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NOTE: The interview began at 4:20 p.m. at the Maurya Sheraton Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India; former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan; Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'etat in Pakistan on October 12, 1999; and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria. The transcript of this interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 22. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks to a Joint Session of Parliament in New Delhi
March 22, 2000

Mr. Vice President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, I am privileged to speak to you and, through you, to the people of India. I am honored to be joined today by members of my Cabinet and staff at the White House, and a very large representation of Members of our United States Congress from both political parties. We're all honored to be here, and we thank you for your warm welcome.

I would also like to thank the people of India for their kindness to my daughter and my mother-in-law and, on their previous trip, to my wife and my daughter.

I have looked forward to this day with great anticipation. This whole trip has meant a great deal to me, especially to this point, the opportunity I had to visit the Gandhi Memorial, to express on behalf of all the people of the United States our gratitude for the life, the work, the thought of Gandhi, without which the great civil rights revolution in the United States would never have succeeded on a peaceful plane.

As Prime Minister Vajpayee has said, India and America are natural allies, two nations conceived in liberty, each finding strength in its diversity, each seeing in the other a reflection of its own aspiration for a more humane and just world.

A poet once said the world's inhabitants can be divided into, and I quote, "those that have seen the Taj Mahal and those that have not." [*Laughter*] Well, in a few hours I will have a chance to cross over to the happier side of that divide. But I hope, in a larger sense, that my visit will help the American people to see the new India and to understand you better. And I hope that the visit will help India to understand America better and that by listening to each other we can build a true partnership of mutual respect and common endeavor.

From a distance, India often appears as a kaleidoscope of competing, perhaps superficial images. Is it atomic weapons or ahimsa; a land struggling against poverty and inequality or the world's largest middle-class society? Is it still simmering with communal tensions or history's most successful melting pot? Is it Bollywood or Satyajit Ray; Shweta Shetty or Alla Rakha? Is it the handloom or the hyperlink? The truth is, no single image can possibly do justice to your great nation. But beyond the complexities and the apparent contradictions, I believe India teaches us some very basic lessons.

The first is about democracy. There are still those who deny that democracy is a universal aspiration, who say it works only for people of a certain culture or a certain degree of economic development. India has been proving them wrong for 52 years now. Here is a country where more than 2 million people hold elected office in local government, a country that shows at every election that those who possess the least cherish their vote the most. Far from washing away the uniqueness of your culture, your democracy has brought out the richness of its tapestry and given you the knot that holds it together.

A second lesson India teaches is about diversity. You have already heard remarks about that this morning. But around the world there is a chorus of voices who say ethnic and religious diversity is a threat, who argue that the only way to keep different people from killing one another is to keep them as far apart as possible. But India has shown us a better way. For all the troubles you have seen, surely this subcontinent has seen more innocents hurt in the efforts to divide people by ethnicity and faith than by

the efforts to bring them together in peace and harmony. Under trying circumstances, you have shown the world how to live with difference. You have shown that tolerance and mutual respect are in many ways the keys to our common survival. That is something the whole world needs to learn.

A third lesson India teaches is about globalization and what may be the central debate of our time. Many people believe the forces of globalization are inherently divisive, that they can only widen the gap between rich and poor. That is a valid fear, but, I believe, wrong.

As the distance between producers large and small and customers near and far becomes less relevant, developing countries will have opportunities not only to succeed but to lead in lifting more people out of poverty more quickly than at any time in human history. In the old economy, location was everything. In the new economy, information, education, and motivation are everything, and India is proving it.

You liberated your markets, and now you have one of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world. At the rate of growth within your grasp, India's standard of living could rise by 500 percent in just 20 years. You embraced information technology, and now, when Americans and other big software companies call for consumer and customer support, they're just as likely to find themselves talking to an expert in Bangalore as one in Seattle.

You decentralized authority, giving more individuals and communities the freedom to succeed. In that way, you affirmed what every successful country is finding in its own way: Globalization does not favor nations with a licensing *raj*; it does favor nations with a *panchayat raj*. And the world has been beating a path to your door.

In the new millennium, every great country must answer one overarching question: How shall we define our greatness? Every country, America included, is tempted to cling to yesterday's definition of economic and military might. But true leadership for the United States and India derives more from the power of our example and the potential of our people.

I believe that the greatest of India's many gifts to the world is the example its people have set, "From Midnight to Millennium." Think of it: Virtually every challenge humanity knows can be found here in India. And every solution to every challenge can be found here as well: confidence in democracy, tolerance for diversity, a willingness to embrace social change. That is why Americans admire India, why we welcome India's leadership in the region and the world, and why we want to take our partnership to a new level, to advance our common values and interests, and to resolve the differences that still remain.

