



## Remarks On the U.S.-India Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (123 Agreement)

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**

Treaty Room  
Washington, DC  
October 2, 2008

**Participants:**

**Under Secretary for Political Affairs William J. Burns,**  
**Senator Christopher J. Dodd,**  
**Senator Richard G. Lugar**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission Ambassador Raminder Singh Jassal**

[View Video](#)

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Good afternoon, everyone. I'm delighted to welcome you to the Treaty Room. I'm very pleased that so many people who played such important roles in the successful conclusion of the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Initiative could be here today. I'm pleased to acknowledge Mr. Jassal and our colleagues from the Indian Embassy who are here, as well as Congressman Royce, whose presence – (applause) – whose presence reflects the extraordinary bipartisan vision and leadership which made this achievement possible.

And now it really is my honor to introduce the architect and the driving force behind this historic effort, Secretary of State Rice. (Applause.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. Well, all that I can say is that there were a lot of architects and driving forces behind this agreement. And it is indeed an historic agreement. It is an agreement that cements an effort that we have been making for some time to bring together the world's largest democracy with the world's oldest continuous democracy. And we believe that the relationship between the United States and India is on a very firm footing, and that can only be good for democracy and it can only be good for the world.

I'm not going to make any speeches. Everyone knows the arguments about this agreement. If you don't know them by now – (laughter) – then I don't know what rock you've been hiding under, because we've certainly made them. But this is really a thank you, a thank you to all of the people who have made this possible. I'd like to thank you from the Indian Embassy, our wonderful friends who have been so steadfast. I've been on the phone with Foreign Minister Mukherjee just a few minutes ago. He will go to Delhi. I will join him there in a couple of days, and I look forward to that.

Obviously, this has been Prime Minister Singh and President Bush's vision to have this agreement cement and be one of the cornerstones of our relationship, but I just want to take a moment to say that it is not the only element of this relationship. As much as the Civil Nuclear Agreement is a breakthrough, this is also a friendship that is based on values, a friendship that is based on ties, people-to-people ties, including the 80,000 or so Indian students who study in the United States. I know that the U.S.-India Business Council is here representing the varied interests that we have economically with India. It is a relationship that is cultural. It is a relationship that goes very, very deep. So as important as this agreement is, it is a part of a much broader framework for our enduring friendship.

I want to say, though, that without, of course, the United States Congress in a completely bipartisan way, this would not have been possible. And I want to thank Congressman Royce who is here, but I also see tucked back here someone that I would actually like to ask to say a word, if you would, Senator Dodd. (Applause.)

I just want to say that Senator Dodd did a magnificent job in shepherding this through for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I did talk with Senator Biden a couple of times in between various events, and he knew that he – and he worked very hard, too, but he knew that he'd left it in good hands. I know that Senator Lugar perhaps will join us a little bit later. I've spoken earlier today also with Speaker Pelosi and with Leader Reid to thank them for the efforts, and also Congressman Berman and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen.

So this has been an all-out effort. I'm very proud of the State Department team, but I am especially proud of our cooperation with the United States Congress. And so if you would come and say a word to us, we would be very honored. (Applause.)

**SENATOR DODD:** Well, thank you very much, Madame Secretary. And I had not intended to say a word here, merely to come and to celebrate with all who have been involved, and for those of you who worked for years at this, we thank you immensely. The Indian Embassy and, of course, our own State Department have been deeply impressed with the work of the Department. And here comes a true hero, in my view, Dick Lugar, by the way. (Laughter.) How about a round of applause for Dick Lugar? (Applause.) I was engaging in a filibuster until you arrived – (laughter) – on the way.

And Joe Biden deserves a great deal of credit. He's otherwise occupied today -- would have been here. (Laughter.) And -- but he and Senator Lugar and the staffs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, going back several years, really have done a marvelous job as well. And I can't add anything more to the words of Condoleezza Rice. This is a tremendously important moment for our two countries. The details of the agreement are certainly important.

But as I tried to say yesterday and as Dick did as well, there are issues here that transcend the specifics of this agreement. There has been this sort of unspoken, but realized tension over the past 35 years or so that we needed to get beyond. And certainly, given the neighborhood in which India resides, given the tremendous issues that this century is going to pose for those who come long after we've finished our work here, this agreement will serve, I think, as a foundation, a bedrock for these two great democracies, ours and yours, to serve as a – hopefully, as a beacon of hope for people in that region, but also as an opportunity for us to work together for that common cause. And so this is a proud moment.

A bit lost yesterday in otherwise debates, I found myself -- (laughter) – the last two weeks, I began to feel like I was the only committee chairman in the Senate. (Laughter.) But we also had a great success yesterday in terms of trying to deal with our financial issues. And again, it was one of the finer moments of the Senate. And so, yesterday to have both accomplished the bill behind this agreement and to also deal with the financial crisis, that we

face and also affects us in a global way was, I think, one of the finest moments in my 28 years in the United States Senate.

