



## Remarks With Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Hyderabad House  
New Delhi, India  
October 4, 2008

**MR. MUKHERJEE:** Secretary Rice and I have just had very constructive and useful talks. It is always a pleasure to welcome a good friend and trusted partner to India. Under Secretary Rice's (inaudible), India-US relations are today better than they have ever been before and have been transformed into a truly strategic partnership.

During our discussions (inaudible) range of subjects. We were both very satisfied with the status of our bilateral relationship and are convinced of its future potential. Today India and the US engage as partners across the entire range of (inaudible). The civil nuclear energy initiative is now in its last lap. We look forward to signing our 123 Agreement and bringing it into effect soon. I am grateful to Secretary Rice for all that she has done to make possible this landmark achievement and transformational event. It is this agreement which has opened the door for India to international nuclear commerce.

What India and the US are doing today has direct benefits for our peoples, and assists India's effort to develop. Whether it is energy, agricultural research, trade or high-technology, India's (inaudible) a knowledge society leads us to work very closely with US. Today the USA is India's largest trading partner, our largest source of investment and a major source of technology. As India grows and develops, our relationship with the US too will grow and develop.

India-US relations today have more than bilateral significance. We naturally also discussed the regional situation and global issues. Ours is a neighborhood of several challenges. India seeks a peaceful periphery (inaudible). We have an interest in the peace, stability and prosperity of our neighbors, and will make our contribution to these outcomes.

Among the global issues that we discussed, we found commonalities of approach. We determined to continue working together on (inaudible) issues, ranging from climate change to UN reform, including that of the UN Security Council.

As we looked back with satisfaction at the transformation of India-US relations, we are convinced of the future prospects of this relationship. The vision for this relationship laid down by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Bush is one that serves the interests of our peoples, and those of the region and the world. India and the US, as two democracies with shared values, look forward to building this partnership based on principle and (inaudible) in the years to come.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much, Minister Mukherjee, for hosting me here, for the wonderful hospitality, for the wonderful lunch, and the good company, but also the very substantive discussions that we have just finished. I look forward to seeing the prime minister a little bit later. President Bush very much enjoyed hosting him in Washington, just nine days ago.

I think it is fair to say that, as I come here to Delhi and work with you, Minister, we both have a lot to be pleased about, particularly that I think we are executing the vision of Prime Minister Singh and President Bush for closer and deeper relations between the United States and India.

We have, of course, just concluded the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement. A lot of people have worked very hard, diplomats and parliamentarians and civil servants, and politicians. I think that everyone has worked to bring this into being, and the negotiations have sometimes been tough along the way, but it is because it is such an historic agreement, and historic achievement. We have all persevered, and the United States will stand by its commitment.

And I believe, in that regard, the unanimous support of the International Atomic Energy Agency, all 45 members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, 298 members of our House of Representatives, and 86 members of our Senate -- that's an enormous bipartisan margin -- it shows that the U.S. civil nuclear cooperation agreement has broad support, bipartisan support, and broad and deep support.

This gives a new platform for cooperation in energy matters. We all need to find ways to diversify our energy mix, and we look very much forward to helping India to develop civil nuclear power. We believe that it is important that the IAEA, and, in fact, Dr. ElBaradei was an early supporter of this, because it builds on India's very good proliferation behavior to strengthen, we believe, the IAEA framework.

We believe it is also very important for our technological cooperation, as it moves forward. But, of course, this relationship goes very much beyond the civil nuclear power agreement. It is a relationship that is seeing ever larger numbers of travelers and of students and of scholars and of business people. And families, because of course, the United States enjoys the tremendous energy and vitality and vibrancy of an Indian-American community that remains very committed to seeing progress between the United States and India.

People are using these ties to gain new technologies, to innovate. Investment is flowing both ways, creating jobs in both of our countries. Bilateral trade has set new records. And, indeed, we have opened up new channels between our governments, as well, in trade and technology, in agriculture -- one of the very earliest elements of cooperation between the United States and India -- in education, in defense cooperation. I think it's fair to say that this is now one of the broadest relationships that the United States enjoys.

And we are also putting this good relationship to use, globally. We have had discussions today about Afghanistan, our joint desire to see Afghanistan peaceful and prosperous. We are working together on issues like climate change. And, of course, as we look to transforming our economies, we hope to work together increasingly to make certain that world trade prospers, and continues so that our economies can continue to grow.

I think it's fair to say, Minister, that the last several years have, indeed, been better years for U.S.-India relations. But as President Bush gets ready to end his administration and pass on to his successor, strong relations around the world, I think that this will be one of the very strongest. I know that whoever becomes President of the United States will continue to build on the firm foundation that Prime Minister Singh and President Bush began in 2005. Thank you very much.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you Madame Secretary of State. Kindly introduce yourself and your organization, and also indicate whom the question is addressed to.

**QUESTION:** I have a question for the minister and for the Secretary of State.

Dr. Rice, we were all expecting the two of you to sign the 123 agreement today. Can you tell us why it is taking so long for the President to sign it into law? What the procedure is now? Is it just a procedural delay, or is there something else?

And also, there are some concerns India has with the bill that's been cleared in the U.S. Congress. Would the President be addressing those concerns in his signing statement?

And Mr. Mukherjee, technically India and the U.S. could have signed this agreement, even before the President signed his statement. Why did India choose not to do that?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the President will sign the agreement very soon. He wants to sign it very soon -- sorry, the legislation -- very soon.

