



THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESIDENT  
GEORGE W. BUSH

 [CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)

For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
February 24, 2006

## Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Steve Hadley on the President's Trip to India and Pakistan

James S. Brady Briefing Room

-  [President's Visit to India and Pakistan](#)
-  [In Focus: Global Diplomacy](#)

4:00 P.M. EST

MR. HADLEY: Good afternoon. Next week the President and Mrs. Bush will depart for South Asia. They will travel to India and Pakistan. This is the first trip of the President and Mrs. Bush to either country. They are very much looking forward to it.

In India, the President will participate in an arrival ceremony, and then a wreath-laying ceremony in honor of Mahatma Gandhi. The trip will basically celebrate a U.S.-Indian strategic partnership that is rooted in shared values and is broad in both its nature and scope.

The two countries are working together on a range of global issues, including counterterrorism, nonproliferation, energy and the environment, and the expansion of economic and political freedom. The President will meet with Prime Minister Singh and the two will discuss the strong relationship between India and the United States and their cooperation on these global issues, and a variety of bilateral issues, as well.

Additionally, President Bush will meet with members of the U.S.-India Chief Executive Officer Forum, or CEO Forum. This was launched during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington last July. This will give the President an opportunity to hear from these business leaders in India, and they will provide to the two leaders and to their governments ideas on how to further expand trade and investment between the United States and India.

U.S.-Indian economic ties have been growing rapidly and they benefit the people of both countries, as the President described in his address here on Wednesday. U.S. exports to India were up over 30 percent last year, making India one of our fastest growing major export markets.

The President will then participate in a joint press availability with the Prime Minister. They will have lunch, and later the President and Mrs. Bush will attend a state dinner hosted by President Kalam. The President will participate in an embassy greeting. He'll thank the employees of our embassy in New

Delhi who are working so hard on behalf of the American interests. The President will also meet with a diverse group of religious leaders to discuss religious freedom.

The President will meet with the leader of the opposition party and with the Indian National Congress party chairman, Sonia Gandhi. Before traveling to Pakistan, the President will participate in an agricultural event, an area where India and the United States have cooperated off and on for some 40 years. And he will meet with young India entrepreneurs. He will then deliver remarks in which he will discuss the importance of our relationship with India and the role our two nations can play together in dealing with global issues.

In Pakistan, the President will meet with President Musharraf. The two leaders will discuss both countries' commitments to the strong relationship between the United States and Pakistan. Since 9/11, Pakistan has become an ally in the war on terror. It has made very tough choices, but has made those choices because they were right for the people of Pakistan. The U.S. relationship with Pakistan goes beyond security interests and issues. The President will discuss Pakistan's progress toward democracy, as well as how we can expand our mutually beneficial economic ties to support freedom and prosperity in Pakistan. The leaders will also be discussing how we can cooperate to support Pakistan's important role in encouraging greater economic integration in South and Central Asia.

In addition to meeting with President Musharraf, President Bush will participate in a meeting on the earthquake reconstruction efforts in which the United States and its military participated. And the two leaders will participate in a joint media availability. Later, the President and Mrs. Bush will attend a state dinner hosted by President Musharraf. Additionally, the President will participate in a roundtable discussion with leaders in Pakistan's public and private sectors.

While in Pakistan, the President looks forward to meeting with embassy employees in Islamabad and thanking them for their hard work and the sacrifice they and their families are making. Many of them are there without their families. He will also participate in a cricket event, a very popular sporting activity in South Asia.

And with that, I'll be glad to take your questions.

Q Could you update us on Nick Burns' negotiations in New Delhi? Are they over?

MR. HADLEY: As you know, the United States and India have been trying to negotiate a document pursuant to the joint statement reached last July of expanding civil nuclear cooperation between the United States and India. Pursuant to that, we have been trying for several weeks to negotiate an agreement whereby India would separate its nuclear facilities between those that are for civil programs and those which are for military programs.

These negotiations have been ongoing for a while. Indians have come here, we have come there. There have been exchange of papers, exchanges of phone calls. In this latest round, the Indians provided a document about a week ago; we provided some additional ideas and response. Nick Burns went to India. There have been good consultations. He is now coming back to Washington to report on where we are on those discussions. We're making progress, but we're not yet there. The Indians,

hopefully, will have an opportunity from there end to see where we are. And we would expect those negotiations will continue by phone, document and the like, probably up through the President's -- up to the President's visit.

