



Remarks at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

Richard Boucher, Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: Thank you (Chargé d'Affaires) Geoff (Pyatt), and thank you President Poddar for having me in for your remarks and I agree with you completely. The only thing I would add was maybe the word "very" -- it is advancing very rapidly, it is becoming very dynamic, it is becoming very important, and frankly, some of these things we get used to consistently surpassing expectations. And I hope we can continue to do that for some time to come in terms of the growth of the U.S.-India business relationship, and our economic and overall relationship. Secretary General Mitra, thank you. It is good to see you again and I really want to thank you and everybody involved with FICCI for hosting the event and organizing this. We have had an excellent working relationship with FICCI and I am pleased that that is reflected in the people I see around the table today, especially the Members of Parliament, who have a very important role in terms of working with the U.S. Congress and working with all the elements of our relationship, and I understand you have been discussing some of these elements recently. I am glad you could take time out to hear my views on a few of these things. The prominent leaders, so many leaders of the business community here -- I think we really do have a lot at stake together.



What I would like to do today is maybe explain a little bit my view of what is happening and the bigger picture, a lot of the many details of things that are happening. I think the first note is the acceleration of the relationship right now -- it is really going gangbusters in so many ways. In many ways, I would also say that the people of India and the United States -- the business people of India and the United States -- keep finding new ways to cooperate, and you are the ones who have been exceeding expectations and moving very rapidly and even faster than some of us in government have come to expect. We have in some ways been playing catch up, and indeed of the three factors that I would cite as critical to advancing the U.S.-India relationship, I think people is the first one. The other two I would like to talk about are technology cooperation and our shared interest in prosperity for the U.S., for India, and for people in the greater region. The people factor is very, very important. We have two million Indian-Americans who live in the United States these days. We have sixty-five thousand Americans living in India, maybe more, and we have got eighty thousand Indian students in the United States. This is quite remarkable to me. It is a big number, it is more than any other country, and it is really an investment that they are making in their personal futures, but it is also an investment that they are making in the future of U.S.-India relations. Whatever we don't do, whatever we get wrong, I am sure those eighty thousand students will get it right some time down the road. The other thing that strikes me when I talk to people here -- especially some of the members of the older generation -- 10-20 years ago when people went overseas to study, particularly in a place as far away from the United States, often they did not return until their studies were finished. Often they corresponded by letter, and exchanged a letter or two every month, or every couple of weeks. Now, they are back and forth three or four times a year, they are exchanging e-mails overnight, they are talking to their parents and their friends and their colleagues on video, and this extends itself into business. A lot of the business that we have seen started between the U.S. and India is business between friends and classmates and cousins. People who used to disappear around the corner of the earth are now in touch all the time, and they find opportunities -- they find opportunities for business, they find opportunities for academic studies, they find opportunities for travel, they find opportunities to further expand the exchanges that they are already involved in -- people have been, and I think will remain a very strong driving force in the U.S.-India relationship.

These ties that we have with the people of India are very deep. When we see the Mumbai bombings, we are also... we feel very deeply the tragedy of events like that that have occurred again and again to the Indian people. You have been hurt by terrorism frequently. And you, I think, are very determined to beat back this threat. You have a lot of strong elements in your society so that you can succeed in doing that. But we know you need partners, we know you need help in the region, and we want to be that partner. We are working with India. We are working with all nations of the region to try to beat the threat of terrorism. Indeed, as Assistant Secretary, that is one of the things that I take up in very specific terms in every country I go to. It is obviously a major effort that we have underway in Afghanistan, and until Afghanistan finds peace I think we do not think any of us can rest easy, especially the Afghan people. We certainly welcome the contributions that India is making to peace and stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan. India has come forward with a really very significant amount -- \$650 million worth of reconstruction aid -- and that is important not only in building the economy, building peace, but also building democratic institutions that can help ensure that in the long run Afghanistan is safe from the threat of terrorism. Similarly, it was the cooperation against terrorism is one of the major topics of my discussions in Bangladesh when I just visited there two days ago, and it is a constant discussion with all the countries in the region, including with Pakistan.

