



Briefing on the Signing of the Global Partnership Agreement Between the United States and India

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(4:45 p.m. EDT)

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I am Nick Burns and I'm on the record and I'm going to talk about India.

And, we can do three things -- but I don't want to bore you -- so we can talk about the advent of this global partnership that President Bush and Prime Minister Singh announced yesterday; the super structure of our new relationship with India. We can talk about the nuclear energy cooperation and I can describe to you the process by how we got there involving Secretary Rice and myself and a number of other people who have been negotiating this for the last six weeks.

All three or any one. I'm happy to take any questions.

QUESTION: On the context of Pakistan also, even though you dehyphenated and you say that these are not linked. Obviously, there are some tensions. I mean the countries themselves seem to link them -- seem to link the issue.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I can tell you that we have an important and vital relationship with Pakistan. Secretary Rice called President Musharraf this morning and reaffirmed, of course, the central importance of Pakistan to the United States, as a strategic partner for us in the war on terrorism. And we've been very pleased by the level of cooperation we've had with Pakistan in Afghanistan and in the war on terrorism in general.

She did describe for President Musharraf the arrangements that were agreed to yesterday between Prime Minister Singh and President Bush, as you would expect. And we have been in touch with the Pakistani Government at a variety of other levels.

But it's very important, I think, to say again, that we have this unique relationship with Pakistan, which is vital to our country and the war on terrorism. We have another unique and vital relationship with India. And as Secretary Rice has said many times before, there's no reason for us to have a hyphenated -- a strategic framework for South Asia. Both countries are important and there are issues where U.S. policy intersects and there are issues where we can have individual relationships with both countries. And certainly in the case of civil nuclear cooperation, we're going to have individual relationships.

And the fact is that India has a record of nonproliferation, which is exceptional; very strong commitment to protection of fissile material, other nuclear materials and nuclear technology; and there's a transparency about the Indian Government's program, which has been very welcomed. India has safeguarded reactors. In Tarapur, for instance, the reactors built long ago by the United States, American firms, and what was significant about yesterday's agreement is that India committed itself in public, very specifically to a series of actions to which it had not previously committed itself. Actions, which will, in effect, in a de facto sense, have India agreeing to the same measures that most of the NPT states have agreed to.

To -- you'll remember this from the joint statement -- to fully -- to separate their civil and military nuclear facilities; to place all the civil nuclear facilities under full IAEA safeguards and that includes monitoring and inspections; to sign an additional protocol, which is very important and, for the first time, to join the United States and most of the other nuclear powers in supporting a fissile material cutoff treaty.

Indians agreed yesterday to refrain from any transfer of sensitive equipment or enrichment and reprocessing technology. They also agreed that they would extend and maintain their moratorium on nuclear testing.

So we believe that the actions that the Prime Minister committed India to undertake yesterday will actually strengthen the nonproliferation regime and we're pleased about that and that's what was a benefit to the United States in agreeing to this construct in civil nuclear energy cooperation. That we would have this assurance of India's compliance with international standards and yet we'd also have the ability to see India now secure peaceful uses of civil nuclear power to satisfy the one billion people who live in that country and their enormous energy needs for the future. And there are concomitant advantages to this.

First is on the environment. India currently relies on fossil fuels. If India can develop in a peaceful way, safeguarded, inspected by international authorities, develop its nuclear power industry; India can then help to alleviate the ravages of global climate change in South Asia. And as a significant country in the world with the second largest population globally, that is a very important consideration for us.

I will also say this, this kind of cooperation is going to strengthen our ability in the United States to be a partner for India on all the associated issues that come with this kind of peaceful nuclear relationship. So we think it's a very good deal for the United States.

QUESTION: Is this -- oh, sorry George --

QUESTION: Go ahead.

QUESTION: Is this a kind of preliminary step to getting India to join the NPT? Are you pushing them to become an NPT (inaudible)?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: India has made a decision not to join the NPT, as you know. Now, speaking ideally and speaking -- looking into the future, obviously, it's the wish of the United States that all countries would join the Nonproliferation Treaty. India has not made that decision to do that. So we deal with the situation where a partner of ours, a friendly country, a very large country with significant energy needs is willing now to commit itself to undertake all of the quite invasive measures to safeguard its facilities. That is a benefit not just for the United States, it's a benefit for the nonproliferation community, and it's a benefit for what all of us believe and that is that these fissile materials, nuclear technologies, other sensitive technologies have to be safeguarded. And that will now be ensured.

