

India USA

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India is a global leader, as well a good friend, says **President Bush** who has set an ambitious agenda with India which is also practical he says, and builds on a relationship that has never been better.

THE ASIATIC ROAR

I came here today to talk about America's relationship with two key nations in Asia: India and Pakistan. These nations are undergoing great changes, and those changes are being felt all across the world. More than five centuries ago, Christopher Columbus set out for India and proved the world was round. Now some look at India's growing economy and say that that proves that the world is flat. No matter how you look at the world, our relationship with these countries are important. They're important for our economic security, and for our national security.

Fifty years ago, many Asian nations were still colonies; today, Asians are in charge of their own destinies. Fifty years ago, there were only a handful of democracies in Asia; today there are nearly a dozen. Fifty years ago, most of Asia was mired in hopeless poverty; today its economies are engines of prosperity. These changes have been dramatic, and as the Asian continent grows in freedom and opportunity, it will be a source of peace and stability and

prosperity for all the world.

The first stop on my trip will be India. India is the world's largest democracy. It is home to more than a billion people -- that's more than three times the population of the United States. Like our own country, India has many different ethnic groups and religious traditions. India has a Hindu majority, and about 150 million Muslims in that country. That's more than in any other country except Indonesia and Pakistan. India's government reflects its diversity. India has a Muslim president and a Sikh prime minister. I look forward to meeting with both of them. India is a good example of how freedom can help different people live together in peace. And this commitment to secular government and religious pluralism makes India a natural partner for the United States.

In my meetings with Prime Minister Singh, we'll discuss ways to advance the strategic partnership that we announced last July. Through this partnership, the United States and India are cooperating in five broad areas.

First, the United States and India are working together to defeat the threat of terrorism. Secondly, the United States and India are working together to support democracy around the world. Like America, India overcame colonialism to establish a free and independent nation. President Franklin Roosevelt supported India in its quest for democracy, and now our two nations are helping other nations realize the same dream.

Third, the United States and India are working together to promote global prosperity through free and fair trade. America's economic relationship with India is strong and it's getting better.

The growing affluence of India is a positive development for our country. America accounts for 5 percent of the world's population. That means 95 percent of our potential customers live outside our borders. More than a billion of them live in India. We welcome the growing prosperity of the Indian people, and the potential market it offers for America's goods and services.

When trade is free and fair, it benefits all sides. At the end of World War II, the United States chose to help Germany and Japan recover. America understood then that as other nations prosper, their growing wealth brings greater stability to their regions and more opportunities for products Americans manufacture and grow. The same is true today with developing nations such as India. As India's economy expands, it means a better life for the Indian people and greater stability for the region. It means a bigger market for America's businesses and workers and farmers.

The area of America's relationship with India that seems to receive the most attention is outsourcing. It's true that a number of Americans have lost jobs because companies

have shifted operations to India. And losing a job is traumatic. It puts a strain on our families. But rather than respond with protectionist policies, I believe it makes sense to respond with educational policies to ensure that our workers are skilled for the jobs of the new century.

My attitude is this: If the rules are fair, I believe our companies and our farmers and our entrepreneurs can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

Fourth, the United States and India are working together to improve human health and the environment, and address the issue of climate change.

Fifth, the United States and India will work together to help India meet its energy needs in a practical and responsible way. That means addressing three key issues: oil, electricity, and the need to bring India's nuclear power program under international norms and safeguards.

To meet the challenge here in America, I have proposed what's called an Advanced Energy Initiative to make this company [sic] less reliant upon oil. As I said in the State of the Union, we got a problem: We're hooked on oil. And we need to do something about it.

We have an ambitious agenda with India. Our agenda is also practical. It builds on a relationship that has never been better. India is a global leader, as well as a good friend, and I look forward to working with Prime Minister Singh to address other difficult problems such as HIV/AIDS, pandemic flu, and the challenge posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions. My trip will remind everybody about the strengthening of an important strategic partnership. We'll work together in practical ways to promote a hopeful future for citizens in both our nations.

The above piece is an extract from President Bush's address to the Asia Society in Washington DC.