I believe in the end that India has no stronger ally in fighting global terrorism than the United States. We have been working with Pakistan to weaken forces of intolerance and extremism, to boost the values of moderation that we all cherish, to go after the threats of terrorist groups -- whatever their motivation, whatever the source of their militancy -- that are a threat to us, that are a threat to you, that are a threat to Pakistani society, and trying to work with Pakistan to help them build a healthy future. At home in the United States, we have prosecuted terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba. We prosecuted them twice -- once in Virginia, once in California -- and we have helped with arrests in other countries. We have led the effort to enforce United Nations sanctions against Lashkar-e-Taiba and a whole range of allied terrorist groups, under the auspices of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267, and we have worked with countries around the world to seize their assets, detain and prosecute members, and share intelligence about this scourge. In addition, under an Executive Order that we issued in April, we have ordered the seizure of U.S. assets of Lashkar-e-Taiba under the other name that they use, the Jamaat ud Dawa. So I think we are fighting terrorism together with the people of India; we are fighting it with the people of the region; we are fighting it with all the governments of the region, as well. And the goal is so that the people of India, the people of the United States and the people of the region can all live their lives in peace. By working together with all the nations of this region, I am confident that we can accomplish that historic task because we do so on the basis of shared democratic values, of our interest in a shared future, and our shared determination to get at the bottom of this problem so that you do not have to suffer these attacks any more, and we do not, and nobody else in the region does either.

The second driving factor I wanted to talk about was technology. As you noted, a lot of our business interaction and indeed, the future of our business interaction has a lot to do with technology. High-tech companies have combined the educational excellence that we have talked about in terms of people ties, they have combined the familiarity and contacts and even relationships that they have -- family relationships that they have -- into new products, new technologies, new initiatives. One of the common misconceptions in the United States is that outsourcing with India is bad. But I think the President stood up very strongly against that view and said it is good for us, it is good for India, it is good for the world economy. It makes companies more efficient. It gets more work done, and in the end, it delivers better services and products to people. Another misconception is that the U.S.-India relationship is all call centers and yes, there are a lot of call centers. You know, I talk to them when my computer breaks down, just like everybody else does, but I think we have been surprised at how many new innovations there are in this area, counting in medicine and biotechnology. The business relationship, the business people are discovering and finding new ways of cooperating in technology that they really continue to astound us and surprise us everyday.

The second area I point to in technology is one that might not immediately occur, and that is agriculture. We all know the U.S. and India cooperated in the first Green Revolution in the 1960s, and under the vision that has been expressed by President Bush and Prime Minister Singh, they established an Agricultural Knowledge Initiative that is based on technology, that is trying to use modern technologies to cooperate together, to work together, and provide a second Green Revolution for the people of India and the people of the world. In scientific research, we are setting up a Science and Technology Commission. In the area of energy, we are using clean energy for India's economic development -- we have got an Asia-Pacific Partnership on clean development and climate. It works with other countries in the region to promote clean, cost-effective, more efficient energy technologies.

The centerpiece of our technology cooperation, as you all know, is the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement. It is a very important piece -- it is the extension of a lot of what

we have done in the past in terms of technology cooperation -- and I think it is a symbol of what is possible in the future, of even more cooperation in all fields between the U.S. and India. I am sure you have all followed the legislation closely, so I will not go into detail, but it is on track. It is moving swiftly, in fact, through the Congress. The House vote was overwhelming -- three quarters of the members in favor. We look to the Senate to take up the issues in September. Under our system, if the House and the Senate pass different bills, it then goes to conference, where they hash out the differences, and so we really will not know the final contents of the legislation until the process is complete. Or as we would say in America, "it ain't over till it's over." That said, I am very confident in predicting that this bill will reflect the agreement made by the President and the Prime Minister, that it will allow us to go forward and implement the initiative the way it was agreed by the President and the Prime Minister. That is the goal that the administration is committed to, that is the goal that the House of Representatives has clearly shown it shares, and that is a goal I think that the Senate shares as well. As it moves through, with all the amendments and the debate and the discussion, you will hear a lot of things raised and proposed. Some of them will get added, some of them will get dropped, but in the end, after the Senate bill has passed, after the conference, I think there is strong support in the Congress for a bill that allows us to go forward the way the President and Prime Minister agreed, and that is what we will keep working for with all the members of the Congress, and that is what I expect to emerge.