Now, to do -- in order to carry all this out, two things have to happen. The Indian Government will need now to implement the specific steps that you saw in the joint statement yesterday. The U.S. Government will have to seek agreement from Congress to change and modify certain U.S. laws and we began the process of consultations yesterday. Secretary Rice and Steve Hadley and myself have been making phone calls to the congressional leadership. And I know that over the next month or two, and especially when Congress comes back from the summer recess, we will want to put in front of the Congress a specific program that would allow the United States to proceed to commit itself to this program of cooperation, but with the advice and with the agreement of the Congress. That's an important part of this.

So I wanted to say that because this agreement will not be put into effect tomorrow morning. It's going to take a series of implementation commitment -- it will have to be implemented by the Indian government and then we will have to seek these changes from the Congress and we'll also have to have conversations with our allies and partners in the nuclear suppliers group and we also began that this morning. We contacted -- we've been in touch with the German, French, and British governments this morning. We will soon be in touch with the Japanese Government and beginning to not just describe this agreement, but to seek the support of those countries for it.

QUESTION: Can I just follow up? In the past, you've had concerns about export controls with India. This strengthens those export control requirements?

UNDERSECRETARY BURNS: The Indian Government was able to have passed, in the Indian parliament, in the middle part of June, a new export control law that imposes various stringent requirements on the Indian authorities and strengthens their ability to protect the export of sensitive technologies and WMD materials in the chemical, biological, and radiological areas. So it was a very important step forward and also helped to bring them into line with many of the international requirements in that area. So we're pleased about that.

QUESTION: A question about Pakistan was raised initially. Could you address that more specifically than you have? And also, do you feel confident that a friendly, democratic India will be a strategic plus for the United States, given the fact that -- given the uncertainty about China's intentions over the long-term, which the Secretary has alluded to from time to time?

UNDERSECRETARY BURNS: George, we -- President Bush made the decision to seek a new global partnership with India not because we -- it is directed at any third country, certainly not. It stands on its own. Here, you have the world's largest democracy of a billion people, a country that is interested in promoting democracy worldwide. And now, we have a joint U.S.-Indian project on that, on democracy promotion. Interested in seeing what we can do to stop global -- the pandemic of global HIV/AIDS. We have a joint agreement on that.

India is interested in achieving scientific cooperation with the United States, space cooperation. We've invited India to join the Manned Space Program at NASA. India will do so. We've now agreed to tighten our agricultural cooperation, so a strategic cooperation that was unveiled yesterday in 11 specific areas by the White House and the Indian Government reveals a new relationship between two of the great countries of the world, which will have obvious benefits for the United States and our strategic interests, but it's not directed at any other country. It stands on its own.

And it is abundantly clear to us that this is a significant point of departure for our foreign policy, not just in South Asia, but worldwide. I would go back to, again, to the Cold War relationship where India and the United States, most often, were separated, did not agree most often on major issues of the day, and in fact, one country was aligned and the other country was very much aligned. We were very much aligned. Now you have, at the beginning of this century, a chance to have a strategic partnership together because our interests are intersecting. That's a big advantage and that was the reason why the Prime Minister was invited for this historic summit and we think the result of it.

In terms of Pakistan, I really don't have anything more to say than what I said before.

David.

QUESTION: Did she call --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) -- first thing this morning?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, she -- I know she talked to Mohamed ElBaradei, the Director of the IAEA, and had a very good conversation, a very positive conversation with him and we believe he was very much supportive of what we had done. She talked to the Pakistani Government. And we are in touch -- I was in touch with the British, French and German governments. And we'll continue consulting with our partners. This was not a revelation to many of these countries. We've been talking to many of partners about our desire to have a stronger relationship with India and to see if we could undertake cooperation in the civil nuclear energy field.

