



## U.S.-India Relations

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First of all, let me thank the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin and all of the sponsors of this convention for inviting me to Las Vegas to speak about U.S.-India relations.

Since India's independence, our interaction has been marked by cooperation, estrangement, and occasionally indifference. The potential of the relationship never seemed to become reality. Although that complicated history informs where we are today, our relationship has come very far from the Cold War differences that once defined us.

If you're reading editorials about the fate of the U.S.-India Civilian nuclear deal or progress in the Doha Round, you might wonder about how far we've actually come. What is the state of cooperation between the United States and India? Let me give you the bottom line here at the very top: this is the most exciting moment in U.S.-India relations in two generations.

Years from now, when people discuss our relationship, they will talk about the across the board transformation of U.S.-India relations that took place in the first decade of the 21st century.

We've long been friends and we've always shared a commitment to democracy and peace. But for the first time since India's independence in 1947, our two governments are working *jointly* to craft solutions to the defining challenges of our age: sustaining global growth; ending poverty; fighting terror; defeating disease; and strengthening democracy around the world.

Here at home, India's cultures and traditions have become a vital part of the American melting pot. More than 80,000 Indian students now study in American universities – more than from any nation in the world. They will graduate. Many will return to India. They will play a vital role in the life of their nation while keeping ties to ours.

So, too, with all of you: the more than two million Indian-American doctors, scientists, businesspeople, and even a sitting U.S. governor. Together, you comprise a "living bridge," spanning two cultures and two countries. And the bridge is growing. Last year we issued more than 725,000 non-immigrant visas in India and the number will likely be even higher this year – a clear indication that U.S.-India relations are not simply about relations among governments.

Because of you, Indians and Americans are looking to each other to create opportunities that spur both governments to work together. Because of you – the Indian diaspora – our relations are not just deeper but broader. No longer just a *South* Asian power, India has become an *Asian* power, even a *global* power. It has a capacity and vision for growth and leadership that it did not possess even ten or fifteen years ago.

The trends are visible now: India participates in regional forums with Southeast Asian and East Asian countries. India's "Look East" policy has given it a bigger economic role in Southeast Asia. Its relationships in the Middle East, its deepening relations with Africa, and its role in regional maritime security are areas where the U.S. is just beginning to engage in substantive talks with India.

Given the breadth of our relationship, I could talk all afternoon. But, let me focus on three areas:

- our expanding economic partnership;
- our collaboration on global issues; and
- the strategic relationship that has emerged between our governments.

### Economic Partnership

India's remarkable growth of eight to nine percent continues to fuel this relationship in many ways. The private sector is dynamic. Investment between the two countries has taken off, and it is not just in one direction. Indian companies are investing in the U.S. in many areas, including steel, software, health care, and textiles. U.S. exports to India were up 72 percent last year, and two-way trade was up 30 percent.

We in government are helping to support this — first through *policy instruments*, such as a Bilateral Investment Treaty, but also through *high-level dialogue*.

In February, we began talks on a Bilateral Investment Treaty that we believe will help to spur business in both directions. We completed another round two weeks ago in Washington, and are on an ambitious timetable to complete negotiations.

We conduct dialogues at or near the Cabinet level and nearly every area of our economic relationship.

- The U.S.-India Economic Dialogue chaired by the Economic Advisor to the President and India's Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.
- The U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum chaired by the U.S. Trade Representative and India's Minister of Commerce and Industry.
- The U.S.-India Commercial Dialogue, the U.S.-India Energy Dialogue, and the U.S.-India Financial and Economic Forum, involving, respectively, our Commerce, Energy and Treasury Secretaries and their Indian counterparts.

And we involve the private sector through the U.S.-India CEO Forum, the Agriculture Knowledge Initiative, the U.S.-India High-Technology Cooperation Group, and the Private Sector Advisory Group to the U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum.

Our government efforts are designed to provide a context and open up opportunities. But the work that is being done, the creative ideas, and the energy has all come from the private sector. They'll go ahead with us or without us.

### Collaboration on Global Issues

Our economic partnerships are matched by collaborative initiatives to find solutions to global problems important to both societies.

Investment in science and technology innovation has yielded promising results in tackling issues related to poverty and health. The United States and Indian governments are working in conjunction with private businesses and organizations to expand the agricultural and energy sectors in India in order to make farming more sustainable and productive and to develop cleaner forms of energy. For example, we have a joint agricultural knowledge initiative working to improve farm-to-market links. U.S. experts in clean coal technology are working with Indian counterparts to ensure India's energy future and promote a cleaner environment. There is no international energy security initiative the United States has promoted that India has not been a part of.

