

your time, you have found it possible to receive me is something I deeply appreciate, deeply value. And the last 4½ years that I have been Prime Minister, I have been the recipient of your generosity, your affection, the show of your friendship. It means a lot to me and to the people of India.

In these last 4½ years, there has been a massive transformation of India-United States relations. And, Mr. President, you have played the most important role in making all this happen. Your efforts towards cooperation with regard to civil nuclear energy—I know these were difficult issues, and at each stage, it was your leadership, your personal intervention which resolved all the difficulties that were affecting the progress of this negotiation.

I sincerely hope that the settlement which is now before the U.S. Congress will be approved in a manner which will be satisfactory from the point of view of both our countries. And when history is written, I think it will be recorded that President George W. Bush played an historic role in bringing our two democracies closer to each other.

I am mentioning civil nuclear initiative because for 34 years India has suffered from a nuclear apartheid. We have not been able to trade in nuclear material, nuclear reactors, nuclear raw materials. And when this restrictive regime ends, I think a great deal of credit will go to President Bush. And for this I am very grateful to you, Mr. President.

**President Bush.** Yes, sir.

**Prime Minister Singh.** But there has been enormous transformation in our relationship in many other respects. The United States is India's largest trading partner. The United States is the largest investor in our country. And at President Bush's initiative, we set up a two-country CEOs forum which has come forward with many innovative ideas to bring the business communities of our two countries closer to each other.

We have taken new initiative in the field of education. We have today a new architecture of bringing the academic communities of our two countries—the new scheme of Fulbright-Nehru Scholarship will unite the intellectual community of our two countries in a manner which gives me immense satisfaction.

In areas of science and technologies, in the areas relating to environment management, in the areas relating to climate change, in areas relating to health, in areas relating to knowledge initiatives in agriculture—all of these initiatives have emerged as a result of the historic meeting that I had with President Bush on 18th July of 2005. These are the reasons we have now a strategic partnership with the United States. And all that has happened has happened because of the strong personal commitment of the President.

India is a functioning democracy. And I know how much President Bush appreciates that fact, that a country of a billion people with tremendous poverty, with all the diversities of the world, is yet trying to find its economic and social salvation in the framework of a functioning democracy. President Bush and I have discussed this aspect of India's functioning several times, and he has shown enormous respect for India, for Indian democracy.

So, Mr. President, this may be my last visit to you during your Presidency, and let me say that—thank you very much.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir.

**Prime Minister Singh.** The people of India deeply love you, and all that you have done to bring our two countries closer to each other is something history will not be able to destroy.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

**Executive Order 13473—To Authorize Certain Noncompetitive Appointments in the Civil Service for Spouses of Certain Members of the Armed Forces**

*September 25, 2008*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including sections 3301 and 3302 of title 5, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Policy.** It shall be the policy of the United States to provide for the appropriately expedited recruitment and selection of spouses of members of the Armed Forces for appointment to positions in the competitive service of the Federal civil service as part of the effort of the United States to recruit and retain in military service, skilled and experienced members of the Armed Forces and to recognize and honor the service of such members injured, disabled, or killed in connection with their service.

**Sec. 2. Definitions.** As used in this order:

(a) the term “agency” has the meaning specified for the term “executive agency” in section 105 of title 5, United States Code, but does not include the Government Accountability Office;

(b) the term “Armed Forces” has the meaning specified for that term in section 101 of title 10, United States Code;

(c) the term “active duty” means full-time duty in an armed force and includes full-time National Guard duty, except that, for Reserve Component members, the term “active duty” does not include training duties or attendance at service schools.

(d) the term “permanent change of station” means the assignment, detail, or transfer of a member of the Armed Forces serving at a present permanent duty station to a different permanent duty station under a competent authorization or order that does not:

- (i) specify the duty as temporary;
- (ii) provide for assignment, detail, or transfer, after that different permanent duty station, to a further different permanent duty station; or
- (iii) direct return to the present permanent duty station; and

(e) the term “totally disabled retired or separated member” means a member of the Armed Forces who:

- (i) retired under chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code, with a disability rating at the time of retirement of 100 per cent; or
- (ii) retired or separated from the Armed Forces and has a disability rating of 100 percent from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Sec. 3. Noncompetitive Appointment Authority.** Consistent with the policy set forth

in section 1 of this order and such regulations as the Director of the Office of Personnel Management may prescribe, the head of an agency may make a noncompetitive appointment to any position in the competitive service, for which the individual is qualified, of an individual who is:

(a) the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who, as determined by the Secretary of Defense, is performing active duty pursuant to orders that authorize a permanent change of station move, if such spouse relocates to the member’s new permanent duty station;

(b) the spouse of a totally disabled retired or separated member of the Armed Forces; or

(c) the unmarried widow or widower of a member of the Armed Forces killed while performing active duty.

**Sec. 4. Administrative Provisions.** The heads of agencies shall employ, as appropriate, appointment authority available to them, in addition to the authority granted by section 3 of this order, to carry out the policy set forth in section 1.

**Sec. 5. General Provisions.** (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

- (i) authority granted by law to a department or agency or the head thereof; and
- (ii) functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, or legislative functions.

(b) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
September 25, 2008.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 29, 2008]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 26,

and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 30.

**Memorandum on Assignment of Function Under Section 203(e)(2)(A) of the Andean Trade Preference Act, as Amended**

September 25, 2008

*Memorandum for the United States Trade Representative*

*Subject:* Assignment of Function Under Section 203(e)(2)(A) of the Andean Trade Preference Act, as Amended

I propose to suspend Bolivia's designation as a beneficiary country under the Andean Trade Preference Act, as amended (the "Act"), and as an Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act beneficiary country.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code and the Act, you are hereby assigned the function vested in me by section 203(e)(2)(A) of the Act (19 U.S.C. 3202(e)(2)(A)), to publish a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the proposed action set forth above.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 26.

**Remarks on the National Economy**

September 26, 2008

Good morning. My administration continues to work with the Congress on a rescue plan. And we need a rescue plan. This is—it's hard work. Our proposal is a big proposal, and the reason it's big and substantial is because we got a big problem.

We also need to move quickly. Now, any time you have a plan this big, that is moving this quickly, that requires legislative approval, it creates challenges. Members want to be heard. They want to be able to express

their opinions, and they should be allowed to express their opinions.

There are disagreements over aspects of the rescue plan, but there is no disagreement that something substantial must be done. The legislative process is sometimes not very pretty, but we are going to get a package passed. We will rise to the occasion. Republicans and Democrats will come together and pass a substantial rescue plan.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. on the Colonnade at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Remarks on the United States Ocean Action Plan**

September 26, 2008

Thank you all. Thank you, Secretary Clough, for the introduction. And congratulations on the opening of the Sant Ocean Hall, which, by the way, opens tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock. The Secretary and I just had a fabulous tour. These exhibits in this hall will remind people that our oceans are vital for our planet. This is going to heighten awareness of how important our oceans are and that we have a solemn duty to protect them.

And so I've come not only to see the hall and to herald its opening but to spend a little time talking about ocean conservation. There are a lot of people in this room who care about ocean conservation, and I appreciate you working on—with us to help preserve a vital natural resource.

First of all, I do want to recognize the Chancellor of the Smithsonian Institute's Board of Regents—I call him the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; Justice Roberts, thank you for coming. I appreciate very much the Sant family, Roger and Vicki. Roger turns out to be the Chairman of the Institute's Board of Regents and a big supporter, obviously, of the Smithsonian; otherwise, they probably wouldn't have named the hall for him. [Laughter] But thank you for your generosity and your support.

Cristian Samper is the Director of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History,