We would, obviously, like, and the Indians would like to use the occasion of this visit to reach agreement on this separation agreement, so-called. We think that would be a good thing. But it's important to have a good agreement that works for the Indians, works for the United States, will be acceptable to our Congress and to the nuclear suppliers group. And that's our objective. We'd like to get it before the trip. If we can, great. If we can't, we'll continue to negotiate it after the trip.

There's, as you could tell, and as you could tell from the President's address on Wednesday, this is a very broad and rich relationship between the United States and India right now, and the two leaders will have a lot to talk about, whether there's this agreement or not.

Q Well, on that point, does the success or failure of the trip hinge on whether or not you get an agreement?

MR. HADLEY: Certainly not. As you could -- listened from the President's speech, there is a long list of things that we are doing together with India, a long list of areas where we hope to have some things to announce during the trip that will demonstrate the breadth and intensity. So, look, it would be nice to have the separation agreement before the trip; if not, if we don't get it before the trip, we think we'll get it after the trip.

Q What specifically is the holdup to a deal, Steve?

MR. HADLEY: It's just getting some clarification from the Indian side about what's in the civil side and what's on the military side, not only in terms of what exists now, at this time, but what are going to be the ground rules going forward. There's a lot of technical aspects to it. And the challenge, from the Indian side, of course, is this came up as an integrated program, and now they're having to make the kind of separation that we've made and other countries have made. And it's hard. It's an issue about facilities, about people, about organization. And it's just -- it's taken time to work through. Again, we're trying to see if we can use the visit as a forcing function. If we can, great. If not, we'll continue to work on it after the visit is over.

Q Is the President is coming -- taking with him anything else, let's say, if this nuclear agreement is not going to be -- -- or any kind of agreement is going to be signed, either in India or Pakistan during this trip?

MR. HADLEY: Well, one of the things about this kind of relationship between India and the United States is that it's at the point where, in some sense, it's been institutionalized. When relations between two countries are in an early stage, everybody focuses on what's the deliverable for the trip, because in some sense, trips are the only times you get agreements and you move forward in the relationship.

A lot of the relationship is now institutionalized. There's a business dialogue, there's economic dialogue, there's energy dialogues, and a lot of those things have produced statements and

agreements and joint programs that the President and the Prime Minister will be able to ratify and bless.

So I think there's going to be a lot of things. But, again, it's not three or four major initiatives. It's the kind of relationship whereby you'll see, I think, a range of agreements, understandings, next steps, across a broad range of issues that will show that the relationship is moving forward, and really is pretty institutionalized at this point.

Q May I have another one on the terrorism? President has been fighting this terrorism ever since he took over the presidency, and he has done a wonderful job. Now, as far as the issue of terrorism is concern, India suffered terrorism, you have suffered terrorism, and also Pakistan, they have suffered terrorism. And as far as General -- President General Musharraf is concerned, he was trying his best to tackle down the extremists and militants in his own country, and also to have good relations between India and Pakistan as far as tracking down the terrorism on the war of terrorism. So what are we expecting here from this trip, what the President has to offer the triangle fighting against terrorism, and where do we stand today as far as terrorism is concerned?

MR. HADLEY: Well, the cooperation has been very good, but of course, the nature of the cooperation in the war on terror is that it's not sort of encapsulated in summits or summit documents. It is cooperation among intelligence services. It's cooperation among law enforcement. It's all those other things, the sort of day-to-day work that you need to do in terms of making progress in the war on terrorism. It's a subject that will be on the agenda for -- when the President is in India. It will certainly be on the agenda when the President is in Pakistan.

The good thing about it is that I think India, Pakistan and the United States all see the challenge of terrorism; all see that it's a challenge to each of them in different ways; and all are convinced that what we need is global cooperation to deal with a global threat. And I think the two leaders will review the progress of cooperation in the war on terror. And I think the report they will receive is that it's good.

Q Steve, what would the President like to see from India on Iran during his visit, either in terms of the nuclear program there, or in terms of the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline?

MR. HADLEY: I think India has, of course, been a participant in the IAEA Board of Governors. It has, in the two recent votes that were taken there, it has been in the side of those who really believe that Iran needs to be held to account for the non-compliance with the safeguards agreement, and that the issue needs to be referred to the U.N. Security Council. So I think it will be a reinforcement of that commitment.

I think what both leaders will do is step back and talk about more broadly the challenge that Iran poses for stability in the region. It is certainly an issue of Iran's effort to achieve nuclear weapons. It is also Iran's role as a state sponsor of terror; the support it is providing to countries like Syria, which are also involved in supporting terror; the attitude its government has towards Israel; the unconstructive role it's playing in terms of the Middle East; and the way it treats its own people.

