone. I want to begin by saying how thrilled my wife Michelle and I and our entire delegation are to be here in India. We have been received with incredible warmth and incredible hospitality. And that includes the hospitality of our friends, Prime Minister Singh and his lovely wife Mrs. Kaur, who we thank for such graciousness and a wonderful dinner last night.

As I've said throughout my visit, I have come to India because I believe that the relationship between the United States and India is indispensable to addressing the challenges of our time, from creating economic opportunity for our people to confronting terrorism and violent extremism, from preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to addressing climate change, from the development that gives people and nations a path out of poverty to advancing human rights and values that are universal. None of this will be possible without strong cooperation between the United States and India.

Moreover, as Prime Minister Singh alluded to, ours is no ordinary relationship. As the world's two largest democracies, as large and growing free market economies, as diverse, multiethnic societies with strong traditions of pluralism and tolerance, we have not only an opportunity, but also a responsibility to lead.

And that's why I believe that the relationship between the United States and India will, in fact, be one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century. That's why I've worked with the Prime Minister, a man of extraordinary intellect and great integrity, to deepen and broaden the cooperation between our countries. And I very much look forward to addressing the Indian Parliament and the people of India later today to discuss how the United States and India can take our partnership to the next level, with a vision of how we can work together as global partners.

With the progress we've made today, we're seeing just how broad and deep our cooperation can be. As President, I've had the opportunity to appear with many of my foreign counterparts at press conferences such as this, but I cannot remember an occasion when we have agreed to so many new partnerships across so many areas as we have during my visit.

We've expanded trade and investment to create prosperity for our people. The major trade deals that were signed in Mumbai were an important step forward in elevating India to one of America's top trading partners. Today I'm pleased to welcome India's preliminary agreement to purchase 10 C-17 cargo planes, which will enhance Indian capabilities and support 22,000 jobs back in the United States.

We agreed to reform our controls on exports, and the United States will remove Indian organizations from the so-called entity list, which will allow greater cooperation in a range of high-tech sectors like civil space and defense. And we agreed to keep working to reduce trade barriers and resist protectionism.

As a result of this visit, we are already beginning to implement our civil nuclear agreement. We agreed to deepen our cooperation in pursuit of clean energy technologies, and this includes the creation of a new clean energy research center here in India and continuing our joint research into solar, biofuels, shale gas, and building efficiency. And we agreed to new partnerships including forestry and sustainable development of land to help meet the commitments we made at Copenhagen to combat climate change.

To ensure the safety of our citizens, we're deepening our efforts to prevent terrorism. Cooperation between our countries' intelligence and law enforcement communities has already reached unprecedented levels. And today we're taking another step, a new effort between our Department of Homeland Security and the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs to improve security at our ports, our airports, and our borders.

I also discussed with the Prime Minister our efforts in Afghanistan and once again thanked him and the Indian people for the generous contributions that India has made towards development and improving the lives of the Afghan people. We agreed on the need for all nations in the region to work together and ensure that there are no safe havens for terrorists.

We're expanding our efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. In keeping with its commitment at our Nuclear Security Summit, India will build a new center of excellence for nuclear energy and security to help reach our goal of securing vulnerable nuclear materials in 4 years.

Given India's growing role in the region, we also agreed to deepen our consultations on East Asia. Given India's growing role on the world stage, we'll expand our dialogue on global issues. And we discussed the need for international institutions, including the United Nations, to reflect the realities of the 21st century, which I will discuss further in my address to Parliament.

Finally, we continue to expand partnerships between our peoples. To promote global health, we're moving ahead with a new disease detection center here in New Delhi. Building on our successful efforts to expand educational exchanges, including our Singh-Obama 21st Century Knowledge Initiative, we'll convene a summit to forge new collaborations in higher education. And we're announcing two initiatives today that harness technology to deliver progress for our people.

Building on the Indian and American agricultural collaboration that led to the Green Revolution, we're launching a new partnership for a Ever-Green Revolution to improve food security around the world. We're also launching a new partnership to promote open government and to empower citizens. And in my address to Parliament, I'll be discussing why these efforts can be models for the kind of cooperation that not only benefits America and India, but benefits other nations as well.

So taken together, all of these partnerships, all these initiatives make it clear the relationship between the United States and India is stronger, deeper, and broader than ever before.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, again I thank you for your partnership and for your friendship. I am confident that as India's influence in the world continues to rise, so too will the opportunities for even closer cooperation between our two countries. And that will mean even greater security and prosperity for India, for the United States, for this region, and for the world.

Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister.

Moderator. Thank you, Mr. President.

The Prime Minister and the President would be happy to take two questions each from the Indian and the American media. You are requested to please restrict yourself to one question either to the Prime Minister or the President and indicate whom the question is addressed to. The first question goes to the American side.

White House Press Secretary Robert L. Gibbs. Scott Wilson from the Washington Post.

India-Pakistan Relations

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, Prime Minister.

Mr. President, as—after a difficult and violent summer in Kashmir, perhaps the chief flashpoint between your chief ally in the Afghanistan war and India, could you explain your administration's policy towards Kashmir and what role the United States might play in resolving that crisis? And if I might, could you please—this morning you called India a world power. Is it possible anymore to stand in the way of India's bid for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council?

And, Prime Minister—

Moderator. Sir, I will request you to please restrict yourself to one question.

Q. Not one each?

Moderator. Please one question, if it's possible. Please restrict yourself to one question to one of the leaders. Thank you.

Q. Okay. Prime Minister—may I address the Prime Minister?

Moderator. All right.

Q. Thank you. To follow on a question that was asked yesterday by a student in Mumbai, do you believe that the United States should refer to Pakistan as a terrorist state?

President Obama. With respect to Kashmir, obviously, this is a longstanding dispute between India and Pakistan. As I said yesterday, I believe that both Pakistan and India have an interest in reducing tensions between the two countries. The United States cannot impose a solution to these problems, but I've indicated to Prime Minister Singh that we are happy to play any role that the parties think is appropriate in reducing these tensions. That's in the interests of the region, it's in the interests of the two countries involved, and it's in the interests of the United States of America.

So my hope is that conversations will be taking place between the two countries. They may not start on that particular flashpoint. There may be confidence-building measures that need to

take place. But I'm absolutely convinced that it is both in India's and Pakistan's interest to reduce tensions, and that will enable them, I think, to focus on the range of both challenges and opportunities that each country faces.

I do want to make this point, though, that I think Prime Minister Singh, throughout his career and throughout his Prime Ministership, has consistently spoken out both publicly and privately on his desire, his personal commitment, to reduce tensions between India and Pakistan. And for that, I very much commend him. I think Prime Minister Singh is sincere and relentless in his desire for peace.

And so my hope is, is that both sides can, over the next several months, several years, find mechanisms that are appropriate for them to work out what are these very difficult issues.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Obama. Oh, well, you know, I was instructed to only take one question. [*Laughter*] It looks like the Indian and the American press are collaborating. That's not the kind of partnership we were looking for. [*Laughter*] But I will be addressing that issue in my speech in Parliament today, so if you'll just have a little bit of patience.

Prime Minister Singh. Mr. President, as far as India's relations with Pakistan are concerned, I've always maintained that a strong, peaceful, moderate Pakistan is in the interest of India, is in the interest of South Asia and the world as a whole.

We are committed to engage Pakistan. We are committed to resolve all outstanding issues between our two countries, including the word "K"; we're not afraid of that. But it is our request that you cannot simultaneously be talking and at the same time the terror machine is as active as ever before. Once Pakistan moves away from this terror-induced coercion, we will be very happy to engage productively with Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues.

India-U.S. Relations

Moderator. Smita Prakash of ANI [Asia News International].

Q. Mr. President, my question to you, sir, you've consistently said India, as an emerging power, has potential to be America's important—most important strategic partner. What is your vision for India in the next decade? And how vital is this relationship for your administration—in your administration's worldview? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, first of all, this relationship is extraordinarily important to me, and don't just take my word for it, I think, look at our actions. Obviously, this trip is—been of enormous significance. It's no accident that this is the longest time that I've spent in a foreign country since I've been President.

And both the Prime Minister and I have alluded to why I think this partnership can be so important. We are the world's two largest democracies. We have both a set of values and principles that we share that I believe are universal: the belief in individual liberty, in freedom of the press, in freedom of political assembly, in human rights. We both have large market economies.

And the person-to-person contacts between India and the United States are unparalleled. We have millions of Indian Americans who are helping to grow our country each and every

day. And we have hundreds of thousands of students from India who are studying in the United States and then bringing back what they've learned to help develop India.

And so on the commercial level, on the person-to-person level, the strategic level, I think this partnership is incredibly important.