We are also working all the other pieces that have to be put together so this trade can really turn into a reality. I was talking today with my counterparts in the Ministry of External Affairs about how we get the next round going of the U.S.-India bilateral discussions on a bilateral nuclear agreement. We have watched the progress of India talking to the International Atomic Energy Agency. We are all out talking to the Nuclear Suppliers Group so that those countries will provide their consent once the U.S. Congress acts. So that we can really make this trade a reality, having all the speeches and the bills and the legislation does not do any good unless we start trading, unless we start sharing technology and sharing information. I am very pleased the way this has been going. There is lot of hard work left, but we are going to get there. And we are going to get there the way the President and the Prime Minister promised.

The final point I would like to talk about the issue of prosperity. Now, we are all in favor of prosperity, both on a national and of course a personal basis, so it might not seem like a very exciting thing to point to, but I think this kind of expansion of economic ties that we have seen has affected a lot of people in India. We still know there are people in India who face poverty, and we still know there is a lot of potential in our relationship. As we look at all these things we are doing -- including especially the cooperation in agriculture or the kind of cooperation we can start in manufacturing where people get a lot of jobs -- I think it is important to bear in mind that in the long term, we are doing this for the people of India and the people of the United States, and not just for the people who have benefited already, but for the people who have not benefited yet. And so I think I can be very proud of the effects of these steps in these relationships already, and I look forward to more in the future.

Indeed, one of the things we are going to see over the next few months is a very busy time in the economic relationship. One indication of that, you see already here in Delhi and in the other American Diplomatic missions in India. We have added a Science Counselor here in New Delhi. We have added consular officers to our embassy and our consulates to try to make the visa process move more swiftly. As you all know, the President announced when he was here that we are going to open a consulate in Hyderabad. We are talking with the Indian government to get the final approvals to go ahead and do that. So we are trying to address these things with new people and new ways. We are also expanding the scope of what we do at our embassy. We are adding four new positions in the next few weeks -- a Federal Aviation Administration representative to work on civil aviation questions, a Treasury Attaché to work with India on financial issues, an Intellectual Property Attaché to work with India on intellectual property rights questions and a Senior Agricultural Attaché to support an expanding agricultural relationship. These are all areas of critical importance to India and to the United States, where I think we will see expansion just by virtue of having some experts on the ground who can work with experts on the Indian side.

During the President's trip, we also moved forward on several tracks of the U.S.-India economic dialogue, and so things like the CEO Forum -- which is very important to us -- and the Trade Policy Forum; commercial, energy, and financial dialogues; the High Technology Cooperation Group that you mentioned; these are really the main vehicles for moving our relationship forward, and I am always impressed when I hear somebody tell me about the activities of any of one of these groups. Because as you said, with the biotechnology group, the movement is very rapid and the cooperation is very positive. Starting at the end of August, I think, there will be a lot of activity in these areas. The CEO Forum will meet in October in New York with Indian and U.S. officials and then probably we will have a high level investment mission to India a few months later. As you mentioned, Commerce Under Secretary Frank Lavin will lead a trade mission to India at the end of November for meetings in Mumbai. We have been really impressed by the response from American companies for this trade mission. It is almost unprecedented how quickly they have signed up, and it looks like this will become the largest bilateral trade mission the United States has ever mounted to any country in the world. And I think that is a reflection of the interest in India that you see, and I am glad to hear it goes the other way as well, in terms of your work in the United States.