Educational exchanges, a historic and important component of our cooperation, have broadened our understanding of our cultures and societies. Indian and American universities are working towards even greater cooperation and cross-fertilization, with an emphasis on knowledge-sharing through student and faculty exchanges and expanded access to higher education in India. We recently concluded a new agreement with the Government of India to double the number of Fulbright scholars.

Educational cooperation extends into the medical field as many of you may know well. Harvard Medical School, for example, has created a partnership with Wockhardt Hospital and Heart Institute to improve health care quality in India. In addition, well-respected specialized American hospitals, such as Mayo Clinic, are increasing their ties with medical professionals in India. High tech media make possible conferences between doctors in both countries on cutting edge procedures or involving particularly difficult treatment.

Your organization and its 42,000 members have also made many significant contributions to the development of the medical field in India. The work of Dr. Navin Shah, a co-founder and president of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, demonstrates what progress can be made by bringing knowledge gained in the United States to India. Many of you may be familiar with Dr. Shah's efforts in Mumbai to implement an emergency response system similar to that of 911. After working with government officials for four years, the system was finally inaugurated in January this year.

Collaborative efforts between Indian and American medical professionals ensure that more breakthroughs like the emergency response system in Mumbai can happen in the future. There is an enthusiasm within our two medical communities to work together to fight diseases, share knowledge and provide better medical services.

In recent years India has leapt forward in the areas of disease control and access to health care. Polio, for example, is near eradication. While the efforts and achievements are commendable, more is left to be done. Investments by the private sector and the two governments, partnering with medical professionals and health institutes, are improving the quality of drugs and medical treatment. The United States is also one of the largest donors to fighting HIV/AIDS in India, providing nearly \$30 million last year. These are but a few illustrative developments of the benefits reaped from U.S.-India cooperation in the field of medicine.

These public and private partnerships are but a few of the benefits arising from our relationship that holds much promise and potential. And they show no sign of slowing down.

## Our Strategic Partnership

Finally, our strategic relationship has evolved over the last decade, transcending ideology. Strategic talks that began in 2000 between the then Clinton administration and the BJP government have deepened through the joint strategic partnership envisioned by President Bush and Prime Minister Singh. Our landmark nuclear deal, our expanding defense ties, and our consultations on developments in South Asia all testify to this.

You're all reading a lot these days about the status of the nuclear deal. We're currently waiting for political developments in India. We need to be patient and understand democratic consensus building in our partner country. As India moves, we will, too. As the Indian government does what it can, we will do what we can, each with an understanding of the other's democratic calendar. We'll have to talk to our Congress about what they can and cannot accomplish during the remainder of this year. But, overall, I am confident that this deal will come through sooner or later. I'm confident because it has widespread support in both countries and because it's good for India, good for the U.S., good for non-proliferation, good for the environment and good, indeed necessary, for India's long-term economic growth.

In our defense relationship, every military service now conducts joint exercises—from small unit Army counterinsurgency training to naval exercises involving aircraft carriers and submarines. Our defense trade has at last begun to flourish. Only this year, India completed the largest acquisition yet of American defense equipment in purchasing approximately \$1 billion worth of Lockheed Martin's C-130 transport aircraft. And two American companies are bidding to build India's next-generation fighter with the F-16 and F-18.

We also aim to expand our cooperation through dialogue on East Asia, the Persian Gulf, and Africa. And we are cooperating on Afghanistan, where India is playing a very positive role as one of the major donors to the civilian efforts there.

Of course, our shared democratic heritage remains a solid bond and enduring foundation for this relationship.

I am just enormously excited about what's happening in this relationship. And I am confident that it will be sustained into our next Administrations, just as it was sustained over the last transitions in American and Indian politics.

Those of you who studied history, or who are not as young and naïve as I am, are thinking that we've had such periods of excitement between the U.S. and India before. The bubbles burst, the enthusiasm turned to disappointment. What's to make this different? And, for those of us in government, how do we make it different this time? My answer to the first question is: YOU. You're the ones who make it different: the students, the trans-oceanic families, the academics, the doctors, the business people. You are the foundation and the dynamic between the United States and India. And, what can governments do to help you? Listen to you. Please, tell us how to open doors and remove obstacles. We'll work to help you find even more and more exciting opportunities.

At the end of the day, the key is people: individuals, like you, whose passion, dedication, and commitment has done so much to build the Indo-American relationship and will carry us forward.

So many things bind us together. It's not just the bonds of industry, and not just ties of heritage and diaspora, and not just our imperfect but wonderful democratic systems. Fundamentally, the U.S. and India share a perspective and a vision for the future that I think will grow and endure for generations to come.

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