And Dick Lugar has been such an incredible leader for so many years -- has been my Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee -- and his leadership on this issue really cannot be exaggerated. I can't begin to tell you what a difference it has made to have Dick Lugar leading our Committee, either in a minority capacity or as the chairman over the years. And what a great honor it's been to be his friend and also to be his colleague in the Senate. So, Dick, thank you very, very much. (Applause.)

**SENATOR LUGAR:** Well, I'm nonplussed hearing that wonderful introduction by my dear friend Chris Dodd. Let me just say I share Chris' feeling that yesterday was one of the highlights of the Senate's history. And I say that, having been there as Chris has, for 30-some years, to see the galleries filled at 9:30 to 10:00 at night on a Wednesday night and to see the floor filled, not only with members of the Senate, but our staffs, members of the House who had come over, the press gallery filled completely, the visitors gallery with all the families. And our presidential candidates, both of those gentlemen on the floor participating, vice presidential candidate Joe Biden, our chairman. It was a magic moment, but it was a good moment to make a final case to the American people who were also watching on C-SPAN and were watching who wandered over and visited with who. (Laughter.)

Chris is an able diplomat and he was working with Republicans, and I shook some Democratic hands, even Senator Obama, for a matter of fact, wandered over there. It was a day in which we had a debate, but in which those offering amendments that we thought would be delaying or destructive finally allowed a voice vote so that we did not go through the embarrassment of having more and more division on the situation.

An 86-13 vote ultimately was not only something the American people watched, but as I took a look at the press clippings from India today, there was genuine excitement. Our press clips picked up at least 20 papers in India that covered this extensively. I pay tribute to the President and to Prime Minister Singh for that original state dinner in which our countries came together. And I pay tribute to Secretary Rice for the follow-through, through a long and tedious procedure, and the Indian parliament for almost two years of difficulty, and in our situation for the same period. We've grown together. We like each other. (Laughter.)

And as a matter of fact, our people in business have come back and forth in increasing numbers with more and more creative ideas on how not only to serve the people of our countries, but to serve the world productively. And in sort of a subterranean theme yesterday, the whole issue of carbon control, climate change, global warming, however you want to call it, is in the background but will come to the foreground in India and the United States. We will be trying to do more with nuclear power, nuclear energy to replace some of the coal-fired furnaces in India and those in the United States.

We'll never make it as a world, given the size and the scope of our economies and our countries, if we do not offer leadership. But the physical elements of having fissile material to be able to do the peaceful nuclear thing is of the essence. You can talk and have conferences and so forth forever without the technical means, really, to go about this, and to have trust that we are going about it. We understand the flow of this.

So I am so grateful that Secretary Rice called us together today. This was an unexpected privilege to have a chance to say to friends in India and friends in the United States and my colleague, Chris Dodd, and my Secretary of State, that this is a great moment for both of our countries and for the world. Thanks so much. (Applause.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. I'm only going to call one other person to the podium, but before I do so, I would especially like to recognize the hard work of this State Department team.

There are many, many people who were involved, but -- Assistant Secretary for South Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher; you saw Bill Burns, our Political -- P, as we call him, who has been very involved; the people in our proliferation activities shop. I want to thank Evan Feigenbaum who worked exceedingly hard. He has the downside also of having been my student at Stanford. (Laughter.)

And I especially want to thank, in many ways, our chief negotiator. John Rood has been doing pretty well. He got the missile defense agreements with the Czech Republic and Poland, the India Civil Nuclear Agreement. Next, we're sending him to the Middle East. (Laughter.) So John, really excellent job.

And I now would just like to ask our Indian colleague, the Chargé d'Affaires, to say just a word, and then perhaps we can gather for a team photo and maybe shake a few hands. (Applause.)

**AMBASSADOR JASSAL:** Thank you very much, Madame Secretary. It's a great honor to be here today with you to have a joint celebration, as it were, of reaching the final stage of a journey that we began in 2005. I would like to pay a tribute particularly to your leadership, Madame, because it was your vision and your ideas on the transformation of India-U.S. relations that actually brought this about. I'd like to also pay a tribute to the vision of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Bush who began this journey in 2005.

As, Madame Secretary, you said, the Civil Nuclear Initiative is one aspect of India-U.S. ties. But because of -- it represents such a change and transformation, it became emblematic of the new relationship. So we are at the end of the process and at the beginning of deeper cooperation. So thank you very much for inviting me here today, and my colleague (inaudible). I'd also like to thank Senator Lugar and Senator Dodd, Congressman Ed Royce, and my colleagues and friends from the State Department and White House. Thank you all very much. It's been a great pleasure for me. Thank you. (Applause.)

**2008/827**

Released on October 2, 2008

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.