The final big area of economics that I would like to talk about is the issue of shared prosperity for all the people in this region. As you know, I am now Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, and I spend part of my time worrying, thinking about what we can do to expand ties between South Asia and Central Asia. There is a natural flow that we need to create. There is a flow of energy from countries in the north to growing markets in the south -- India and Pakistan both being very fast growing economies. There is a natural flow of manufactured goods from the countries of the south that are needed by the countries of the north, whether they are consumer products or goods for their industries, goods for their expanding power sectors. We want to try to promote that. We are not trying to take away from their existing ties in Central Asia with Russia or China or Turkey or Europe, but we think that opening up Afghanistan, making it a place of transit has been a very positive strategic change, and it allows for cooperation between Central Asia and the countries to the south, including India. We have had some very good discussions at the Foreign Ministry about this. I expect we will continue our discussions not only with the Ministry of External Affairs, but I have talked about it today with the Secretary at the Power Ministry, so there is a whole variety of players on the Indian side. I just want to make clear today -- India has a very important role, not only as a market for energy and source of supply for manufactured goods, but as a source of technology cooperation, as a source of education, as a source of democratic values and experience that I think will benefit us all the more it is shared with the countries of Central Asia.

To finish up, let me say I am very much an optimist about the U.S.-India relationship. I am a fervent supporter of, and believer in, the vast potential of the U.S.-India relationship. As we face the dawn of a new century, I think we do have many challenges ahead of us -- and many times and days of terrorism and bombings and various global difficulties all we see are the challenges, but we also have the potential to overcome these challenges by working together based on our shared values, our common interests. I am confident that we can work together to expand democracy, to expand energy, security and peace, and I am confident that we can tackle together the challenges of environment, disease and poverty, protecting our world from terrorism and the fears of proliferation. The U.S.-India relationship is going to be critical to the 21st century. I think if the U.S. and India get this right, if we work well together in all these areas, if we try to really realize this whole potential, we can have a major impact on the international landscape for decades and decades to come. People used to call us "estranged democracies." Well, I think if we can cooperate on civil nuclear energy, it shows that we can accomplish almost anything. In the end, the full potential of U.S.-India relationships is quite exciting. I am very happy to be involved with it. I am happy to be here in Delhi working on it. And I do believe that our dividends together, that our efforts together will pay dividends for a long, long time to come.

Thank you, it is a pleasure to be here. I would be glad to take as many questions or hear as many comments as we have time for. Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Good Afternoon, my name is Kamal Gupta. I have some questions about this Indo-Civil Nuclear Agreement. I have gone through the bills, the both HR-5682 and S-3709 which were presented in the Congress and this. And at the end, the U.S. President is required to make determinations. Are these determinations binding or non-binding as of today?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: I think it's too early to start examining the legislation in that detail and trying to take action or make policy on that basis. We still have problems with some of the things in the Senate bill. We are quite pleased with the House bill. We think the House bill indeed lets us go forward along the lines of the President's promises. So, it's not surprising for our Congress to want to know that certain things are true and we have active consultation, discussion and reporting to our Congress. But as I said, before you start to analyze this too deeply let's wait until it's over, let's wait until we have had legislation from both houses. Let's wait until the conference has happened and let's wait to see what finally emerges.

QUESTION: We find its going in a wrong direction. Because...

MODERATOR: I don't think we need a dialogue I think Ambassador as...

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: I guess I would say I think it's going very much in the right direction.

MODERATOR: This can be discussed further in terms of the response.

QUESTION: I am Suren Malhotra from the JK Group. Talking about the peace and the positioning and the role of United States trying to direct Central Asia and South Asia towards democratic values and peace. If I look at the scenario today with Iran, terrorism, Pakistan and all the factors which makes India a victim of circumstances and we are not able to find the, or play, the role that we wish to play towards progress and relationship and prosperity. What kind of a road map you are looking forward to?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: It's a bumpy road, I grant you that. There is lot of bumps, there is occasionally a tree that falls down in our way and rock slide that happens as we proceed down this road, and there are some fairly high passes too. One of the high passes is the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement. I think we are going to get over that one. Fighting terrorism is maybe the highest pass of all. There is a lot to do. We have been working in Afghanistan. We are still working in Afghanistan. We haven't finished the job. Pakistanis have turned against terrorism, said that that's not what they want for their country. India has dealt with terrorist incidents. We have seen some in Bangladesh. I mean it's a lot of things. We all haven't finished the job. So, I think when it comes to terrorism, there is lot more work to do. But I also think that fundamentally the values that we share, the determination that we share...if it comes down to it, how do you build a healthy society? You build it by strengthening democracy. You build it by opening up economic opportunity. You build it by promoting education. Those are the things that you are doing. Those are the things we are doing as we fight the direct criminals, terrorists. But in the long run, I think the healthy society is going to win out. It may take the long run to achieve this but I am confident we can.