There were long periods when that would not have been possible. Though our democratic ideals gave us a starting point in common and our dreams of peace and prosperity gave us a common destination, there was for too long too little common ground between East and West, North and South. Now, thankfully, the old barriers between nations and people, economies and cultures, are being replaced by vast networks of cooperation and commerce. With our open, entrepreneurial societies, India and America are at the center of those networks. We must expand them and defeat the forces that threaten them.

To succeed, I believe there are four large challenges India and the United States must meet together, challenges that should define our partnership in the years ahead.

The first of these challenges is to get our own economic relationship right. Americans have applauded your efforts to open your economy, your commitment to a new wave of economic reform, your determination to bring the fruits of growth to all your people. We are proud to support India's growth as your largest partner in trade and investment. And we want to see more Indians and more Americans benefit from our economic ties, especially in the cutting-edge fields of information technology, biotechnology, and clean energy. The private sector will drive this progress, but our job as governments is to create the conditions that will allow them to succeed in doing so and to reduce the remaining impediments to trade and investment between us.

Our second challenge is to sustain global economic growth in a way that lifts the lives of rich and poor alike, both across and within national borders. Part of the world today lives at the cutting edge of change, while a big part still exists at the bare edge of survival. Part of the world lives in the information age. Part of the world does not even reach the clean water age. And often the two live side by side. It is unacceptable. It is intolerable. Thankfully, it is unnecessary. And it is far more than a

regional crisis. Whether around the corner or around the world, abject poverty in this new economy is an affront to our common humanity and a threat to our common prosperity.

The problem is truly immense, as you know far better than I. But perhaps for the first time in all history, few would dispute that we know the solutions. We know we need to invest in education and literacy, so that children can have soaring dreams and the tools to realize them. We know we need to make a special commitment in developing nations to the education of young girls, as well as young boys. Everything we have learned about development tells us that when women have access to knowledge, to health, to economic opportunity, and to civil rights, children thrive, families succeed, and countries prosper.

Here again, we see how a problem and its answers can be found side by side in India, for every economist who preaches the virtues of women's empowerment points at first to the achievements of India's State of Kerala—I knew there would be somebody here from Kerala. [*Laughter and applause*] Thank you.

To promote development, we know we must conquer the diseases that kill people and progress. Last December India immunized 140 million children against polio, the biggest public health effort in human history. I congratulate you on that.

I have launched an initiative in the United States to speed the development of vaccines for malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS, the biggest infectious killers of our time. This July, when our partners in the G–8 meet in Japan, I will urge them to join us.

But that is not enough, for at best, effective vaccines are years away. Especially for AIDS, we need a commitment today to prevention, and that means straight talk and an end to stigmatizing. As Prime Minister Vajpayee said, no one should ever speak of AIDS as someone else's problem. This has long been a big problem for the United States. It is now a big problem for you. I promise you America's partnership in the continued struggle.

To promote development, we know we must also stand with those struggling for human rights and freedom around the world and in the region. For as the economist Amartya Sen has said, no system of government has done a better job in easing human want, in averting human catastrophes, than democracy. I am proud America and India will stand together on the right side of history when we launch the Community of Democracies in Warsaw this summer.

All of these steps are essential to lifting people's lives. But there is yet another. With greater trade and the growth it brings, we can multiply the gains of education, better health, and democratic empowerment. That is why I hope we will work together to launch a new global trade round that will promote economic development for all.

One of the benefits of the World Trade Organization is that it has given developing countries a bigger voice in global trade policy. Developing countries have used that voice to urge richer nations to open their markets further so that all can have a chance to grow. That is something the opponents of the WTO don't fully appreciate yet.

We need to remind them that when Indians and Brazilians and Indonesians speak up for open trade, they were not speaking for some narrow corporate interest but for a huge part of humanity that has no interest in being saved from development. Of course, trade should not be a race to the bottom in environmental and labor standards, but neither should fears about trade keep part of our global community forever at the bottom.

Yet we must also remember that those who are concerned about the impact of globalization in terms of inequality and environmental degradation do speak for a large part of humanity, those who believe that trade should contribute not just to the wealth but also to the fairness of societies, those who share Nehru's dream of a structure for living that fulfills our material needs and at the same time sustains our mind and spirit.

We can advance these values without engaging in rich-country protectionism. Indeed, to sustain a consensus for open trade, we must find a way to advance these values as well. That is my motivation and my only motivation in seeking a dialog about the connections between labor, the environment, and trade and development.

I would remind you—and I want to emphasize this—the United States has the most open markets of any wealthy country in the world. We have the largest trade deficit. We also have had a strong economy, because we have welcomed the products and the services from the labor of people throughout the world. I am for

an open global trading system. But we must do it in a way that advances the cause of social justice around the world.

