



Partners in a Journey of Progress

*A Toast by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Taj Palace Hotel,
New Delhi, March 2, 2006*

President George Bush, Madam First Lady, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome 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.

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 nonviolent 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 must 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 environment 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 worshipped 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 our 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. I hope he will be more chivalrous the next time you are here.

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. □



President Bush listens to Prime Minister Singh at Hyderabad House on March 2.

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