I should tell you something about this agreement. Secretary Rice, when she was in Delhi in March, made the suggestion to Prime Minister Singh that we ought to try to vault ahead in this relationship and have a relationship in the civil nuclear energy field, as well as in the other fields that I mentioned. That began the process of our two governments on negotiating the agreement that was finished yesterday. We continued that negotiation for the last several months. I made a trip to Delhi in the middle part -- latter part of June where I spent most of my time working on this issue. And the Indians sent a delegation, led by their foreign secretary, the number two official in their foreign ministry, to Washington on Thursday. And we spent Friday, Saturday and Sunday, all day, negotiating this agreement. And finally, Secretary Rice and the Prime Minister talked yesterday morning and then President Bush and the Prime Minister talked and that was -- that resulted in the agreement.

So it occurred at, at least three levels of our government. It took months because it's very complicated business and because the stakes were high for both countries, but we were very pleased to reach agreement.

Nick and then David, I'm sorry.

QUESTION: NPT. On the conversation this morning with ElBaradei, did they talk about what -- the fact that India has refused to sign the NPT says about the NPT because clearly there are some disadvantages to a country signing onto this treaty? And there was just a review conference in New York a couple of months ago. Just so generally, sort of, if you can talk about what these problems with the treaty might be that India would not be interested in signing it?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Nick, I'm not aware that they had that specific discussion. I do know that Secretary Rice briefed Dr. ElBaradei on what we had accomplished and that his response was very positive, but I will let him speak for himself. But I don't believe they got into that level of detail. But I would just say this -- we see yesterday's agreement as India joining the mainstream of international thinking and international practices on the nonproliferation regime.

They're not part of the Nonproliferation Treaty, but they've now joined the mainstream because they committed yesterday to undertake steps that they previously had not been willing to undertake or able to undertake. And these steps are the same practices that all of us employ, all of us that have civil nuclear power, and that includes many of the most advanced industrialized countries of the world.

So you had a situation for the better part of several decades where you had an international regime and you had India outside that regime. And what you did not see happen yesterday was India to formally join the treaty regime. But what you did see was India very publicly say, "We will now adopt the same practices" and those practices ensure stability, they ensure nonproliferation, and they open up the door to future civil nuclear energy cooperation. That means that once we had our agreement with the Congress, if that is forthcoming, we hope it is, and once India has taken these steps, American companies would be free to begin to provide safeguard material, safety material for nuclear reactors, and to cooperate on an industrial level in the establishment of civil, peaceful nuclear power in India.

This is all about nuclear power. It's not about nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons were not the subject of this agreement. Nuclear weapons -- there's nothing in this about nuclear weapons. By taking this decision, we are not recognizing India as a nuclear weapons state. We are simply opening up a channel in order to cooperate on a commercial basis and a technological basis on nuclear power itself and that's a very important distinction.

Yes.

QUESTION: To follow up on that commercial aspect, you said you were having consultations with Japanese and European nuclear providers. Have there been

discussions with U.S. nuclear component providers in any way?

UNDERSECRETARY BURNS: Not that I'm aware of. This discussion -- the negotiation we had over the last several months was solely between the two governments and I certainly did not participate in any discussions with American industry. Now it may be -- we talk to industry all the time, and I'm sure that people in our Government, at one point or another, had discussions. But there were so few people involved in these negotiations and they are at such a high level that American industry never figured in negotiations themselves.

I'm sorry, David.

QUESTION: Just try turning back to the previous question, nuclear weapons were not spoken about or whatever. But wasn't India -- hasn't India's decision to become a declared nuclear power, hasn't that propelled them into the big leagues politically? Isn't this an under -- hasn't this been -- doesn't this justify their decision to weaponize?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, I don't think so. We don't see it that way. I mean, India is a major force in the world because of the size of the country, the size of the population, the stability of their democratic system, and the fact that India is now very much playing a role that is consistent with the role played by the United States from our perspective. And so that is the obvious interest in having a global partnership with India.