The third challenge we face is to see that the prosperity and growth of the information age require us to abandon some of the outdated truths of the industrial age—as the economy grows faster today, for example, when children are kept in school, not put to work. Think about the industries that are driving our growth today in India and in America. Just as oil enriched the nations who had it in the 20th century, clearly knowledge is doing the same for the nations who have it in the 21st century. The difference is, knowledge can be tapped by all people everywhere, and it will never run out.

We must also find ways to achieve robust growth while protecting the environment and reversing climate change. I'm convinced we can do that as well. We will see in the next few years, for example, automobiles that are 3, 4, perhaps 5 times as efficient as those being driven today. Soon, scientists will make alternative sources of energy more widely available and more affordable. Just for example, before long, chemists almost certainly will unlock the block that will allow us to produce 8 or 9 gallons of fuel from biofuels, farm fuels, using only one gallon of gasoline.

Indian scientists are at the forefront of this kind of research, pioneering the use of solar energy to power rural communities, developing electric cars for use in crowded cities, converting agricultural waste into electricity. If we can deepen our cooperation for clean energy, we will strengthen our economies, improve our people's health, and fight global warming. This should be a vital element of our new partnership.

A fourth challenge we face is to protect the gains of democracy and development from the forces which threaten to undermine them. There is the danger of organized crime and drugs. There is the evil of trafficking in human beings, a modern form of slavery. And of course, there is the threat of terrorism. Both our nations know it all too well.

Americans understood the pain and agony you went through during the Indian Airlines hijacking. And I saw that pain firsthand when I met with the parents and the widow of the young man who was killed on that airplane. We grieve with you for the Sikhs who were killed in Kashmir, and our heart goes out to their families. We will work with you to build a system of justice, to strengthen our cooperation against terror. We must never relax our vigilance or allow the perpetrators to intimidate us into retreating from our democratic ideals.

Another danger we face is the spread of weapons of mass destruction to those who might have no reservations about using them. I still believe this is the greatest potential threat to the security we all face in the 21st century. It is why we must be vigilant in fighting the spread of chemical and biological weapons. And it is why we must both keep working closely to resolve our remaining differences on nuclear proliferation.

I am aware that I speak to you on behalf of a nation that has possessed nuclear weapons for 55 years and more. But since 1988, the United States has dismantled more than 13,000 nuclear weapons. We have helped Russia to dismantle their nuclear weapons and to safeguard the material that remains. We have agreed to an outline of a treaty with Russia that will reduce our remaining nuclear arsenal by more than half. We are producing no more fissile material, developing no new land- or submarine-based missiles, engaging in no new nuclear testing.

From South America to South Africa, nations are forswearing these weapons, realizing that a nuclear future is not a more secure future. Most of the world is moving toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. That goal is not advanced if any country, in any region, it moves in the other direction.

I say this with great respect. Only India can determine its own interests. Only India can know if it truly is safer today than before the tests. Only India can determine if it will benefit from expanding its nuclear and missile capabilities, if its neighbors respond by doing the same thing. Only India knows if it can afford a sustained investment in both conventional and nuclear forces while meeting its goals for human development. These are questions others may ask, but only you can answer.

I can only speak to you as a friend about America's own experience during the cold war. We were geographically distant from the Soviet Union. We were not engaged in direct armed combat. Through the years of direct dialog with our adversary, we each had a very good idea

of the other's capabilities, doctrines, and intentions. We each spent billions of dollars on elaborate command and control systems, for nuclear weapons are not cheap.

And yet, in spite of all of this—and as I sometimes say jokingly, in spite of the fact that both sides had very good spies, and that was a good thing—[*laughter*]—in spite of all of this, we came far too close to nuclear war. We learned that deterrence alone cannot be relied on to prevent accident or miscalculation. And in a nuclear standoff, there is nothing more dangerous than believing there is no danger.

I can also repeat what I said at the outset: India is a leader, a great nation, which by virtue of its size, its achievements, and its example has the ability to shape the character of our time. For any of us, to claim that mantle and assert that status is to accept first and foremost that our actions have consequences for others beyond our borders. Great nations with broad horizons must consider whether actions advance or hinder what Nehru called the larger cause of humanity.

So India's nuclear policies, inevitably, have consequences beyond your borders, eroding the barriers against the spread of nuclear weapons, discouraging nations that have chosen to forswear these weapons, encouraging others to keep their options open. But if India's nuclear test shook the world, India's leadership for nonproliferation can certainly move the world.

India and the United States have reaffirmed our commitment to forgo nuclear testing. And for that I thank the Prime Minister, the Government, and the people of India. But in our own self-interest—and I say this again—in our own self-interest, we can do more. I believe both nations should join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, work to launch negotiations on a treaty to end the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, strengthen export controls. And India can pursue defense policies in keeping with its commitment not to seek a nuclear or missile arms race, which the Prime Minister has forcefully reaffirmed just in these last couple of days.