QUESTION: My name is Kishan Mehta. I went to MIT 57 years ago. And I am a friend of good India-U.S. relations. In the nuclear deal sir, there is an anxiety here as you must have noticed in this country, and there is some kind of a sense of anxiety and resolution being talked about. To mirror these anxieties, it seems to me, and I may be wrong and I would like to have your comment, that this sense of resolution bringing out the anxieties may help actually the Senate to take care of those anxieties and without rushing through them without any reference or without any concern to this anxiety. I don't know whether you agree or not sir?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: Yes, I mean I think to some extent it does by raising these issues, by helping people understand why they are of concern. We all -- you know -- encourage, educate the senators into understanding a little better why you have some problems with things in the Senate bill, and we have some problems with many of the same things in the Senate bill. So, we are going to keep working on it. And I do think it's important for them to understand why some of these things are issues. Because, some of these things on the face of it, you say that shouldn't be a problem. Everybody knows that. But, we have a problem as you have seen from the testimony of our new Assistant Secretary John Rood. We have a problem just turning some things from policy into legislation. That for us in the executive branch is always a problem and it's specifically a problem here. So, I think it's important to raise these concerns, to be vocal about them, make sure that people understand why they are concerns. But also we are continuing to work to pass the best possible legislation. And we will continue work right to the end until it is finally legislated to make sure that it does meet the requirements that the President and the Prime Minister laid down.

QUESTION: We are really happy that the cooperation between the two countries is moving ahead in spite of certain problems around but we are happy that we are solving them out and after a pretty long time of half a century distance between our two countries, we are now closer to very important decisions like the deals in nuclear up-gradation and all that. But you have made a mention in your presentation just now that the terrorism is a threat around, and I come from a state which some of our leaders call "a theatre of violence." We are suffering for the last 15 years. But at one occasion I had in my mind that the greater trouble which started on us from the side of Pakistan was because that some of the forces were engaged in Afghanistan, and most of the help which they derived from your country, some of them over-spilled to our side. But now that's an old story.

Now we are all in together for fighting terrorism in a different way as you have said very rightly that there are many things to do in that direction and terrorism is a real threat. But the point is that we got some help from your country also, which I know very well, for starting a dialogue with Pakistan and civil society got closer. We started talking to them. It was a people-to-people contact progress very much, and the two countries started coming closer that we had a hope that now we are in a position to sort out our conflicts and we may be on a road of bigger cooperation in South Asia so that the conflicts become smaller. But very unfortunately, the culprit of terrorism has run away from the theater and come to Bombay now. And right from the day we had an unfortunate happening in Mumbai. The relations are under strain now. As a friend, as a supporter, and as we are together for fighting the terrorism, shouldn't we do in the direction of cooperation to enhance the cooperation, work together and what help you can render in this so that, it's my personal concern because I come from Jammu & Kashmir, that the dialogue should not break. We must keep on talking and we must find out, hammer out a solution between our two countries.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: Yes. I think what you say is very true. And the bombing in Mumbai was a very tragic event for everyone involved and for the people of India. But it's also important to the people of India to accomplish many other things, and we have watched the situation closely after the bombing in Mumbai. I think we understand the Foreign Secretary talks being postponed. I saw some comments from your Foreign Secretary after he met his Pakistani counterpart in Bangladesh. I think that is generally positive, that both sides have in mind what you said -- that at some appropriate point that they will decide they will be able to get back to the discussions, the discussions which, in the past 6-9 months, maybe a year or more, have been quite positive, made some progress on a lot of confidence-building areas. We have also noted that there are a lot more people with a lot more ideas that might help find a solution in Kashmir. We have also noted there have been a lot more meetings with a lot more different kinds of people on Kashmir. So, we have seen a certain amount of, you might say, intellectual ferment in that area, as well as steps by the governments and their dialogue. So, we would certainly welcome continuation of that dialogue. As I said, I saw comments by the Foreign Secretary pointing in that direction that I thought were positive. But it will be up to the two sides to figure out when they can do that and how they can proceed. It doesn't in any way, what can I say...I don't see the issue of Kashmir and the issue of terrorism as linked in any way. We need all to fight terrorism for a variety of reasons. But it is also good to see progress made on Kashmir. I'd like to see that as well.

