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Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Steve Hadley

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MR. HADLEY: Good evening. I thought I would begin by trying to give you a little color on the meetings today, what was discussed, and then talk a little bit about the President's speech tomorrow, and then take some questions.

There was, as you know, an arrival ceremony and then the wreath-laying ceremony involving the President. And then he began his meeting with the Prime Minister. The meeting began with a one-on-one meeting just between the two of them, which lasted about a half hour to 45 minutes, something like that. And then the President and the Prime Minister were joined by delegations of the two sides, and the meeting went on for a good -- as an expanded meeting, for another 45 minutes, maybe a little longer.

The President began the extended meeting by giving a brief readout of the subjects that were discussed between the two leaders. And that then merged into a further discussion of those issues in the expanded group. So I'm going to give you basically a profile of the two meetings together, the kinds of issues that were discussed.

There was a discussion about the common values that bind India and the United States together, the commitment to democracy, to freedom, to the institutions of freedom -- free press, freedom of religion, independent judiciary, and the like -- and the important message that the United States and India together can carry forward to the world in being, in some sense, examples and advocates of those institutions.

There was a discussion about the importance of cooperation on the war on terror, an affirmation that that was a priority for the relationship, and that cooperation was good. There was a discussion about the trade issues. Rob Portman, who is our USTR, U.S. Trade Representative, and the Indian Trade Minister were there. They briefed the President on the work of the bilateral trade policy forum, which is a forum by which trade issues are identified, brought to the attention of the two Ministers, they can sit down and resolve them. The two Ministers informed the President and the Prime Minister that this had been a successful mechanism of resolving issues. One of the things they indicated was that Indian mangos would soon be entering the U.S. market, which is a good thing for India and a good thing for American consumers of mangos, since there's not a domestic mango industry of any size in the United

States.

They also talked about a commitment to try and achieve a successful conclusion of the Doha Round. A statement was released today by the Indians and the United States side together about our common aspirations. Ambassador Portman believes that will contribute to progress towards a successful Doha result, and is an important result of these meetings.

There was a -- the Agricultural Minister for India was there. He talked about the importance of the Agricultural Knowledge Initiative, which the President will talk more about tomorrow, which is an exchange of information among scientists on both sides, academic institutions. It is something that we will fund over a multi-year period. And the Minister reminded the President that the Green Revolution in India in the 1960s owed a lot to that kind of exchange of views between American and Indian experts, and indicated that India needs a second Green Revolution, and the President reaffirmed our desire to try and assist India in that regard.

There was a discussion about the need for energy and India's plans to enhance dramatically its ability to provide secure energy to its people, its desire to do so in a way that avoids proliferation risks and does not create environmental problems. The President talked about his advanced energy initiative and his hope that technologies coming out of that initiative could be shared with India and other countries.

As you know, there is the Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development which we have started that seeks to advance secure energy from a variety of sources in a way that is environmentally responsible. India and the United States are joined by China, Japan and South Korea in that endeavor, as well.

There was a discussion of a range of individual regional issues. They talked about Pakistan. And as you know, the President indicated today in his press availability his belief that there is an historic opportunity for the leader of India and Pakistan, who have shown vision and courage, to continue progress on bilateral issues between those two countries, including Kashmir. And the President supports that, of course.

They talked about Burma and the terrible human rights situation in Burma; the need for Aung San Su Kyi to be released. And the President indicated a desire that the international community needs to be more vocal about what is going on in Burma. They talked about Nepal and the need to both support the government against the Maoist rebels, but also -- or the Maoist terrorists -- but also the need for the King to reach out and include the political opposition.

They talked about Darfur and the President spoke about the challenge to the international community to avoid genocide in Darfur. The violence is ramping up. This is a concern. As you know, the President has talked about the need for a U.N. mandated force, and possibility of NATO making a contribution to carrying out the mission of that force. That will require, of course, a variety of countries to come forward and make contribution to that peacekeeping force. And the President talked to the Indian Prime Minister about that.

They also talked about Iran and the threat Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons poses to stability in the region. So as you can see, it was a very broad discussion, reflecting the strategic character of the relationship. The fact that it is a broad range of issues we discuss, and that the United States and India are increasingly working together to address not just bilateral or regional issues, but also global issues of concern to both -- to the countries and to the international community more general, and that would include things like HIV/AIDS, avian flu, malaria, and the like.