Again, I do not presume to speak for you or to tell you what to decide. It is not my place. You are a great nation, and you must decide. But I ask you to continue our dialog on these issues, and let us turn our dialog into a genuine partnership against proliferation. If we make progress in narrowing our differences, we will be both more secure, and our relationship can reach its full potential.

I hope progress can also be made in overcoming the source of tension in this region, including the tensions between India and Pakistan. I share many of your Government's concerns about the course Pakistan is taking, your disappointment that past overtures have not always met with success, your outrage over recent violence. I know it is difficult to be a democracy bordered by nations whose governments reject democracy.

But I also believe—I also believe India has a special opportunity, as a democracy, to show its neighbors that democracy is about dialog. It does not have to be about friendship, but is it about building working relationships among people who differ.

One of the wisest things anyone ever said to me is that you don't make peace with your friends. That is what the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told me before he signed the Oslo accords with the Palestinians, with whom he had been fighting for decades. It is well to remember—I remind myself of it all the time, even when I have arguments with members of the other party in my Congress—[*laughter*]—you don't make peace with your friends.

Engagement with adversaries is not the same thing as endorsement. It does not require setting aside legitimate grievances. Indeed, I strongly believe that what has happened since your Prime Minister made his courageous journey to Lahore only reinforces the need for dialog.

I can think of no enduring solution to this problem that can be achieved in any other way. In the end, for the sake of the innocents who always suffer the most, someone must end the contest of inflicting and absorbing pain.

Let me also make clear, as I have repeatedly: I have certainly not come to South Asia to mediate the dispute over Kashmir. Only India and Pakistan can work out the problems between them. And I will say the same thing to General Musharraf in Islamabad. But if outsiders cannot resolve this problem, I hope you will create the opportunity to do it yourselves, calling on the support of others who can help where possible, as American diplomacy did in urging the Pakistanis to go back behind the Line of Control in the Kargil crisis.

In the meantime, I will continue to stress that this should be a time for restraint, for respect for the Line of Control, for renewed lines of communication.

Addressing this challenge and all the others I mentioned will require us to be closer partners and better friends and to remember that good friends, out of respect, are honest with one another. And even when they do not agree, they always try to find common ground.

I have read that one of the unique qualities of Indian classical music is its elasticity. The composer lays down a foundation, a structure of melodic and rhythmic arrangements, but the player has to improvise within that structure to bring the *raga* to life.

Our relationship is like that. The composers of our past have given us a foundation of shared democratic ideals. It is up to us to give life to those ideals in this time. The melodies do not have to be the same to be beautiful to both of us. But if we listen to each other and we strive to realize our vision together, we will write a symphony far greater than the sum of our individual notes.

The key is to genuinely and respectfully listen to each other. If we do, Americans will better understand the scope of India's achievements and the dangers India still faces in this troubled part of the world. We will understand that India will not choose a particular course simply because others wish it to do so. It will choose only what it believes its interests clearly demand and what its people democratically embrace.

If we listen to each other, I also believe Indians will understand better that America very much wants you to succeed. Time and again in my time as President, America has found that it is the weakness of great nations, not their strength, that threatens our vision for tomorrow. So we want India to be strong, to be secure, to be united, to be a force for a safer, more prosperous, more democratic world. Whatever we ask of you, we ask in that spirit alone.

After too long a period of estrangement, India and the United States have learned that being natural allies is a wonderful thing, but it is not enough. Our task is to turn a common vision into common achievements, so that partners in spirit can be partners in fact. We have already come a long way to this day of new beginnings, but we still have promises to keep, challenges to meet, and hopes to redeem.

So let us seize this moment with humility in the fragile and fleeting nature of this life, but absolute confidence in the power of the human spirit. Let us seize it for India, for America, for all those with whom we share this small planet, and for all the children that together we can give such bright tomorrows.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at the Parliament Building. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Krishnan Kant, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Speaker of the Lok Sabha G.M.C. Balayogi of India; and Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'etat in Pakistan on October 12, 1999.

Exchange With Reporters at the Taj Mahal in Agra, India
March 22, 2000

Visit to the Gandhi Memorial

Q. Mr. President, what were your thoughts when you were at the Gandhi Memorial?

The President. I was thinking about Gandhi's life. I was thinking about his going to South Africa, how he decided to come back here, how he completely gave his life over to what he believed, and how if all of us just had one fraction of that commitment, we could make peace in the world. That's what I was thinking.

Visit to Agra

Q. Mr. President, are you sort of sad that Agra is sort of a ghost town? Would you have liked to pump hands?

The President. Absolutely. I did see some people——

Q. Yes, but back there. They were peering——