As I said yesterday, I don't think India is emerging; it has emerged. India is a key actor on the world stage. And given that we have these values that we share, at a time when there are still too many conflicts, there are still too many misunderstandings between nations, when principles like democracy and human rights too often are not observed, for our two countries to be able to stand together to promote those principles—in international forums, by the example that we set, by the bilateral ties that we form—I think can be incredibly powerful and incredibly important.

And one last point I want to make on this: This is a belief that is shared by Republicans and Democrats in the United States. I mean, if you think about what's happened in our relationship, how it's evolved over the last 15 to 20 years—you had President Clinton, a Democrat; President Bush, a Republican; and now me, another Democrat—each of us reaffirming in a steady, committed way, why the U.S.-India relationship is so important.

And so we are going to continue to cultivate this. We will continue to nurture it. We have business leaders who are here today and have been working actively in the private sector to strengthen those ties. We want to make sure that our Governments are acting in that same constructive way. And if we do so, then I think that's not only going to benefit India and the United States, but I think ultimately will benefit the world as well.

Prime Minister Singh. The foremost concern of the Indian polity is to grapple with the problem of poverty, ignorance, and disease, which still afflict millions of our citizens. For that, we need a strong, resurgent, robust rate of economic growth. And it is a growth rate which is within our reach. Our objective is to sustain a growth rate of 9 to 10 percent per annum in the next three decades. And in that process, the help of the United States is of enormous significance.

We need a global trading system which is—does not encourage protectionism, which enables our entrepreneurs to make use of the enormous opportunities that processes of globalization now offer. We need the American assistance by way of export of capital. We welcome American investments in our economy.

I've mentioned earlier, also on several occasions, India needs an investment of a trillion dollars in the next 5 years in its infrastructure, and we would welcome American contribution in fulfilling that ambition of ours.

America is a home of high technology. We need that technology to upgrade our skills both in the civilian sector and also in the defense sector. So I attach great importance to strengthening in every possible way India's cooperation with the United States. This is truly a relationship which can become a defining relationship for this 21st blessed century of ours.

White House Press Secretary Gibbs. Christi Parsons with the Chicago Tribune.

National Economy/Global Economic Stabilization

Q. Thank you very much. This question is for you, President Obama, but if the Prime Minister chooses to weigh in on it, that would be lovely.

Mr. President, the German Finance Minister says this of recent Fed decisions: "It doesn't add up when the Americans accuse the Chinese of currency manipulation and then, with the help of their central bank's printing presses, artificially lower the value of the dollar." Might this, in fact, look hypocritical to other world leaders as you head to the G-20 to talk about this and other issues? How do you address it? And do you expect support from the Indian Government and your press to get the Chinese Government to appreciate the value of the currency?

Thank you.

President Obama. First of all, Christi, as you're aware, the Federal Reserve is an independent body. It doesn't take orders from the White House, and it's important as a policy matter, as an institutional matter, that we don't comment on particular Fed actions.

I will say that the Fed's mandate, my mandate, is to grow our economy. And that's not just good for the United States, that's good for the world as a whole.

The United States has been an engine for growth, for trade, for opportunity for decades now. And we've just gone through an extraordinary economic trauma, which has resulted in some extraordinary measures. And the worst thing that could happen to the world economy, not ours—not just ours, but the entire world's economy—is if we end up being stuck with no growth or very limited growth. And I think that's the Fed's concern, and that's my concern as well.

Now, when we go to the G-20, we're going to be talking about a whole host of issues, including how do we start creating balanced and sustainable growth. And if you think about what's happened at the G-20 over the last couple of years, the first G-20 I participated in was all about putting out a fire. We had an immediate crisis in the financial sector that had to be dealt with. And working with outstanding leaders like Prime Minister Singh, we were able to deal with it, and that immediate crisis was contained.

Subsequently, we've talked about how do we maintain growth, how do we start looking at fiscal consolidation and making sure that countries that may have overextended themselves for a long time start getting their houses in order. But part of balanced growth is also a recognition that we can't continue to sustain a situation in which some countries are maintaining massive surpluses, others massive deficits, and there never is the kind of adjustments with respect to currency that would lead to a more balanced growth pattern.

Now, I should point out that India is—has been part of the solution and not part of the problem. As Prime Minister Singh mentioned, generally, there's a balanced growth pattern with respect to India. We've got a—excellent trade ties with India. India has been moving in a more liberal direction consistently under Prime Minister Singh's leadership. And India has been a very constructive partner with us in some of these international issues. I expect that will continue.