And India has now begun to adopt the practices of the international system that it hadn't before. It's a unique country. It's a unique situation, because of some of the decisions that India has decided not to take in the nuclear field. But we think we're far better off having secured these commitments than having not secured them in terms of nuclear safety in the world, nuclear power safety I should say.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: But just a question on in relation to nuclear arms. I mean, here is a nuclear-armed state cooperating with a country like the United States on civil nuclear energy. I mean, how sure are you that there will not be any proliferation because the facilities that they are going to allow for inspections are basically only civilian facilities. So how sure are you that there is not going to be any proliferation within the country itself?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: One of the factors by which we judge the performance of other countries is to look at the record of commitment to nonproliferation. And if you look at what India has done as it's developed its civil nuclear power sector, its economy and how it's treated fissile material, other sensitive materials and nuclear technologies, India has not been a proliferator. India has not sold or transferred those materials and equipment to third parties that do not have them. India has been responsible. And India has now opened itself up to a degree of transparency that assures us that this agreement can be verified and will be verified. There's a significant amount of trust between India and the United States, but there's also verifiability in this agreement.

QUESTION: But when --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: And that's a very important factor when you judge whether to take the kind of step that the United States took yesterday.

QUESTION: Which is why the doubt about why India is not joining the Non -- the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, if they comply to all these transparency --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: That's India's decision to make, and I would never give advice to a country publicly --

QUESTION: So here is the United States --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: From a podium like this. And so you have to judge the situation as it is. We currently had a situation -- previously had a situation with India, where it not only was not part of the NPT, it had not made these types of commitments to protect nuclear materials and nuclear technology. It has now made the commitments. Surely, we're better off, all of us who are concerned with nonproliferation, seeing those commitments in black and white in the text yesterday.

QUESTION: Which is why the U.S. seems to be rewarding good nations rather than making them adhere to international rules.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: No. The United States has been one of the leading countries committed to the NPT for a very long time. And this is a different situation. We were talking not about nuclear weapons; we're talking about nuclear energy and there we have to judge countries by their record. And India's record is of significant strong commitment to nonproliferation. That's the record that they have.

QUESTION: Nick, can you say one thing about the Security Council -- India's Security Council membership, the discussions there. Is the U.S. now supporting Indian membership? Are they considering it?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: We've said that we will support Japan for membership in the current debate. We've also said that it seems to us that the great imperative has to be to agree on the other reforms that need to be made to strengthen the UN: Secretariat reforms, management, budget, human rights committee, peace-building commission, a commission on terrorism. And those should be completed before we have a vote, before there is a vote on Security Council expansion.

So we would not want to see a G-4 proposal come to a vote in the next two weeks. I'll be in New York tomorrow to argue that point, to present that point to our friends at the United Nations. But I think it's also -- so we're not currently supporting India to become a permanent member of the Security Council. Not.

However, take a look at the statement that President Bush made yesterday, the joint statement, and it reflects what Secretary Rice has been saying for several months and that is that given India's growing role in the world, it's going to be necessary for international institutions to adapt and accommodate that growing role at some point in the future.

QUESTION: So suggesting, possibly, that the U.S. might, at some point, support India?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Suggesting that India must have a bigger role to play in many of the international institutions, but I'm not suggesting that we're going to be supporting India for a seat on the Security Council in the current debate between, you know, between now and September.

QUESTION: Is that because you haven't made up your mind or is it because you don't want to -- the rest of -- you know, if it means to get distracted by like the horse race on who --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: We think there's been far too much oxygen spent on the Security Council debate and not on the other reforms. And if you look at the Hyde Bill and the other in the current debate in the Senate over UN reform, we've got to be able to convince our Congress that we are serious about UN reform.

You know, if there's to be an expansion of the Security Council, the U.S. Senate will have to ratify the amended UN Charter or else it would not take place. Because we're a P-5 country, it's very clear to us that the Senate would not now want to entertain any expansion of the Security Council absent the larger reforms that have to be made. So that's where the President and Secretary Rice have been putting their emphasis and that's what our job is in the UN over the next two weeks as this debate continues in the General Assembly.

TOM CASEY: Nick, I think because of time we're going to have to end it there.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Okay. Thank you.

QUESTION: Thank you very much for coming down, it was really important.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: It's a pleasure. A pleasure. **2005/715**

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