The President and the Prime Minister then went to a meeting of a CEO forum that represents 10 Indian and 10 American CEOs. The leaders on the two sides of those CEO groups presented their recommendations to the President and the Prime Minister. They then described for the two leaders six of those initiatives. I won't go into any detail here, but they talked about cooperation to increase the investment in infrastructure in India, physical infrastructure, for example, and they talked about a private investment fund for that purpose, the potential for making Bombay, for example, a regional financial center. They talked about the need for energy security, talked about human resources and need to increase investment in human resources and human capital. They talked about the desire to double trade between India and the United States every three years. And they identified barriers to increased trade, and talked about dispute settlements and IP enforcement as important elements of increasing and making more attractive the climate in India to private investment.

There was then, as you know, a lunch, an embassy greeting, and then a meeting that the President had with nine religious leaders, reflecting a full spectrum of faiths within India. The leaders talked about the contribution India makes by serving as an example where all faiths are welcomed and respected; talked about the cooperation among the various states. And it was a very enlightening and inspiring session for the President.

That's really the gist of what happened today. The relationship between the two leaders, I think as you could see, is a very warm one. They also are both fairly strategic and they understand that what is happening is a real transformation of the U.S.-India relationship. They are both committed to it and they have both made, in different ways, very hard decisions politically because they believe this is an historic opportunity that really cannot be missed to transform that relationship.

The President will give a speech tomorrow. As you know, he goes to Hyderabad and then comes back to Delhi. He'll give a speech. He will talk about the ties that bind India and the United States -- as I mentioned earlier, freedom, commitment to the institutions of liberty, building democracy. He will talk about the contributions of Indian Americans to American society. And then he will talk about the importance for the two nations to work together for two great purposes, spreading prosperity and opportunity, and fighting terror and advancing freedom.

In terms of fighting terror and advancing freedom, he will talk about the good cooperation between India and the United States. He will talk about our cooperation in bio-terror, in cyber-terror, and in aircraft security, for example. He will then also talk about India as an example of a free society, which is multicultural, multireligious, multiethnic, and yet democracy has been the framework in which all of these groups have been able to live in peace, and that this is an example of the kind of impact that democracy and freedom can have over the long-term in eliminating some of the tensions that are exploited by the terrorists.

In terms of spreading prosperity and opportunity, he's going to talk about the important decisions India made to open up their economy to the global economic system, and also the important role that India, itself, and its companies are playing in engaging the international economy.

He will talk about the mutual benefits to the United States and India of bilateral trade. He will talk again about the importance of the Doha Round and the commitment by India and the United States to achieve success there, and then talk a little bit about our cooperation in energy and agriculture, science and technology, and in the areas of health, outlining some of the initiatives that I've talked about here.

That's really what happened today, and a little bit of a preview on the speech for tomorrow. And I'd be glad to answer any questions.

Q Steve, is it true that the fast breeder reactor will not be placed under international safeguards?

MR. HADLEY: There's two issues there. There is the existing reactors, which we can get you more details on, but they are two in number and they are very limited capability. And then there is a question of, what about future breeder reactors, which would be important to have under safeguards, so that this could be an area of cooperation between the United States and India, and potentially India and other countries, as well.

Nick Burns did a press backgrounder here. I'd really refer to that. He went into these questions in great detail. But he indicated that, yes, there is a commitment for India to put future civilian breeder reactors under safeguards, with India, of course, having the right to designate the civilian status of any such reactors. That was the resolution of that issue.

Q Steve, do you believe that the attack in Karachi today was targeting the U.S. diplomat that was killed? Is that the indication, or is that unclear?

MR. HADLEY: We've been getting some reports over the course of the day. As you know, those reports are notoriously incomplete. You get more information the longer you go. There certainly is some evidence of that, and it's very troubling. We lost an American life there, a Foreign Service Officer, and at least three others were also killed. So it was a very tragic event. And it's an indication that, and a reminder that we're at war, and that Pakistan is both an ally in the war on terror, and in some sense, a battleground of the war on terror. And one of the reasons it's important, of course, for the President, and why the President is going to Pakistan, is to show his solidarity with Pakistan and President Musharraf as he deals with the terror challenge that Pakistan faces.

Q Going back to the nuclear agreement for just a minute. One thing that Nick didn't go over when he was here a few minutes ago is what oversight or jurisdiction, if any, the Nuclear Supplier Group has. I know India is going to deal with them, but what can they do? And in addition to that, the prospects for getting this through the Hill?

