



Special Briefing
Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
April 27, 2006

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns and Pakistan Foreign Secretary Riaz Khan On-The-Record Briefing

(3:03 p.m. EDT)

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure for me to welcome Foreign Secretary Riaz Khan to the United States and to Washington. When President Bush visited Islamabad six weeks ago, he and President Musharraf announced that the United States and Pakistan would begin a strategic dialogue between the two governments and it's been our responsibility, and I should say it's been our honor, to begin that strategic dialogue over the last two days. I had the great pleasure of hosting Foreign Secretary Riaz Khan at dinner last evening. We began with breakfast this morning and worked through the morning and lunch in discussing every aspect of the very broad and very important relationship between our two countries.



Under President Musharraf's strong leadership, Pakistan has become a critical ally of the United States with which we seek to establish a stable, long-term relationship. Our cooperation on counterterrorism is well known, but we work closely together in many other areas: nonproliferation, the stability of South Asia and democracy are other regular items on our agenda. And the list is growing all the time, as it has throughout the last two days of our discussions. Pakistan yesterday assumed command of Task Force 150, which supports the maritime interdiction effort in the Arabian Sea. We are seeking to expand our economic cooperation, our trade and economic cooperation and we discussed many of the issues that President Bush put on the table when he met with President Musharraf in Islamabad.

We also discussed Pakistan's trade and long-term commercial economic linkages with Afghanistan and with the countries of Central Asia because we believe that will be an increasingly important way to integrate these two regions in the future. I assured Foreign Secretary Khan that the United States is determined to fulfill the commitments that we have made to the Government of Pakistan. And we agreed today to schedule in the near future separate dialogues between our governments on economics, trade investment, on education, and on science and technology.

I reassured the Foreign Secretary that we are committed to the sale of American F-16 aircraft to Pakistan and we intend to begin our consultations on this issue with Congress shortly. Due to the financial pressures on the Pakistani Government following last October's earthquake, the Foreign Secretary informed us that the package will be smaller than that was envisioned last year. We'll also work with Pakistan and with Afghanistan and certainly with the United States Congress to design reconstruction opportunity zones that will bring genuine benefits to the people of Pakistan as well as Afghanistan. And in that regard, I reaffirmed our willingness to contribute to the Pakistani efforts to bring development to the federally administered tribal areas.

My colleague Under Secretary Josette Sheeran Shiner will travel to Pakistan very soon to begin discussions on these economic issues. We're also making good progress on a number of other areas in our bilateral relationship. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and my colleague Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes plan to travel to Islamabad in the latter part of May to move forward on our education dialogue.

Secretary of Energy Bodman traveled to Pakistan in -- earlier in March and a Pakistani delegation will soon visit Washington to continue the energy dialogue that's underway between our two governments. And the director of the National Science Foundation will co-chair the U.S.-Pakistani Science and Technology Joint Committee.

We also in addition to paying attention to our bilateral relationship, in addition to making sure that both of our governments are meeting the commitments made by our two presidents six weeks ago in Pakistan. We also talked about what we can do together to make the South Asia region and the Middle East more peaceful and more stable. Pakistan and the United States have the closest possible relationship -- working relationship to counter the terrorist groups operating within Pakistan and in the region. We are working together with the Government of Afghanistan through our Joint Military Committee, but also through the political engagement of the three governments to support President Karzai and to support the Afghan Government as it continues to try to build stability in that country and resist the offensive of the Taliban.

The Foreign Secretary briefed me on the progress of Pakistan's composite dialogue with India and I noted that the United States hopes for progress in these talks, especially regarding their discussions of Kashmir and about the importance of continued strategic stability between Pakistan and India. For our part and on the part of the United States Government, we will do what we can to encourage India and Pakistan to make progress on these issues. And we continue to be hopeful that Pakistan and India can reach a mutually acceptable settlement of the issues that -- of the issue of Kashmir that would take account of the wishes of the people of Kashmir. And we continue to be hopeful that there can be progress, continued progress in the very good dialogue underway between the Governments of Pakistan and India.

So I should say it's been from my perspective an exceedingly useful set of discussions that we've had with the Foreign Secretary and they're not over. After we finish this press conference, we're going to go back upstairs and continue for another couple of hours and talk about some of the regional issues, including the issue of Iran which is so much on the mind of both of our governments these days. So it's been a pleasure to welcome Foreign Secretary Riaz Khan here to Washington. I committed to return to Pakistan in the next several months with a delegation of U.S. Government officials to fulfill all of the aspects of the strategic dialogue that both President Musharraf and President Bush have asked us to undertake.

