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GEORGE W. BUSH

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President Speaks to Leaders of India and Pakistan

Statement by the Press Secretary

Today, President Bush telephoned the leaders of India and Pakistan, urging them to take steps that will ease tensions in the region and reduce the risk of war -- a message Deputy Secretary of State Armitage and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld will reiterate during their trips to South Asia.

The President reiterated to President Musharraf that the United States expects Pakistan to live up to the commitment to end all support for terrorism. The President emphasized to Prime Minister Vajpayee the need for India to respond with de-escalatory steps. To both leaders, the President stressed the need to choose the path of diplomacy.

South Asia is a region of tremendous potential. Armed conflict will do nothing to improve the lives of the people of India or Pakistan. It will instead blot the future of both nations. The United States is ready to help the parties in their efforts to resolve the many underlying issues that divide them.

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