There are administrative details that have to be worked through. For instance, just to give you an example, a bill, once it's passed on Capitol Hill, has to be enrolled, it's called. It then has to be transmitted to the White House. I think you know that this has been a busy time for our legislative branch over the last several days.

But indeed, the President very soon looks forward to signing the legislation. And, of course, the administration has made clear in a number of fora and we will make clear again, that the Hyde Act is completely consistent with the 123 agreement that we have signed with India, and the 123 agreement is consistent with the Hyde Act. The United States will keep its commitments to both.

**MR. MUKHERJEE:** So what the signing is concerned as -- we have completed the process of registrations, and the approval of the registration in the US Congress is (inaudible). After the signing of the President, then the process will be complete and after the process is complete we'll be in a position to sign at a mutually convenient date (inaudible). And I hope it will be signed shortly.

**MODERATOR:** Bob Burns.

**QUESTION:** No, it's Lachlan Carmichael from the AFP News Agency. I wanted to ask Madame Secretary and Mr. Minister about the commitment that Madame Secretary made to one of the top congressmen in the U.S. to go to the NSG, and ask the NSG to amend the rules, demanding a ban on the transfer of reprocessing and enrichment technology to countries such as India, that haven't signed the NPT.

How soon will you do that, and what will you do to achieve that? And how does Mr. Minister feel about that? I understand you're not so happy about it.

**SECRETARY RICE:** This is a criteria-based approach for the NSG on this matter, Lachlan, so we have the language correct. And, indeed, this would now be a global issue. And the United States has been seeking this for some time. So there is nothing new here, it's just a matter of whether or not it is de-linked from other issues. But this has been U.S. policy for some time.

**MR. MUKHERJEE:** So far as NSG clearance is concerned, it has enabled the NSG member countries to enter into civil nuclear cooperation trade with India. This is just an enabling provision. Directly through the bilateral arrangements the details of implementing the agreement will be finalized.

In respect of the facilities for reprocessing, when (inaudible) enter into bilateral arrangements, these issues will be addressed. As I mentioned, this is an enabling provision. All aspects of the contract, bilateral contract, cannot be addressed in an enabling provision. The bar which prohibited, which did not allow the NSG members to enter into nuclear trade with India -- that has been removed with the approval of the India specific safeguards agreement by the board of governors of IAEA and cleared by NSG members. And how we will resolve through the bilateral arrangements -- that would depend on the contracting parties. Thank you.

**QUESTION:** I represent INS News Agency. My question is addressed to Madame Secretary of State. Madame now that the 123 deal is almost done, what is the 456 in India-US relations? And also, what can India and the United States do together to deal with terrorism flowing from Pakistan and surrounding (inaudible)? Thank you.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Right. Let me be clear. The 123 Agreement is done. It's a matter of signing that agreement. And so I don't want anyone to think that we have open issues. We, in fact, don't have open issues. These are administrative matters of signing agreements, just to be very clear.

In terms of the situation in Pakistan, we have had a very good discussion. The United States has encouraged the cooperation between Pakistan and India, encouraged dialogue between Pakistan and India, which has taken place.

My colleague, Foreign Minister Mukherjee, was one of the first visitors to Pakistan after the new government came into being there. I think we all have a stake in a successful, civilian government in Pakistan that can deal with Pakistan's considerable challenges, be they economic or political, but particularly in terms of terrorism.

And Pakistan, more than anyone, has an interest in the -- fighting terrorism, as is witnessed by the fact that the great Benazir Bhutto was, of course, gunned down by these militants.

And so, we all have an interest. I don't think that there are any interests in conflict here. But to the degree that a good relationship between India and Pakistan is going to help, which I think it will, I have to say that I found, both on the Pakistani side, within the government, and on the Indian side, a full understanding of that, and a willingness to pursue it.

**MR. MUKHERJEE:** I would just like to add (inaudible) already Dr. Rice has stated. We are (inaudible) mechanism for this issue, including the recent discussion with President (inaudible), Dr. Manmohan Singh our prime minister, and (inaudible) discussed tackling the problem of terrorism and we're assured by Pakistan President (inaudible) that the territories of Pakistan will not be used for carrying out the terrorist activities against India. We do hope (inaudible) established, they will be more effective to tackle this (inaudible). Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** Last question. Susan?

**QUESTION:** I'm Susan Cornwell with Reuters, and this is a question for Secretary of State Rice. Madam Secretary, have you made any progress in getting North Korea to hand over their verification protocol for their nuclear program? And is North Korea willing to consider handing it to China first, and then being delisted from the U.S. nuclear -- the U.S. terrorism list?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Susan, I don't have any update for you. I have spoken only briefly with the Assistant Secretary Hill, who was, at the time, in Pyongyang. I will talk with him on Monday, when I return to Washington, and we can review the discussions that he had in North Korea.

But one thing was very clear. The North Koreans have an obligation to give a verification protocol -- and I would say it's to all six parties, of course, or to all five parties, a verification protocol that gives confidence that we are able to verify the provisions of the declaration that North Korea made, and begin to answer the substantial questions that that declaration raised.

And so, what we will be looking at is the verification protocol, and what the North Koreans have said about it. But I don't have any specifics for you on the outcome of Assistant Secretary Hill's discussions. He himself has said that they were substantive. I'm sure they were. We will see when he gets back if they were productive.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you very much.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you.

**2008/T27-2**

Released on October 4, 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.