Mr. Secretary.

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, thank you very much, Under Secretary Burns, for inviting me and my delegation for this inauguration of the strategic dialogue. And we are deeply touched and we are very grateful for the gracious hospitality that you have extended to us who are here, the warm reception that we have received during our stay. We have had very extensive discussions together, starting from yesterday and then today, since morning.

I would like first reciprocate to the sentiments that you have expressed regarding the strengthening of Pakistan-U.S. relationship and the broadening of the scope of our bilateral cooperation. This inaugural round of strategic dialogue is basically a follow-up of the decision that was taken by our two Presidents in Islamabad which established a strategic partnership between Pakistan and the United States last March. Pakistan and the United States are committed to building a broad-based long term and sustainable relationship which is to the benefit of our two peoples and is a factor of stability and peace and security in our region.

I have had, as I mentioned, very useful and wide-ranging exchange of views with Under Secretary Burns and his team. We reviewed progress on implementation of decisions which were contained in the 4th March joint statement issued after the visit of President Bush to Pakistan. We discussed new institutional framework for cooperation in the four identified sectors which is in energy, economy, education and science and technology and the next steps that need to be taken to operationalize cooperation in these areas.

We also discussed many other aspects of bilateral relations, including trade, investment ties, including, as Secretary Burns has just mentioned, the reconstruction of opportunity zones out of these. And also we had discussion over bilateral investment treaty and other initiatives. We reaffirmed our own (inaudible) cooperation in counterterrorism. As you know, the joint working group had held very recently a fruitful meeting earlier this month. Also the defense consultative group will be meeting very soon in Washington next week to consider the steps to deepen cooperation in the defense field, which is already very strong.

You have already heard Secretary Burns relating to the fact that our request, which is a scaled-down request for F-16s is being processed. We had substantive exchanges on regional strategy, global issues of common interest. We discussed, of course, a Palestine-Pakistan-India peace process, Kashmir, Central Asia, our situation in the Middle East and cooperation in counterterrorism. Also we discussed the UN reforms.

Clearly, as Secretary Burns has also mentioned, the United States has a deep interest in the diligent efforts for the resolution of outstanding issues between Pakistan and India. We greatly value U.S. engagement in our region for peace and development. We appreciate U.S. bilateral cooperation to help our efforts for social, economic development and cooperation in the security area. Pakistan will continue to seek close collaboration in the context of our strategic partnership. We are committed to carrying forward this process. I also look forward to welcoming Under Secretary Burns in Pakistan for the next round. And we hope that we would be able to reciprocate the hospitality, very generous hospitality, that we have received over here.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR: If I could ask you to identify yourself and your organization, please?

QUESTION: Barry Schweid, Associated Press. First, Secretary Burns, you said you would like to see a Kashmir agreement in accordance with the wishes of the people there. What are the wishes of the people there, do you know? I mean, I'm referring, of course, to who do they want to be affiliated with? And Mr. Minister, can you tell us how the F-16 package has been, or is being adjusted? What are the changes, which apparently you were trying to make it less expensive?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Barry, thank you very much. First, let me say that you'll remember that when President Bush went to South Asia six weeks ago, he spoke openly in his speech in Delhi on the second day of his visit -- the third day of his visit about the need for progress on Kashmir. And he and Secretary Rice have instructed us to work as we can with our two friends, Pakistan and India, to see if we can be helpful in that quest for peace.

Now the United States is not a mediator. The United States, obviously, respects the considerable progress that's been made by Pakistan and India in the composite dialogue. And my friend, Foreign Secretary Riaz Khan is the Pakistani representative in those talks and our mutual friend, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran is the Indian representative. And we're just trying to help build whatever we can on that progress. The United States, obviously, has an interest as do the people of the region and the two governments in seeing if a final settlement can be reached. It's not for the United States to dictate to the people of the region what that settlement should look like. This is up to the people of the region as well as to the two governments and we respect that process, but it's an important one.

And as we are -- we have an increasingly strong partnership with Pakistan and we have a very important partnership with India, it makes sense that the United States would be interested in seeing some of the remaining problems left over from another period in history -- to see those problems resolved.