So I'm sure that we'll have more commentary at the G-20 when we get to Seoul. Every country, I think, is concerned right now about what other countries are doing at a time when the recovery is still fragile. But the bottom line is that every country that participates in the G-20 will benefit if the United States economy is growing.

Prime Minister Singh. Ladies and gentlemen, I don't claim to have any expert knowledge of the working of the American economies. But I do know one thing: that a strong, robust, fast-growing United States is in the interest of the world. And therefore, anything that would

stimulate the underlying growth impulses of entrepreneurship in the United States would help the cause of global prosperity.

India-U.S. Relations/Commercial Relationship with India

Moderator. The fourth and last question to Maya Mirchandani of NDTV [New Delhi Television].

Q. Thank you. This question is for President Obama, but, Mr. Prime Minister, I'd request you as well to answer it if that's possible since you're taking the other questions as well.

But just taking forward, I think, what my colleague from the U.S. media just said, the American press has been full of headlines on this visit of yours, about the 50,000 jobs that have been created because of deals that have been struck around this visit. Critics argue that unemployment rates in India are also very high. So what does India get out of all these deals that have been struck and this visit? And also, isn't the outsourcing bogey a little misdirected, given that it's become such a hot-button issue? The job losses are really in the manufacturing sector, and they're going to China, which is the greater threat.

President Obama. Well, first of all, I don't think you've heard me make outsourcing a bogeyman during the course of my visit. In fact, I explicitly said in my address in Mumbai to the Business Council that I think both countries are operating on some stereotypes that have outlived their usefulness.

In every discussion that I've had with Indian businesses, what I've seen is that our countries are matched up in a way that allows for enormous win-win potential. So you mentioned that some of the deals that we have struck are ones that will create jobs in the United States. That's absolutely true. We're very proud of some of our high-tech industries, and we think that we make some of the best products in the world, and we want to sell them to a growing Indian market.

But it turns out that those same technologies are ones that will allow Indian entrepreneurs to grow and to thrive and to create jobs right here in India. And that's true at the large scale; if we're helping to build up Indian infrastructure, then that helps to knit the country together and get goods and products and services to market.

It's true of the small scale. I mean, I had these amazing conversations down in Mumbai with Indian businesspeople who had taken American technology—in one case it was solar cells; in another case it was some of the equipment designed to be used for electric cars—and they were using those technologies in new ways in India, using different business models that were—applied uniquely to India, to make profits and to do good here in India, and to create jobs here in India.

So I think that the pattern that you're going to see is that U.S. companies are creating jobs in the United States with technologies where we've got a lead. Indian businesses are then going to take those technologies and apply them in India to grow Indian businesses as well. And that's going to be a win-win for both. Those are the kinds of patterns that, I think, make this relationship so important.

And when I go back home to the United States—part of the reason that I advertise these 50,000 jobs is I want to be able to say to the American people when they ask me, "Well, why are you spending time with India, aren't they taking our jobs?"—I want to be able to say, actually, you know what, they just created 50,000 jobs. And that's why we shouldn't be resorting to protectionist measures, we shouldn't be thinking that it's just a one-way street. I

want both my—the citizens in the United States and citizens in India to understand the benefits of commercial ties between the two countries.

Prime Minister Singh. Well, as far as India is concerned, India is not in the business of stealing jobs from the United States of America. Our outsourcing industry, I believe, has helped to improve the productive capacity and productivity of American industry. And the new deals that have been struck, they all happen to be in infrastructure, and infrastructure today is the biggest bottleneck to the faster growth of India, to the faster growth of employment. And therefore, these deals that the President has mentioned are truly an example of trade being a win-win situation for both our countries.

In fact, I have a vision, when the G–20 meets later in the month in Seoul, that the world needs a new balance between deficit countries and surplus countries, and that balance has to be restored by paying more attention to the development—of the development potential, including infrastructure development and energy infrastructure, agricultural infrastructure in the poorer countries of the world.

That is the challenge before the global statesmanship. And I do hope that the Group of Twenty, when it meets in Seoul, with the active guidance and support of President Obama, who in a way is the father of the Group of Twenty—it was his initiative which led to the creation of the Group of Twenty—this group will, I sincerely hope, grapple with this issue of rebalancing growth by laying emphasis on faster growth in the countries which are described normally as developing world.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1 p.m. at the Hyderabad House. In his remarks, the President referred to Gursharan Kaur, wife of Prime Minister Singh. A reporter referred to Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schaeuble of Germany.

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