



White House Press Release
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Briefing by Secretary Rice and National Security Advisor Hadley Aboard Air Force One

6:55 P.M. EST

MR. HADLEY: This is a real historic trip, to India and Pakistan. We'll of course be doing the India segment first. You may remember that during his campaign for first term, the President identified strengthening U.S.-India relationships as a priority of his foreign policy. He pointed out that India was a country with whom we not only had common interests, but common values -- committed democracy -- and that he saw India playing a role on a global stage, and a potential ally and partner for the United States in dealing with global issues.

And he gave us instructions to try and move the U.S.-Indian relationship in that way. We've been working on this now for five, six years, with two successive Indian governments. Both have accepted the President's vision. And what I think you'll see in this trip, if you look at the range of subjects and the depth of U.S.-Indian cooperation on them, is that on a whole range of issues, global in significance, we are now a partner with India. It has moved beyond just narrow bilateral issues, moved beyond even regional issues to India and the United States seeing how they can cooperate together on a global range of issues.

Obviously, it starts with the cooperation in the war on terror. We have also -- and that cooperation is good, it's continuing. One of the things that is part of this discussion over several years about enhancing U.S.-Indian civil nuclear cooperation, is that that is a vehicle for bringing India onto the same page as we are on the issue of proliferation. It is a way we can make India a global partner with this non-proliferation.

That also opens the door, of course, to cooperation with India on nuclear energy. And one of the things I think you will find coming out of this visit is that we are clearly moving in that direction with India. India is probably going to become and participate in the EDER* initiative on nuclear fusion. They are going to participate in the FutureGen* project. And we would hope, at some point, as we move forward under cooperation, that India would participate in the next generation nuclear program that the President has set out, GNEP, Global Nuclear Energy Partnership.

The cooperation with India in energy is also not just limited to the nuclear area. As you know, there is a regional Asian partnership with India, China, Japan, the United States and South Korea, in which we are working to develop energy initiatives that are providing energy security in the long-term, in a way that is both environmentally responsible. These are just examples of United States and India cooperating together on solving global problems.

We're also going to see, I think, an expansion of our traditional bilateral relations. One of the things we've tried to do is to re-engage India on cooperation on agriculture. This is something important to India, it's something important to this new government. The United States and India worked very closely together on the so-called "green revolution" in the 1960s that helped India get to the point where it could be self-sustaining in agriculture.

India needs a new second "green revolution," if you will. And one of the things we're exploring in connection with this visit, and hopefully we'll announce, is an initiative between the United States and India, a knowledge initiative on agriculture, that would be a three-year, \$100-million commitment to enhance cooperation in this area. I think you'll see cooperation in other areas, in science, technology, and in a full range of issues in the relationship.

So I think that the story here is, rather than any specific single announcement, but what I think you'll see on display is a broadening and deepening of the relationship between the United States and India, and the fulfillment of the President's charge to us, and vision, that U.S.-Indian relations have really become strategic, and U.S.-India, we've become partners on a global level. And that's what this trip is just about.

SECRETARY RICE: I would just add one thing, which is that because India also has a vibrant private sector, we are able with India to engage in a deepening of the relationship between our private sectors. There's the CEO forum that's going to be meeting; the Asian-Pacific partnership that Steve mentioned on energy has a strong private sector component. The nature of the Indian economy and its increasing private -- the energy that comes from the private sector there has made it possible to deepen that relationship between India and the United States, as well.

QUESTION: So what is the status of the civil nuclear agreement? It doesn't sound like you're going to be able to get it done on this trip.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, we're still working on it, and we'd like to have a deal. Obviously, it's an important -- would be an important breakthrough, not just for the United States and India, but also for the role of nuclear power in energy development, for our relationship with India on these global issues that Steve talked about. But as Steve said, I think when he briefed you on Friday, we'd very much like to have a deal; we're going to continue to work at it. But if we don't have one for this trip, then we will continue to work at it. It's very important.

