



Press Briefing by Assistant Secretary Boucher and National Security Council Senior Director Millard in India

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MR. JONES: Good afternoon, everybody. We have briefing this afternoon Senior Director at the National Security Council for Central and South Asia Elizabeth Millard, and Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher, for South and Central Asia, as well. They'll be talking about the meetings and events today in Hyderabad.

MS. MILLARD: I was just going to say we hope you'll be indulgent. It's been a long, hot and dusty day, and we'll be here for a few minutes with you all to give you a little bit of the picture of what we saw today in Hyderabad at the two different events, and then answer any questions you might have.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: I assume there's some kind of pool report and that you'll get some of the color and details from your colleagues who were down there, or from watching their film on TV. So I'll go over some of the basics tied to the policy and turn it over to Elizabeth.

The first visit was at Acharya and Cultural University. Their chief players at the Chief Minister of the State, Mr. YSR Reddy; the Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. Raghu Vardhan Reddy; and the State Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Renghu Veera Reddy. They were the ones who showed him around this university. This is a place where they develop and then popularize agricultural techniques. And it was very important to us for policy purposes -- we announced the Agricultural Knowledge Initiative yesterday, the President and the Prime Minister did.

If you noticed, when the Prime Minister talked about things during the trip, he mentioned this, I'd say, three or four times during the course of the press conference. It's very important to India, it's important to any government to be reaching out to the agricultural population of India. And this has been a particular emphasis down in Andhra Pradesh, where they visited.

So, in addition to the high-tech that is down there, there's a lot of effort on agriculture. And the Agricultural Knowledge Initiative is to try to, in some ways, reflect the kind of success that the U.S. and India had in the 1960s, in the first Green Revolution, and try to help create a second Green Revolution for India's agricultural population.

Twenty-two percent of the GDP comes from agriculture, but two-thirds of the population gets its living from agriculture. So it's very important to adapt modern techniques, to use new technologies, to develop together new opportunities for India's farmers to develop, grow and market their goods.

What the President saw down there were a series of different exhibits and demonstrations. Inside the building, it was things like seed generation, pesticide use, a variety of experiments that they're doing down there, dealing with agricultural pests, integrated pest management, rice intensification, crop improvement, things like that.

Then outside, there was a pavilion with a number of exhibits dealing with women's empowerment -- opportunities to start businesses, make handicrafts and things like that, either as an income for women or as a secondary income for the family through the women. And that involved a variety of things they can do -- handicrafts, food production, eco-friendly food products, dairy production.

There was also a group of women entrepreneurs who -- people who had started these kind of businesses in different villages and places who were there. Secretary Rice sat down with them, talked for 20, 30 minutes, maybe -- probably 20 minutes, discussed how they're doing, how they're developing opportunities for their families.

And then the third area was a field where the President walked around, talked to some of the people who were demonstrating some of the kind of farming techniques that they've developed there, that they're trying to popularize in India -- use of hydrometer to better measure soil moisture, weeding, water management techniques, cotton-picking techniques, things like that that are part of the university's efforts to develop new techniques and to extend them to the agricultural population.

This university has an arrangement with Cornell University that's funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, and that's focused on how to popularize new techniques in agriculture.

And that whole event lasted about an hour. The President then got back in the helicopter and proceeded to the next site, which Elizabeth will talk about.

MS. MILLARD: We then traveled on to the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad, which is one of the premier business schools here in India. It's set up on the model of American business schools, and it offers a one-year MBA program. Beautiful modern building, a real contrast to the dusty and sort of more -- lesser-developed area that we traveled through to get there.

At the school there were about 400 members -- students and members of staff were seated in the audience. And then there was a large table where the President sat down with 16 young Indian entrepreneurs, aged between 25 and 45, men and women. Many of them had gone to school in the United States and had then come back here to open up businesses. The atmosphere was very relaxed. These young folks asked the President a number of questions, which ranged -- some of them were very broad, talking about globalization and the effects of globalization, why India is now so important to the United States -- to very specific questions, why does it take so long for a container to get cleared through American ports.

As I said, the atmosphere was relaxed, and the President told the young entrepreneurs that he was very excited to get outside of New Delhi, and he was very excited about this trip. He sees, of course, as we know, India as a strategic partner, and he's very excited about the future of India. And these young people that he was talking to, many of them represent the future of India. He said that yesterday he had met with the CEOs at the CEO forum. He joked that those were the old folks, and here today he was meeting with the CEOs of tomorrow.

