



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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President and Prime Minister Singh Exchange Toasts in India

Taj Palace
New Delhi, India

[President's Visit to India and Pakistan](#)

1:39 P.M. Local PRIME MINISTER SINGH: President George Bush, Madam First Lady, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome to you and your distinguished delegation to India. We are pleased to have you in our midst. It is our privilege to return your warm hospitality at the White House.



VIDEO Multimedia

President's Remarks

 [view](#)

The people of India have great regard and affection for the American people, as they have had for centuries. Ours has been a two-way relationship. Long years ago, the father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged the influence of Henry David Thoreau when he launched a movement for civil disobedience against foreign rule.

In our own generation, a great son of the United States, Martin Luther King, acknowledged the influence of Mahatma Gandhi when he launched a non-violent struggle for civil liberties and racial equality.

Mr. President, close to half a century ago, President Eisenhower said on a visit to India, "We who are free and who prize our freedom above all other gifts of God and nature much know each other better, trust each other more, support each other." Today, Mr. President, these words have acquired a new resonance. Your people and ours have come to regard democracy and peaceful political popularization as legitimate and civilized instruments of social change. Our passionate commitment to democracy and human rights, our respect for equality of all before the law, and our regard for freedom of speech and faith place us on the same side of the street.

Today in India, we are engaged in a Himalayan adventure of pursuing development, improving the quality of life, and modernizing one of the world's oldest civilizations. We seek to provide a social and economic involvement at home that will unleash the creativity and enterprise of every Indian, thus enabling our people to live a life of dignity, fulfillment and self-respect.

The United States has been a partner in our journey of progress. I am, therefore, very happy that on this visit, you will renew an old association between our two countries in the field of agriculture. Our farmers greatly benefited from American help in the past, and they will now do so again through the

knowledge initiative that you will launch.

Mr. President, in India, we admire the creativity and enterprise of the American people, your excellent institutions, the openness of your economy, and your ready embrace of diversity. These have attracted the brightest Indian minds, thereby creating a bond of understanding that transcends distance and differences between us.

Tomorrow, you will meet young Indians who fuel the engines of our knowledge economy. Your own country has made it possible for the talent and abilities of our people to become more visible to all over the world.

Mr. President, we seek a world free of poverty, ignorance, disease, and the threat of terrorism. The United States and India must work together in all possible fora to promote these ends. We must fight terrorism wherever it exists, because terrorism anywhere threatens democracy everywhere.

India seeks a neighborhood of peace and prosperity. Our subcontinent has been home to all the great religions of the world. It is a powerhouse of human creativity, where knowledge is worshiped as the gift of our Creator. With wisdom and farsightedness, we South Asians can transform not just this region, but the whole world.

In our journey of modernization and development, social change and empowerment, we see the United States as a partner, a friend, and a well-wisher. In particular, Mr. President, we see you as a true friend of our country.

I've always been touched by your warm praise for India and the Indian people. We sincerely acknowledge your deep personal commitment to a closer economic and strategic partnership between our two countries. Indeed, I recall that at very first meeting, you paid tribute to our efforts to achieve economic and social salvation in the framework of an open society and an open economy.

I was deeply touched by your admiration for Indian democracy and our commitment to pluralism and modernism. We in India greatly appreciate the firm stand you took against the upsurge of protectionist forces in your country, and the farsighted approach you adopted on the issue of outsourcing. In taking this stand, you have not only cemented closer relations between our two countries, but also helped America retain its edge in the global marketplace.

Madam First Lady, my wife and I recall with gratitude your warm hospitality at your home. You have a deep and abiding interest in learning and education. I hope, as I said to you some moments ago, that you will return to India to spend time with our students and teachers, and discover a new India in the midst.

I am truly sorry that the President is not taking you to Taj Mahal this time. (Laughter.) I hope he will be more chivalrous the next time you are here. (Laughter.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I now request you to join me in a toast to the continued good health and

happiness of the President and the First Lady of the United States, to everlasting friendship between our great nations. Thank you very much.

Mr. President. (A toast is offered.) (Applause.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. Prime Minister, and Mrs. Kaur, thank you for your hospitality. Mr. Prime Minister, I'm sorry you brought up the Taj Mahal. I've been hearing about it from Laura ever since I told her that we weren't going. But we pledged if you invite us back to come back, we'd love to see the magnificent part of your country that we will be unable to see this trip.

This is an historic trip. It's a chance to continue to build on the progress we made in Washington, D.C., progress being a relationship that is -- that lasts beyond our time in office. It's a relationship that is based upon our common values that every person matters, every person belongs, and everybody should be able to worship as freely as they want to, the common values of recognizing the right to people to express themselves in a peaceful way.

Our relationship is one that's important for peace and prosperity in this world. It's important that we continue to work together to battle the terrorists, to give them no quarter, and to never yield. Terrorism has no place in democracy and terrorism must be defeated for our children and grandchildren to be able to live in a peaceful world.

Our relationship is one based upon our belief that free and fair trade is in the interests of our people; that when trade moves freely and fairly, that people in our respective countries will be able to find good work and good jobs and improve their standard of living. I believe India has got a really important role to play in showing parts of the world what is possible when it comes to having people live side by side in peace. India is such a wonderful example of pluralism, of religious freedom, of human rights. This relationship of ours is a vital relationship; it's a strategic partnership.

And so Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much for our dialogues and our work together. Thank you for your hospitality. I want to thank the leaders who are here with us today for taking time out of your busy schedules to welcome Laura and me and our delegation.

And so I, too, would like to propose a toast, a toast to the Prime Minister, his wife, and to the people of India.

(A toast is offered.) (Applause.)

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