The key here is that these are big and important issues. And the one thing that is absolutely necessary is that any agreement would assure that once India has decided to put reactors or safeguards, that it remains permanently under safeguards. So we've got a couple of issues that are important -- and we'll keep talking about them -- that remain unresolved. But we're going to keep working at it, whether or not there is a deal on this trip.

QUESTION: Does the fast breeder reactor have to be under safeguards?

SECRETARY RICE: I think the key here is that India has to demonstrate that it is prepared to put its civilian reactors under safeguards, and do so permanently. There are a variety of ways that that might happen. I don't want to get too much into the discussions that we're having on particular types of reactors, but I think not every reactor and not every type is going to be under safeguard. I think that's what you're --

QUESTION: Is that an exception then, for the fast breeder?

SECRETARY RICE: Terry, let's wait and see what the agreement says.

QUESTION: Is there a concern that if an agreement isn't reached on this trip that momentum will be lost?

SECRETARY RICE: No, not at all. First of all, this trip is not a civil nuclear power trip. This trip is a trip about the relationship between the United States and India. It's business development, it's science and technology development, going back to agriculture. This is a very broad relationship that is deepening, and I think benefiting the world as it did, and cooperation on the tsunami, as it demonstrated in the IAEA Board of Governors, where India joined the consensus on Iran. So there's a lot that is

going to be cemented here.

But the civil nuclear piece of it is important. And if they take some time to continue to work, we'll continue to work on it.

MR. HADLEY: But remember, the basic framework is something that was agreed last July, when the Prime Minister came to Washington. So we got the framework. The implementation is going to take a long period of time. The next step in the implementation is this separation agreement, which is what we've been working on. But we've been working on this for four, five, six months; they come here, we go there; telephone conversations, exchanging documents. This is part of an implementation process of the basic agreement, which was reached last July.

So if you get it for the trip, that's fine. You always like to use trips as forming function or forcing functions. If we don't get it on the trip, then we'll get it after the trip, because the parties are committed to make this relationship work in the civil nuclear area.

QUESTION: What do you say to those critics who say this agreement represents an end run around the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

MR. HADLEY: Just the opposite, as I said in my comments. This is actually a way to bring India within the Non-Proliferation framework. It will be adopting the kind of Non-Proliferation protections that we do. It's to bring India on the same page as we, so they can be a global partner, if you will, in the proliferation issue, as well. And India has had a good record, as a practical matter, in terms of proliferation to third countries. They've been a very responsible party. This is actually the vehicle to bring India onto our page, in terms of proliferation policy.

SECRETARY RICE: Let me just note that one of the supporters of the framework agreement has been Mohammed ElBaredei*, of the IAEA, because he sees precisely what Steve just said, that this brings India into a framework that makes it a good partner on the proliferation side, which it has demonstrated that it can be over the years.

QUESTION: Do you think that Pakistan qualifies for this same kind of special treatment?

SECRETARY RICE: Pakistan is not in the same place as India. I think everybody understands that. And one of the important contributions, or one of the important achievements I think of the administration is that we've been able to take Pakistan on its own terms and India on its own terms. We have programs and relationships with Pakistan that would not be appropriate with India, and vice versa. And I think that being able, in a sense, to de-link these two, and to have good relations with both, on their own terms, has both helped the relations -- our relations with them, and I think it's helped their relations with each other.

QUESTION: What about Afghanistan, do you want to say anything about whether or not we're going to go there?

MR. HADLEY: We're briefing India and Pakistan. That's the trip that we're talking to you about. And, obviously, if we have any changes to make in the schedule, we'll let you know in the normal course.

QUESTION: Speaking of changes in the schedule, it seems like Friday night -- there's a **departure Friday night** --

MR. McCLELLAN: Even if we were, we wouldn't be telling you until it was the appropriate time.

QUESTION: Well, it's in the trip book. Can you say what we're doing Friday night?

MR. HADLEY: I will say this to you: If we make a change to the schedule, you'll be the first to know.

QUESTION: I don't think so.

QUESTION: Wait a minute, I want to know, too.

MR. McCLELLAN: All right, we're landing.

END 7:07 P.M. EST

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