One of the questions to the President was, why is India so important to you now, and to the United States now. He said, of course, that during the Cold War things were different, opportunity -- the political situation now was such that both he and the Prime Minister of India were able to make the kinds of breakthroughs that they had done -- made yesterday with the new agreement, as well as the many other agreements we've entered into. He also talked about the very important example that India can set

for the world as a democracy, as a country where people can live, people from different ethnicities, different religions live together harmoniously.

He spoke a little bit about the meeting he had had yesterday with religious representatives here in New Delhi, and said how impressed he had been that these leaders and representatives, while speaking with a lot of pride about their own faith, above all expressed pride about being an Indian citizen. And so he thought that was quite remarkable.

One of the participants asked the President, what does India have to do to move from being a developing country to a developed country? And the President spoke about the great importance of having an infrastructure development plan, among other things, to help the farmers get the goods to market. He talked about education, the importance of education, tax policy reform. He talked about dealing with difficult issues, how important it is to honestly look at very important issues that face -- and problems that face our country, as well, but certainly faces India, such as HIV/AIDS and trafficking. And he noted that we, the United States, are prepared to help India as it faces these questions.

There were a couple -- there was a spontaneous applause in the audience when the President talked about removing barriers, for instance, to Indian mangos, which now will be able to be enjoyed by Americans. And he actually saw mangos at the agricultural site, and that was pretty exciting, as well. I want to remind those of you who don't know, but there are about 60 varieties of mangos here in India. They ripen at different times, and they are really delicious.

I think that -- I could tell you a little bit about the School of Business. It has a memorandum of understanding with Wharton and with the Kellogg School of Management, and in fact, we noticed today in the audience there were exchange students also from American schools participating or attending the program. Thank you.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: We'll take a few questions.

Q The women at the very beginning, what were they doing? We couldn't tell what they were doing. The women underneath that canopy, all those different exhibits. There was a loom --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: Yes, they were various enterprises, sort of -- people showing what they did to make money.

Q Do you know what they were?

MS. MILLARD: They were weaving fabric and stuff, and there was also a group of women -- it was a women's support group, and they were discussing -- they said they were discussing the many issues that face women here in India. And they have these regular support groups. That was the group I spoke to.

Q -- that was a water buffalo he was looking at?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: Yes.

Q Hyderabad is a big center of outsourcing. He didn't really go to one of the businesses where outsourcing is done, right? Was that a particularly conscious decision, or why did you decide to go to the place you went?

MS. MILLARD: Well, I can just say one thing, and that is, I think that we have addressed outsourcing both in the Asia Society speech, and also I think you'll hear the President speak about it in his address a little bit later this evening. I think his desire in Hyderabad was, A, to see -- to get away from the big city and see the agricultural -- the farmers working and so forth, and also meet with these young entrepreneurs.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: I'd just say I think in his remarks, whether it was to the entrepreneur group or some of his public remarks in India, the President has been very clear on his stand on outsourcing, that the sharing of work, sharing of opportunities between the U.S. and India has been good for them and good for us. And he takes a very clear stand on that and there's no change in that stand.

I think in terms of these events, first the agricultural sector, because it's so important, because it's such a large sector of the population, because it's important to Indian governments and Indian people, it was one we wanted to highlight where the United States has a very strong record in India of having participated in the first Green Revolution and we're now embarked on \$100 million -- this Agricultural Knowledge Initiative involves contributions from the Indians and from us

-- \$100 million program is to really try to recreate that and get these agricultural -- new techniques, develop them and get them out there.

I mean, one of the things the university is doing is developing seeds that are appropriate for this climate down there, things like that. There's a lot we can do, sort of applying technology and techniques to agriculture. So it's not a backward-looking thing, it's a very forward-looking thing. And I think that's what the entrepreneur event was about, too, was looking forward to India's future. Outsourcing is a very strong phenomenon in Hyderabad. It's something maybe a lot of Americans know about, but in terms of India's future, that's part of it, but these other pieces are part of it, too.

Q In any occasion did the President mention about the nuclear -- civilian nuclear cooperation, especially what to do with international community or Congress?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: Did he talk about civilian nuclear cooperation, especially what to do in the international context? In my -- I didn't hear everything he said at the Agricultural University, where I tend to doubt that came up, given the seeds and the pesticides and the plants. And it didn't even come up in the entrepreneurial roundtable.

Thank you.

END 5:30 P.M. (Local)

 [BACK TO TOP](#)