



Remarks at a Luncheon in Honor of His Excellency Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Benjamin Franklin Room
Washington, DC
July 18, 2005

(1:40 p.m. EDT)

MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. The Secretary of State, accompanied by the Prime Minister of the Republic of India and Mrs. Kaur.

(Applause.)

SECRETARY RICE: Welcome to everyone, particularly the warmest welcome to the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Dr. Singh and to Mrs. Kaur, you are among friends here in the United States of America and I hope you have felt that since you have been here. I want to welcome also all of the members of the Indian Delegation and all of the citizens of India, several of whom I have met, who have accompanied the Prime Minister here.

The American-Indian relationship is one that is based on values and there can be no deeper friendship than when it is based on values. We are, indeed, both great democracies and we are great multi-ethnic democracies, that believe that our strength is both in our democratic values and in the diversity of our people, religiously, ethnically and politically. It means that India and the United States understand things at a level that is very deep and so we will continue to work to strengthen this great relationship.

Today the President had an opportunity to tell the Prime Minister that we value greatly India as an international partner, as a country whose rise economically, politically, we welcome. We welcome India as a global partner and we look forward to the continued strengthening of democratic institutions, values and peace because this partnership will prosper and move forward.

Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Kaur, members of the Indian Delegation, again, welcome. And now if I may raise a glass to the relationship between the United States and the Republic of India and also to the American and Indian people who share values and bonds of kinship. Here, here.

Please be seated.

PRIME MINISTER SINGH: Dr. Rice, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your gracious welcome and for the excellent arrangements for my visit. Never before in my life, I have met such a large group of the best and the brightest people from the United States and I thank you, Dr. Rice, for providing me with this unique opportunity. I now sense what is it that makes America such a great country.

We in India -- (applause) -- we in India have greatly welcomed the extent to which the President's U.S. Administration under President Bush has taken forward efforts to affect a major transformation in the relationship between India and the United States. Madame, we recognize your central role in contributing to this great effort. Indeed, your own visit to India in March marked a significant (inaudible) point in our relations.

Ladies and gentlemen, the refashioning of this bilateral relationship is not merely a matter of diplomatic process. Our vision of relations with the United States is a long-term and strategic one, based on shared values and commitments. What we have embarked upon is, therefore, not just for tomorrow but I sincerely hope and believe that it is for generations to come.

Our partnership draws upon the values of pluralism and the diversity that is such a defining characteristic of both our societies. We believe that with the experience of the last 15 years since we unshackled the forces of creativity and competitiveness, India has a stronger basis for shouldering greater global responsibility.

As I told President Bush earlier today, this creates increasing opportunities for both our countries to work together as partners. But more importantly, we recognize that in this increasingly interdependent world in which we live, just as prosperity is indivisible, so too is adversity. This underlines the imperative for both our nations to expand our cooperation in every facet of human endeavor to deal with the challenges (inaudible) upon the processes of globalization.

In this context, the success of the Indian-American community has added a new vibrancy to our historic relations. I take pride in the achievements of American Indians, if I may put that that way, for their creativity, for their spirit of adventure and enterprise. They have done us all proud and I -- (applause) -- and I have no reason to doubt that their contribution to the enrichment of the life of this great country is equally appreciated by all concerned. This community has played a very valuable role as a bridge between our cultures. And in doing so, they have helped accelerate the transformation of this relationship.

I, therefore, believe that we are at the beginning of an exciting new period in our partnership. It's the juncture that we will one day look upon -- look back upon as a defining moment in history.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to conclude by asking you to join me in proposing a toast to the good health of Secretary Rice and to the continued development of the India-U.S. partnership in years to come. I thank you.

(Applause.)

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