

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India
September 30, 2014

President Obama. It is an extraordinary pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Modi to the White House for the first time. I think that the entire world has watched the historic election and mandate that the people of India delivered in the recent election. And I think everyone has been impressed with the energy and the determination with which the Prime Minister has looked to address not only India's significant challenges, but more importantly, India's enormous opportunities for success in the 21st century.

We have had an outstanding discussion around a range of issues. And we, during our discussions, reaffirmed that as two of the world's largest democracies—vibrant people-to-people contacts between India and the United States, including an incredible Indian American population that contributes so much—that we have so much in common, it is critical for us to continue to deepen and broaden the existing framework of partnership and friendship that already exists.

Last night, during a private dinner, we spent most of our time talking about the economy. And we agreed that in both countries, one of our primary goals is to improve education and job training so that our young people can compete in the global marketplace. And the Prime Minister shared with me his vision for lifting what is still too many Indians who are locked in poverty into a situation in which their lives can improve.

We also today spent time talking about the international situation and security issues. We addressed challenges in the Middle East and violent extremism and the fight against ISIL. We discussed what has now been a successful, peaceful transition of power in Afghanistan and the need for all of us to work together to ensure that there is stability there.

We discussed issues of trade, issues of making sure that maritime rules are observed. And we discussed how we can continue to work together on a whole host of issues from space exploration and scientific endeavor to dealing with humanitarian crises like Ebola in West Africa.

And throughout this conversation, I've been impressed with the Prime Minister's interest in not only addressing the needs of the poorest of the poor in India and revitalizing the economy there, but also his determination to make sure that India is serving as a major power that could help bring about peace and security for the entire world.

So I want to wish him luck in what I'm sure will be a challenging, but always interesting, tenure as Prime Minister in India. I'm very grateful for the friendship between the United States and India, and I'm looking forward to building on this meeting so that we can continue to promote progress in both countries and around the world.

So thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Modi. Thank you. President Obama, members of the media: First, I want to thank President Obama for his invitation and his warm and generous hospitality. I am pleased to visit U.S.A. and meet President Obama at the start of my tenure.

I am happy that we are meeting here just a few days after the Indian and the U.S. missions reached Mars around the same time. So after the India-U.S. summit on Mars, we are meeting here on Earth. *[Laughter]* This happy coincidence captures the potential of our relationship.

This visit, especially my conversation with President Obama, has reinforced my conviction that India and the United States are natural global partners based on our shared values, interests, and strengths in the digital age. We already have the foundation of a strong partnership. We now have to revive the momentum and ensure that we get the best out of it for our people and for the world.

The President and I spoke about many of our common economic priorities. I'm confident that India will see rapid economic growth and transformation. We are focusing in India on not just on policies, but also on processes to make it easy and productive to do business in India. I believe that India-U.S. economic partnership will also grow rapidly in coming years.

I also sought President Obama's support for continued openness and ease of access by Indian service companies in the U.S. market. We are serious about resolution of issues on both sides to enable civilian nuclear energy cooperation to take off. It is important for India's energy security.

We had a candid discussion on Bali ministerial of the WTO. India supports trade facilitation. However, I also expect that we are able to find a solution that takes care of our concern on food security. I believe that it should be possible to do that soon.

We have agreed to consult and cooperate closely on climate change issues, an area of strong priority for both of us. There was great convergence on international developments that matter the most to our two countries, including peace and stability in Asia-Pacific region. The United States is intrinsic to our "Look East" and "Link West" policies.

We discussed existing terrorism challenges, including in South Asia and the new threats of terrorism in West Asia and beyond. We agreed to intensify our counterterrorism and intelligence cooperation. The Afghan people have shown the will to prevail over violence and extremism. We discussed our two countries' continued commitment to assist Afghanistan and our own coordination in this area.

We have shared concern on the Ebola crisis in Africa, for which India has already made financial commitments of 12 million U.S. dollars.

Given our broad range of shared interests, we will also continue to deepen our security dialogue and defense relations. I want to especially welcome the U.S. defense companies to participate in developing the Indian defense industry.

During the last 4 days in the U.S., I have seen extraordinary interest and excitement about India and India-U.S. partnership among the people of our two countries. We will draw strength and inspiration from it as we start a more purposeful course in our ongoing journey.

I look forward to receiving President Obama and his family in India at a convenient time. I once again thank President Obama, the people of the United States, and especially the Indian American community for their warm welcome and hospitality.

President Obama. Excellent.

Prime Minister Modi. And also, I should thank the media from India and the U.S.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Prime Minister Modi spoke in Hindi, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : India, Prime Minister Modi.

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