QUESTION: Mr. Boucher, I am Amit Baruah from the Hindu newspaper. My question relates to the Senate version of the bill. There are some concerns within the Government of India as well that the kind of reporting requirements that have been introduced in the bill could very well amount to an annual kind of waiver coming from the President. Is that the case? Would that be an annual waiver given the specific reporting requirements on India's nuclear program that are contained in the bill?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: I think actually this question was asked by the gentleman over here 10-15 minutes ago, and I'll be glad to give you the same answer but I really think I'll stand by the answer I gave then.

MODERATOR: Mr. Yashee, who has been a person living in the United States, Non-Resident Indian who came back and became a member of Parliament from the State of Andhra Pradesh.

QUESTION: First of all, we will appreciate increasing the number of student visas, also opening up a Consulate in Hyderabad, which is the state where I come from. The question is on the skilled workers visas -- the H1 visas so called. We have the reverse recruitment going on in the U.S. Like Tatas have hire about 13,000 people in the U.S., Mahindra's hired about 4,000 -5,000 people in U.S. So I do understand there is opposition from the labor unions for increasing the skilled workers in the U.S. But if you could apprise the labor unions in the U.S. about number of Indian companies coming to the U.S. and also providing jobs there. So, in other words, the 65,000 quota which is not good enough, and what are the steps the administration is taking into the direction increasing that which is helpful to both the countries. We do appreciate on the students visa increasing that also builds the much more closer relationship.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: This is one reason why parliamentary exchanges are good so that you can explain these things directly to our legislators to get their support, and it does not always rely on my efforts because you are so much more eloquent in talking about this. Indeed, we are doing everything we can on students H1B. First, look at it. Sounds like a big number, and I think that's what most people say -- 65,000, my god, that's a lot. But when you actually piece it out with the amount of business being done, the amount of business back and forth, the amount of need in that industry for trained people. I agree it's generally not enough.

Geoff, do you have any updates on, if we're in a position to talk about more?

CHARGE PYATT: No.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: Not at this point, but it's an ongoing part of our discussion with our Congress. It's got to be the form of legislation to get it raised. So, it's something we recognize as a problem, but no, I don't have a solution for you yet.

MODERATOR: First, let me go to Mr. Huda, Member of Parliament from Haryana.

QUESTION: First of all, thank you for the wide ranging comments and perspective that you just gave. We really appreciate it. My question relates to the interesting vision that you had put forth as regards to Central Asia and South Asia - Asian cooperation, especially in the energy sector where you hinted that the energy-rich Central Asia could be a source for meeting the increasing demand for the South Asian energy needs. How do you contrast that with also the potential of Indo-Iranian energy cooperation?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: I think first of all we start by understanding that India has a very quickly growing economy. It has a very quickly growing need for energy. There is certainly more hydropower, some coal, some energy efficiencies that you can do in India your selves. But you also have a need to import energy for your needs. I suppose our only opinion on the Iran project is it's up to you to decide whether it's reliable, commercially viable and a good long-term project. We, in our observations of Iran for last 10 or 25 years, have not found them to be a very stable or reliable partner in anything. But that will be a decision that you will make according to your own view of the situation, your own energy needs and the commercial viability of the project. As far as where we place our own efforts, we think that there is great potential in Central Asia. We see not only see hydro power resources of countries like Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, but the coal capacity, already the excess capacity that exists in those regions, and it's a way to bring new kinds of energy down here, new sources of energy that we think in the long term might start with a couple of lines, but in the long term may have an enormous potential, just as in the long term you have enormous needs. And so, in terms of where this will go for, not just the next 10 years, where there's "you can do this, you can do that," but in the next 50 years, I think establishing that relationship between Central Asia and South Asia on energy is really an enormous long-term potential that cannot be matched by some of the other proposals that are around.