And let me just say, Barry, if I could, before the Foreign Secretary speaks, we are very pleased to move forward with the sale of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan. This is something that we envisioned last year. There was a delay for obvious reasons after the horrible earthquake in Pakistan, but we've received the request of the Government of Pakistan to move forward. We notified Congress several weeks ago. We've been talking to members and their staffs, but we'll present our views formally and in detail to Congress very shortly.

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: Well, as regards to your first question, let me say that Pakistan has been saying that there has to be a solution which is acceptable to Pakistan, to India, and most importantly, to the people of Kashmir. And in this regard, we have been also saying that the Kashmiri parties have to be involved with the process, the peace process. There is already some movement. And you must have already seen that there are Kashmiri leaders who have been traveling to Pakistan as well from across the (inaudible) and we hope that this process will be encouraged and that it will supplement the negotiations which are going on between the two countries within the context of the composite dialogue, as well as through other modalities and at the highest level; that is the summit level.

About the second part of your question, yes to the scale-down request, which is to scale down in view of the constraints that we have in terms of resources. There's a mix of some new and some old aircraft. This will be processed. I do not have all the details of the package, but earlier, we were thinking of purchasing new aircrafts. The entire package was composed of new aircraft, but in view of the constraints that we have on resources, we have now far less ambitious package which, as I said, is a mix of some old, used aircraft and some new. Thank you.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) from Voice of America. My first question is for Mr. Secretary, Secretary Burns. You had mentioned the goals about strategic partnership with Pakistan and one of the goals you said, creating stability in South Asia. Pakistan is openly say that the civil nuclear deal with India will destabilize the region. So how do you reconcile these two positions between you and the Pakistanis?

And my second question is you talk about the strategic partnership and we have partnerships in almost every other country in the region, especially a partnership with India, with Afghanistan. So what's so unique about this dialogue with Pakistan? What's the unique component which makes it distinguished? Thanks.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, let me start with your second question and I'll answer the first too, because the second question lays the foundation for this relationship. Pakistan and the United States do have a unique relationship. There's no country in the world more important to the United States in prosecuting and winning the global war on terror than Pakistan. There's no country in the region more important than Pakistan in making sure that the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan might be peaceful and helping us, Pakistan and America working together to help stabilize the situation within Afghanistan itself to bring support to President Karzai, political and economic support, so that the country can be rebuilt and so that the Afghan forces and the U.S. forces and NATO forces can repel the incursions of the Taliban and al-Qaida inside Afghanistan itself.

So Pakistan and the United States have been friends for a long, long time, but the most modern addition to this relationship post-September 11, 2001, this issue of our common struggle for peace, for stability and for security and against terrorism, is what has been at the core of our relationship.

But that also allows us to think more broadly about the relationship, about the need for economic development in Waziristan, in Baluchistan, in parts of Pakistan that have seen so much instability, and the United States would like to find a way to help the Government of Pakistan to bring some economic relief to that part of the country. You know that President Bush said in Islamabad that the United States would seek to plan reconstruction opportunity zones that might bring to both Pakistan and Afghanistan a measure of relief from the dislocations of the last several years.

And the relationship is even broader than that. We are the largest trading partner with Pakistan. We have a growing economic relationship and we're trying to respond to many of the good reforms that have been undertaken by the Pakistani Government. And we have an important relationship in the wider region, we hope in trying to deter the ambitions of the Iranian Government. From an American perspective, that's very important.

And we spoke today about the many, many crises in South Asia, whether it's the current crisis in Nepal, which seems to be heading towards a positive outcome and Assistant Secretary Boucher is leaving tonight for a trip to Nepal; whether it's in Sri Lanka where we hope to combine with the European Union, Japan and the Norwegian Government to stop the fighting and return the government and Tamil Tigers to negotiations; whether it's to Bangladesh, where we hope that the government will heed our advice and arrest those responsible for the wave of bombings. So this region of South Asia is very important to the United States and this relationship with Pakistan is unique and is very broad based.

On your first question, we obviously believe that our civil nuclear agreement with India is in the best interests of the United States and of India, and we think it's going to help normalize the relationship between our two countries, help relieve the energy deficit that the Indian Government is facing. It's going to help the strategic partnership that we've formed with the Indian Government. As President Bush and Secretary Rice have said many times, we believe this relationship is going to be good for all of South Asia.

