

**Opening Remarks of Chairman Henry J. Hyde
Before the Full Committee
U.S.-India “Global Partnership: How Significant for American
Interests?”**

**Wednesday, November 16, 2005
Room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building**

The establishment by the U.S. of a “global partnership” with the enormity known as India would appear to be a momentous event. But it is of a sufficiently general nature that any prediction of its long-term and real-world impact cannot be cast with any confidence. It may yet prove to be a profound initiative, but it may be destined to take its place as one more of the many routine agreements between the world’s countries.

Although the agreement announced on July 18th was the result of a decade-long effort, it has been acknowledged by the Administration as having been hurriedly negotiated, so hurriedly that those involved in the negotiations have stated that there was no time to consult with Congress beforehand.

Given that its implementation requires Congressional action, the purpose of today’s hearing is to assist us in examining in greater detail the agreement’s likely impact on American interests. As part of that effort, this Committee has already held two hearings regarding the controversial provisions on nuclear cooperation and will continue to devote attention to this and other consequences which this agreement may have for our security and that of the globe.

Although the term, “global partnership,” lends itself to grand statements and sweeping pronouncements, my belief is that this agreement is likely to prove of more modest consequence, and that it is best understood as a useful and long-overdue clarification of relations, including clearing away the thicket of unnecessary encumbrances that have grown up over the years and confined us to narrow paths lined with thorns. Although it is somewhat of a novelty to regard the two countries as partners, even extended reflection on our strained relations fails to unearth any compelling clash of interests. Perhaps it is simply that we both are growing up.

In terms of what the agreement will actually do, of what will be created or destroyed, conclusive evidence is difficult to come by. From the standpoint of the United States, I’ll defer to the Administration and the distinguished experts before us today to enlighten us. For myself, I find it encouraging that, by this agreement, the U.S. is, in effect, freely acknowledging India’s growing role in the world and, more importantly, welcoming it, regarding it not as the fulfillment of a threatening prophecy but as an awakening to be nurtured.

But it must be noted that for all the talk in this city of a new alliance, which among other things is said to be aimed at offsetting the rise of China, India's leaders have proclaimed no such goal. In fact, they have repeatedly stated that they foresee no change in their decision-making or in their policies which will remain as they have always been, namely to advance India's interests. If we are seeking to use them for our purposes, most assuredly they will be seeking to use ours for theirs.

What I hope this agreement most signifies is a sea change in how India's leaders conceive their country's role in the world.

Since its independence in 1949, India's role in the world has been but a fraction of what it otherwise might have been, and here I fault India's leaders. Much of the problem can be traced to the legacy of the colonial past: specifically, a mindset manifested in a defensive attitude toward an imagined hostile world and a self-imposed alienation from the West that impoverished its opportunities and produced anomalies remarkable for a democracy, such as its close and warm relationship with the Soviet regime.

Thus, among the most hopeful signs of this agreement is that these cramped dogmas of the past and the distorted view of India's interests that accompanied them are now fading away and are increasingly being replaced by a more confident vision of India as a major actor in the world. For to maintain a position of defiance is to refuse to accept any burden for upholding the world in which one lives and, worse, to gleefully add to the problems facing those who do. Thus, the assumption by India of a more active role is to be very much welcomed if it is accompanied by a commensurate expansion of responsibility for reinforcing security and stability in the Middle East, the Indian Ocean region, and Central Asia and even for the international system as a whole.

But complacency would be a mistake. We would be foolhardy indeed to believe that willful power dutifully acknowledges wisdom as its Master. Giant India's emergence summons comparably giant possibilities. History is pockmarked with rising powers aggressively seeking their "place in the sun," their singular purpose resulting in a challenge to, and not an enhancement of, the international order. At best, this has proved a needless drain on resources for others without any real advantage accruing to the guilty country. At worst, mindless disaster has resulted.

There is no evidence that this is even a remote possibility, but the permanent anarchy of the world allows for many things once believed to be unimaginable. We have no other course but to consider such things and thereby inoculate ourselves against them.

But I would not want my remarks to be viewed through a distorting prism, for my forecast is a sunny one. India is at a formative moment and facing profound decisions for her billion people, all of this occurring in a world which is quickly evolving into unfamiliar patterns, the old and familiar giving way to the unformed new. My hope is that she will join us in shaping this era and take possession of the limitless possibilities that are hers to possess.

And now I would like to turn to my friend and distinguished colleague, Mr. Lantos, the Ranking Democratic Member, for any remarks he might wish to make.