MR. HADLEY: Well, of course, it was exactly those considerations that were one of the reasons why

we worked on this issue over the course of the last seven or eight months. And I think it's important to put this into perspective. Today India and the United States have reached a truly historic agreement on civil nuclear cooperation. And what it entails is that India has agreed to take steps that will bring it into the international non-proliferation mainstream. This includes placing its civilian nuclear facilities and programs under IAEA safeguards, and also harmonizing its export control lists with those of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

What this means is that India, which has had a good record in safeguarding technology, but has largely stood out -- from outside the global non-proliferation arrangements, is moving inside those arrangements. It is adopting practices and procedures, export controls and other safeguards that are much more in line with the international community's efforts to police proliferation and avoid proliferation.

In return, what that opens up is the prospect then for India and the United States and other countries to cooperate on civil nuclear power. In order to do that, there will have to be changes of laws and regulations. It will start with the United States Congress. And the case we will make to the Congress is that the opening of civil nuclear cooperation between the United States and India is very much in our interest and India's interest; it's part of a new strategic relationship between India. But it has also been the vehicle, by bringing -- to bring India under the same kind of set of international norms and procedures that we all abide by.

We will make that case to the Congress. We hope to get legislation that would allow civil nuclear cooperation between the two countries. It will also require India to negotiate the appropriate agreements with the IAEA, and it will also require the Nuclear Suppliers Group to make changes to its rules and regulations to admit this cooperation.

So there is a road to go. This is the way forward that the President and the Prime Minister basically agreed to in July of last year, and this is the next step, but a very important step, in moving in that direction.

Q Can I follow up on that one point? To what extent was concern over India's potential deal with Iran over a natural gas pipeline a motivating force in trying to allow them an alternative source of energy going forward? The President has talked a lot about the effect this would have on the fossil fuels and the importance of using renewable fuel sources, but to what extent was Iran --

MR. HADLEY: It really didn't. This has a long genesis, this increased cooperation between the United States and India. It really started almost two years ago when we developed what was called the NSSP, the next step in strategic partnership, which was a document that laid a way forward, a glide-path, if you will, for increased U.S.-India cooperation in three areas, one of whom was this.

So this has been something -- civil nuclear cooperation is something that's been on train for a long period of time, motivated by India's need, of course, to increase its energy sources in a way that is environmentally and, from a proliferation standpoint, responsible.

Q Given the Karachi bombing, how would you characterize the threat level for the President's trip to

Pakistan?

MR. HADLEY: That's something that we ought to get you from the Secret Service. They are the ones that sort of continually assess the threat. What I would look at it the following way: Look, as I said, Pakistan is both an ally in the war on terror and, in some sense, a site where the war is being carried about. So there is obviously risks. But what I would say is the Secret Service and others, for the United States, working with the Pakistanis, have taken a number of precautions and what they assess is whether those precautions in their view are adequate given the risks. And that was an assessment that was made before we decided to come to -- to make this trip, to take the trip, and it's something that they reassess up to the point where we head to Pakistan. And at this point, people are comfortable that the necessary precautions are in place.

But this is not a risk-free undertaking. The President has made it very clear, though, in the same way that Musharraf, who is also under risk, has not been deterred from waging the war on terror by the attacks and the terrorists, he and the United States cannot be deterred by the attacks of the terrorists from showing our support to a good ally.

Q On India's deal, the President mentioned that he was looking forward to dealing with India in a different way, and Nick had mentioned that this was kind of an India-specific deal, that it was not a model to look at in terms of other countries and deals with the United States. Can you kind of explain that, why that's the case?

MR. HADLEY: It's going to be a safeguards arrangement negotiated by the IAEA, and they're going to have to be comfortable with it. And they have a set of procedures and agreements that they use, and that will obviously be very much in their minds as they talk about this. But it's obviously India-specific because we have a situation where this is a country that will not be accepting safeguards on every nuclear-related facilities. It has made a separation agreement, separating those that are civilian and will be under safeguards, and those that will be outside the safeguard system. That in itself is an unusual situation, if you will, a one-of-a-kind situation.

And so, of course, the safeguards arrangement that the IAEA negotiates is, of course, going to have to be India specific because it's going to have to deal with that unusual situation. What that means is going to be something, obviously, the IAEA will be working out.