You know, we don't compare the relationships between the United States and Pakistan, the United States and India. Secretary Rice said on her first trip to the region in March of 2005 we ought to de-hyphenate American relations with the two great countries of South Asia. We are a friend to Pakistan, we are a friend to India, and both are important to the United States. But the relationships, by nature, are different and there are things that we're doing with Pakistan in terms of our bilateral cooperation that we're not as advanced on with India, and vice versa. With Pakistan, we're very much focused on these economic opportunities that I talked about and very focused on the military and security cooperation that is so important to the United States.

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: Thank you. Well, the Pakistan-U.S. relationship, obviously I agree with what Secretary Burns has said. It's for us one of the most important relationships that we have in our foreign policy context. And for the last many years now, this relationship has been on an upward trajectory. It is gaining in strength. We are one of the major non-NATO allies of United States, that is the strategic partnership. We are cooperating in many, many areas. This relationship is of vital importance for the security, peace and development progress in the whole region. We are cooperating with regard to bringing about normalcy and stability in Afghanistan. We are also cooperating in the counterterrorism efforts. We look up to the very positive engagement of United States for the resolution of various issues that have created problems in South Asia that have been at the heart of conflict and tension there.

So this is an extremely important relationship apart from the bilateral cooperation that exists. In terms of trade, the United States is the largest trading partner of Pakistan. In terms of investments, it's a major investor, foreign investor, in Pakistan. We are also looking forward to this new engagement for the ROZs, Reconstruction Opportunity Zones, in Pakistan, which once they materialize may have a great impact on some of the economically depressed areas of Pakistan, especially in the regions which border Afghanistan, Baluchistan, also the earthquake-affected areas. This is one part of our proposal that we have handed over today to Secretary Burns. So this is an extremely important relationship.

Secretary Burns also mentioned about Iran. We also discussed Iran, but we have also concerns regarding the gravity of the situation relating to the nuclear issue concerning Iran. We made it very clear that we are opposed to any use of force in the area to resolve this issue, that there is no military option, and we have emphasized that we look up to the success of diplomatic efforts and that there would be a diplomatic solution to this issue.

As regards the other matter, I may just mention that our position on this question of the U.S.-India nuclear cooperation agreement is really well known and we conveyed our position and whatever concerns we have during our discussions. Regardless of this agreement, whether it is there or it is not there, I would just like to mention two points, and that is that we want, of course, strategic stability in our region in South Asia and we are not interested in any arms race, but certainly we can not be oblivious of our security requirements. And the second point that I would like to mention is that we have also a growing economy, expanding economy, and we have growing energy needs, and in that certainly for us the nuclear power generation is a very important option that we want to develop and we will also not be oblivious to our energy needs. So these are the points that I wanted to make in this regard.

MODERATOR: Peter Mackler, Agence France Presse.

QUESTION: Mr. Minister, a very specific question, the next question for both of you gentlemen.

First question is in terms of the F-16s, are we to understand that the numbers of F-16s are going to remain the same but it's a mix of old and new that's changing, or are the numbers going to change?

And my second question is in terms of putting pressure on Iran, Under Secretary Burns said, I believe it was last week, was urging countries to avoid the transfers of any dual-use or sensitive technologies to Iran. I was wondering if Pakistan has made that engagement.

And Under Secretary Burns, have you been satisfied in your conversations with the Minister on this question?

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: As regards the specific details of this package, I'll give you the basic fact, which is that it is a scaled down request. But exactly what are the numbers involved -- what were before because these things keeping on getting revised. So what numbers we may have started with, I even don't know that and I have rough idea as to what we have requested now. So I'm really not in a position to make a comparison as to what was in our minds before and what it is that we have asked now, but it is a scaled-down, much scaled-down request and it is a mix, as I said, that this is no longer all new aircraft.

As regards to your second question, we are not, first of all, producers of any new or advanced technologies, so we do not have this kind of relationship with any other country. But I will say that we have now a very strong system of export controls and this has been made into a legislation and the list that we have on export controls they are consistent with the NSG guidelines and other international standards.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: We're actually going to be having a specific discussion of Iran when we leave here, a full discussion, and what I will certainly want to share with the Foreign Secretary is our expectation that tomorrow's report by Director General ElBaradei is going to have to be a strongly negative report, because Iran has not complied with the wishes, either of the UN Security Council or of the IAEA Board of Governors. And Iran this week made the extraordinary statement, the Supreme Leader of Iran, that nuclear technology produced by Iran would be made available to Sudan, which is a highly irresponsible country. That extraordinary statement, of course, followed the other very disturbing initiatives of the Government of Iran to seek -- to proceed on enrichment at the plant at Natanz.