QUESTION: Mr. Boucher, it's about terrorism. Are you now convinced that India has been able to give you evidence that there was Pakistan's involvement or collusion in the Mumbai blasts. Are you now convinced ready to make a statement about Pakistan's involvement, sir?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: First of all, that's a question from a couple of weeks ago and things have advanced since then. Second of all, I think we all know there is terrorism in this region. Some of that terrorism is in Pakistan. Some of those groups that have designs on India still have pieces in Pakistan. So, as I said earlier, there is more work to be done.

QUESTION: Could you be specific Mr. Boucher? Because you have condemned terrorism all through. But, you have said that India has not been able to supply us with evidence. Are convinced with your talks with the Indian establishment this time around?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: That's not what I said, so the premise is wrong. I addressed specifics in my speech and I'll stand with that.

MODERATOR: We will go to a Member of Parliament from West Bengal.

QUESTION: The reason I was keeping quiet, there were two reasons. One, I thought it was only fair to let others ask, we get lot of opportunity. And other reason was that members of Parliament these days hardly have an opportunity to speak on the floor of the House. [Laughter] So, once I thought I'll take the mike I won't end it. I know there are no easy answers, so I have no question. I know I am very much aware. But I can tell you, first of all, Ambassador Boucher we are very happy that you are here. We are also equally happy that you have visited India, I understand, thrice and on two occasions, of course, I could see you also. So, that shows the sincerity of purpose and that shows this partnership is going to be real and I totally agree that the road is going to be bumpy, and I take it as a challenge, and the challenge comes, we say, peace and prosperity. Prosperity doesn't come without peace. So peace is prefix for prosperity. And the partnership to fight this war against terror, and I think if at all the world lives in peace it's India and America coming together and fight this penance for the humanity at large and that's the only thing that we are very happy that this fight ... It is unfortunately that it took 9/11 for America really to wake up, which we have been facing here.

When I was in school in America it was very difficult to convince people that India is the largest democracy, and please for heaven's sake look at India. So we are happy in terms of economic, we have bought many planes, and I am sure its a big huge market for you, and in times to come India and America are really going to be partners to get the world together.

QUESTION: You have mentioned the number of people of Indian origin there as 2 million if you include the secondary and tertiary migration it's a little over 2.5 million. There are people who have migrated. There are Indo-Fijians, Indo-Caribbean's, people from East Africa, including Canada, in fact, next door, a number who have migrated there. That was the subject I did within my Foreign Office career. But, second, you mentioned about 80,000 students studying in U.S., and by conservative estimate they spend about close to 2 billion dollars a year in U.S. In the 50's and 60's, there was a lot of U.S. involvement in the Indian education system here. Do you propose to do anything to make it into, once again, a two-way process -- more American students, involvement of American faculty in the Indian education institutions? It would definitely happen only if there is some amount of support to begin with from the State Department.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: Yes, definitely. You will see a number of elements in what the President and the Prime Minister announced in March where the government is trying to get more in the business of promoting those kinds of exchanges in two ways -- two directions. And the Embassy offers a lot of support for those kinds of programs and for Americans who come here. It is very important that we have academic research that goes both ways, that we have academic exchanges that goes both ways, and I think one of the things that struck me in recent months is to see more and more universities in the United States starting to focus on South Asia, and as they set up South Asian departments, South Asian majors, or expand their departments, they also start setting up exchange programs with their Indian counterpart schools, so the students in their programs want to go and spend the year here, or six months here or what ever, and so I do see a real expansion both from what the government can do, but also what our universities and academics are doing themselves.

QUESTION: My name is Arun Saxena and I would speak as a layman. My point is, sir, we are trying to tackle terrorism by crushing them, and my view point is we should eliminate the root cause, by crushing we can't crush the evil things. So what I feel is the democracy has to be you know reinvented and reestablished. The problem is the political scenario. Our political parties they are not really responding well because like a small house

MODERATOR: You have expressed your view. He will take note of them. We have to go to the gentleman there.

QUESTION: My name is Deepak Arora, Deputy Chief of Bureau with National Herald. I just want to seek a little clarification. You said in your opening remarks that U.S. is chasing Lashkar-e-Taiba and groups like that even in Pakistan. Is that correct what I understood? That India's helping developing peace in Afghanistan.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER: No, that is not what I said.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

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