Q Is the United States happy with the steps Pakistan has taken to flush out al Qaeda leaders like Osama bin Laden, who are believed to be hiding in Pakistan? And what steps could the U.S. do or take in relation with Pakistan in a joint campaign against terror?

MR. HADLEY: Over time, the level of cooperation between the United States and Pakistan has increased. That's a good thing. There are still more steps that can be taken to further integrate our cooperation. In terms of apprehending Osama bin Laden and Zawahiri, that is something that is a priority for Pakistan, it's a priority for the United States, it's a priority for a government like Afghanistan, because they and the terrorist organization of which they had is a threat to all three countries.

So is there more we have to do? Sure, we haven't caught them yet. There's obviously more we have to

do. And all three nations need to be doing more together if we're going to be effective.

Q Since India and U.S. now, they have come to so many agreements, including fighting against terrorism -- how is the U.S. and India are going to fight against terrorism, because both nations are and were victims of terrorism. India for the last 20 years, and now U.S. since 9/11, are still under a threat. So what kind of cooperation the President was talking about that will fight against terrorism and root out terrorism?

MR. HADLEY: Well, a lot of it is sharing information. It's a crucial element of it. The other thing, I think, is that one has to look at it is a bilateral -- there are things we can do bilaterally. But, of course, we're dealing with a global network and a global challenge. So one of the things we have to look at is what the United States and India can do with other partners, globally and in the region, to enhance our effectiveness against the terrorists. And there are a number of steps that our intelligence services and other professionals can identify and will be identifying to try and intensify that cooperation.

Q Can I ask you on the Pakistan visit, is it true that the President is now going to actually spend a night there? And when did you make that decision?

MR. HADLEY: Have we said anything publicly on the schedule? I don't know what is out on the schedule and what is not out on the schedule. Let me --

Q We leave tomorrow to Pakistan.

MR. HADLEY: That's my understanding.

Q What initially it was said --

MR. HADLEY: It's on the schedule? I know what's on that schedule. If you've got that schedule, you know what I know.

Q Initially we were told that he will be only going to Pakistan for a day. And we saw the schedule yesterday.

MR. JONES: Actually, that's not what we said initially. We didn't say anything, so --

Q Well, when was the decision made that he would spend the night there?

MR. HADLEY: It was made a while ago. It's a decision that obviously, because of the security situation, that this is something we'd like to do and it's something we'd like to announce as late -- my understanding is that it has been announced. That's my understanding. If not, you need to correct me.

Anything else?

Q Was the President successful in persuading India to lower any of their trade barriers, and which

specific ones?

MR. HADLEY: Sorry? The President and the Prime Minister didn't try to negotiate trade barriers. That's what Rob Portman is there for, and why he will talk with his counterpart Minister. That's the forum in which that will be done.

The statement you will see will indicate -- and the President's speech tomorrow will indicate that one of the areas that we can do to enhance trade between our two countries is if India will eliminate or increase its restrictions, its quotas and other restrictions on foreign investment; that it will eliminate some of the regulatory barriers that make it difficult for American business to operate effectively in India; and also to eliminate or otherwise modify tariffs and the like.

So it's clearly on the agenda, and it's something that Rob Portman and his counterpart are going to need to address and are addressing.

Anything else?

Q Are you familiar with the case of this opposition candidate in Belarus being arrested in a scuffle? He was an opponent of Lukashenko, apparently.

MR. HADLEY: I saw the press reports. I saw a little bit of a profile of the man. I don't know him; I don't know much about him. Obviously, this is an election -- there's an election coming up. We would like it to be free and fair. And a prerequisite of a free and fair election is that you don't beat up opposition candidates or opposition supporters and throw them in jail. And we think that there is not enough outrage and international attention on Belarus generally, in the runup to this election, in particular. And the international community ought to be talking about it and sending a firm message and insisting that it be free and fair and doing everything we can to encourage that. And that's the message, of course, the President wanted to send when he met with these two widows whose husbands were killed by the regime.

Q Was there any talk about defense cooperation between -- defense cooperation between India and the U.S.?

MR. HADLEY: There has been a -- over the last four or five years, there has been a real progress and enhanced defense cooperation between the two countries. There's a statement that will be put out in connection with all the other statements that describes kind of the glide-path going forward in defense cooperation. There was no specifics that came up between the -- in the discussion between the two leaders.

Okay, thank you.

END 7:00 P.M. Local

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