The Iranians have crossed all the international red lines, and so this is now going to force a significant debate at the United Nations Security Council. There'll be a meeting of the Permanent Five political directors in Paris on Tuesday, which I'll be attending, to consult about the best way forward. But there's no question in my mind that we're going to have see a significant international response and that will be one of rebuke of the Government of Iran for its actions. And as I said last week and as Secretary Rice has said during this week when she's been traveling in the Middle East and Europe, a great variety of countries are going to have to consult about whether or not sanctions is the right way forward. The United States believes it is. There has to be a significant international diplomatic response to show the Iranian Government that this is not a cost-free exercise.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: We are not part of the Security Council, so we would not be engaged in any discussions on this matter. But when I spoke earlier, I made our position very clear. We are against any result to use of force. We want that this matter should be resolved diplomatically. And in that, there are efforts already in hand and we hope that all those efforts will go through.

QUESTION: I am (inaudible) from Voice of America Television. My question to Secretary Burns, what role does Pakistan have, if any, in solving this Iran issue, either through diplomatic means or through force? And Secretary Khan, does the U.S.'s stand against Iran jeopardize the U.S.-India-Pakistan gas pipeline project?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Let me just say that the United States has been pursuing a diplomatic path. Our President, Secretary of State have said many times that we're focusing on diplomacy. And over the past year, we've worked with the European governments, with Russia, with China, with India, with Pakistan, other countries to try to assert the possibility of a diplomatic solution. But for a diplomatic solution to be achieved, Iran has to begin to listen to the international community.

You had this extraordinary situation now where the entire IAEA Board of Governors voted by a very large majority to rebuke Iran and to tell it to suspend its nuclear

programs. That was followed by a presidential statement of the United Nations Security Council, the most authoritative international body in the world. And you're going to see a very vigorous debate in New York at the Security Council in the first half of May about what additional steps the Security Council should take.

And so we're a permanent member of the Security Council. We're focused on that diplomatic track and it's been encouraging to see the number of countries who have stepped forward to deliver that basic message to Iran. And that is you can't try to achieve a nuclear weapons capability against the wishes of the international community. There is great international unity on that issue.

There are very few countries defending Iran. I think Syria has. I believe Venezuela has. Other than those two, I haven't found -- Belarus has also defended Iran. So those three countries are the only ones that I know of that believe and that are arguing that Iran should have the right to achieve a nuclear weapons capability. All the rest of us and that vote in the IAEA was extraordinary because Egypt and Sri Lanka and many of the African and Latin American countries all voted together with the Permanent 5 members of the Council. The Iranians need to begin to reflect that there is going to be a cost to what they are doing.

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: Yeah. As I made it really clear, our position on the Iranian issue, one other aspect to that position is that we strongly emphasize that all parties, particularly Iran because it's also a member of the NPT must abide by their international obligations. As regards, the gas pipeline, Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline which basically a project which is conceived in the context of the huge energy needs that Pakistan has in the future and also the Indian market also has those needs. So it is -- basically we perceive it like any other agreements that Iran has for supply of oil and gas to -- they have very large number of countries, the Europeans, the Japanese, the Chinese. The -- almost every country has a certain agreement with Iran for supply of oil and gas. So basically we look at this project in that context.

MODERATOR: Elise.

QUESTION: Under Secretary Burns, Elise Labott with CNN. Under Secretary Burns, I know efforts right now at the UN on the Iran nuclear issue in trying to put pressure on the regime, either through a resolution or perhaps a coalition of other countries, but to what extent has the Bush Administration given up on the hope that the regime of President Ahmadi-Nejad will actually end its nuclear ambitions and that it's probably necessary to pursue -- more efforts to transform the regime through your democracy programs and programs of that nature? And Foreign Secretary, to what extent does Pakistan feel that the regime of President Ahmadi-Nejad is a threat to peace and national security? And should efforts of transforming the regime to a more democratic country be pursued? Thank you.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, our policy, of course, is very much broad-gauged, where we're operating with a wide circle of international friends to try to stop Iran from achieving a nuclear weapons capability. We have tremendous international support in the effort to try to convince the Iranians that they ought to end their central banking role for international terrorism in the Middle East and to stop their support for Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations.

We are concerned, as are a number of the Arab countries in the Middle East, about an increasingly aggressive Iranian foreign policy in the region of the Middle East. And finally, as you know, we have put forward to the Congress a request for funding that would allow Voice of America and Radio Farda to broadcast more frequently a greater number of hours per day into Iran. We want to bring Iranians here on scholarships. We certainly want to support, at the grassroots level, the building of a democratic government in a country -- in Iran. That's the basis of the \$75 million request that President Bush and Secretary Rice have sent to the Congress.

So we have a broad-gauged policy and it's necessary, because Iran is challenging peace and stability in the international arena in the Middle East in a number of areas. And we think it's important to pursue all of these avenues and we are doing that and we've got -- I'm happy to say I think we have bipartisan support in our Congress. And equally importantly, these ideas are gaining increasing resonance around the world. It is impressive to see the number of countries that are now beginning to speak out about Iranian support for terrorist groups and impressive to see the number of countries that are beginning to think about a response, an economic response on the former sanctions against Iran.

So we're encouraged that there is an international coalition that's building and we are at the heart of that coalition and we have not given up hope that there can be a diplomatic solution to the problem of Iranians -- Iran's search for nuclear weapons and we're determined to pursue that as aggressively as we can.

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: Well, I think part of your question was also addressed to me.

QUESTION: Do you see the regime of President Ahmadi-Nejad specifically as a threat to peace and national security? Should there be a broader policy of transforming the regime?

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: Yeah. As regards to transforming regimes, let me make it very clear that Pakistan has a very simple policy. We are not in the business of transforming, changing regimes anywhere. So that is not something that we conceive as -- see as part of our policies. As regards to the second part of -- the first part of your question, we want friendly relations with all our neighbors. We want a friendly environment in our region. Iran is a very important neighbor of Pakistan. So we hope that they would be -- of course, resolve all the problems that they have, especially this issue and we hope that the international community will be able to resolve these issues with Iran. But as far as Pakistan is concerned, as a neighbor and a country which has a very longstanding good relationship with Iran, we wish them well and we also want to have, as I said, peaceful involvement and friendly relations with all our neighbors.

MODERATOR: We have time for one more.

QUESTION: There are two things, one to Mr. Burns and the other one to Mr. Khan. One -- this one is about Iran. There is sort of a concerted belief that America will not take any actions against Iran because of two reasons. Number one, if it does, it will bog down U.S. troops in Iran for years and number two, it will create so much instability, globally, that you will not be able to tackle with it.

And the other question is, of course -- either of you can answer -- about the de-hyphenating your relationship with India -- the de-hyphenation of a relationship with India and Pakistan. You do that, but that does not change the situation in the region on the ground, that your nuclear agreement with India has created a deep sense of insecurity in Pakistan. How would you reassure the Pakistanis that this is not something that is going to hurt them?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, first of all, as you know, our relationship with India is to build a civil nuclear power and it's to try to give the Indian people a chance to have energy, electricity production to fuel the very rapid economic growth in that country and to accommodate the expansion of the economy that has to take place, particularly in rural areas. So I think the people of Pakistan should be reassured that this program does not speak at all of support for the nuclear weapons sector of the Indian nuclear industry, but to the civil power sector. And that is going to be positive. It's going to be positive for the Indians. And I think our overall relationship with both Pakistan and India is going to be a force for stability in the region, quite frankly.

The United States is friends with both countries and we are very pleased to see the positive evolution in relations between Pakistan and India. And I said to the Foreign Secretary today it's our great hope that that will continue and that's our expectation as well. So I think the people of Pakistan can be very much reassured about that.

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: Well, we, of course, also welcome U.S. role for -- in the interest of stability and peace and security in South Asia. But when it comes to security, we also understand our own responsibility as a sovereign country and naturally, in case there are trends which, in any manner, create an imbalance which requires some kind of measures on our part, then as I said earlier, that we would never be oblivious of the requirements of our security. As in the past, we have been taking steps in order to ensure that there is a deterrence which remains established and this deterrence has, in fact, been helpful for maintenance of peace in the region. 2002 was a case in point. So similarly, we understand the importance of it and we will continue to make efforts, if such efforts are needed, to maintain that deterrence.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Thank you.

FOREIGN SECRETARY KHAN: Thank you.

2006/425

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.