The President, of course, on Wednesday and then again today, talked about the initiative that was

announced by the Secretary of State to try and enhance our support for those voices within Iran that are calling for greater freedom and openness in that society. That's a very important thing in looking forward to the day when we have a democratic Iran that can be a partner on these issues, rather than to be a part of the problem on these issues.

So I think you'll find a kind of -- a strategic level discussion between the two leaders on the challenge Iran poses and what we need to do about it together.

Q Can you respond to the criticism that the nuclear deal rewards bad behavior and makes it harder for the United States to get help for the other countries that have operated outside the framework --

MR. HADLEY: I don't think it does. I think what the nuclear agreement does is it brings India into, and has India accepting the kinds of proliferation restrictions that the rest of the international community has accepted. Because the U.S-India civil nuclear is premised on India and the United States getting on the same page with respect to proliferation. The first step was the so-called NSSP -- the next steps in strategic partnership -- which we entered into over two years ago and which was completed in July. And as part of that, as the United States and India enhance their cooperation in the areas of space, high technology, civil nuclear, India was taking steps to bring its nonproliferation policies and practices in accord with ours and the international community, generally.

So I think, in fact, it is our view, and is the President's view, that the civil nuclear cooperation we contemplate with India will not only be good for India to help it deal with the enormous challenges it faces in its own development to find a clean, environmentally sound, and secure energy, but it also has the effect of bringing India on the same page as the rest of us in terms of the fight against nuclear proliferation.

Q What role is the President going to play in the cricket event? Is he going to play, or watch?

MR. HADLEY: I have not asked. (Laughter.) But it is planned as an opportunity for him to watch and learn a little bit about it. But who knows what he'll do.

Q I need to ask about port security and the delay that Dubai Ports World has now proposed, in cooperation with the White House. Can you tell us what that delay is for and what it is not for?

MR. HADLEY: My understanding is that the company is proposing an arrangement whereby some additional time occurs before they take control of the ports, the U.S. ports that are at issue. We have said privately, publicly, in a variety of different ways that we think that's a good thing, that the CFIUS process that we're all now familiar with looked at the deal, felt there were no national security problems that, in the end of the day, remained unaddressed, and that, therefore, the deal as contemplated did not jeopardize national security interests. The President supports that deal and believes that it should go forward.

But, obviously, questions have been raised in the public and in the Congress, and the President believes that additional time, which would allow the company and the administration to explain this and provide more information to the Congress, is a good thing and that in the end of the day, Congress and

the public, when all is said and done, will come to the same conclusion he has, that this is something that can go forward and not jeopardize the national security of the United States. So we think it's -- and the President thinks it's a good thing.

Q You realize that lawmakers have suggested that the time should be spent with an additional extra review. Is that what it is not for?

MR. HADLEY: Well, in terms of the administration and executive branch process, that process has been completed. There was a lot of work that was done before the company filed its notice through -- it was then a review conducted in the 30-day period. And at the end of the day, no agency indicated that they had a national security problem, and therefore, the company was informed that the administration's process would go no further. So that process is over. But, of course, there are questions raised in the Congress, and what this delay allows is for those questions to be addressed on the Hill.

Q They can discuss it, but you're not going to reopen it?

MR. HADLEY: There's nothing to reopen. In terms of the CFIUS process, it's been completed.

Q Can I stay with this one?

Q You mentioned a CEO forum. Will the President be taking any business leaders with him on his trip to India?

MR. HADLEY: They will go out -- the U.S. business -- this is a meeting that is ongoing, that is meeting at the time, of course, of the visit. This is a forum that was set up, again, last summer. And they will travel separately. But the President, while he's there, will meet with them.

Q Because he usually does not take delegations of business leaders --

MR. HADLEY: And he's not this time.

Q Why is that? Is it just a personal style thing?

MR. HADLEY: Well, it's --

Q Or members of Congress, for that matter.

MR. HADLEY: It hasn't really come up as something that has been recommended to him as advancing the objectives of the visit. And, of course, in a way, this is a group that is meeting, is ongoing. And what we've -- the course we have taken is for the President to meet with these groups on this trip, so he can meet with both Americans and Indians, and hear the results of their discussions, and the recommendations they would make to the two governments to enhance trade and economic cooperation. It just seems to be a -- it has been a more effective way to deal with this problem.

Q Just ask you a quick question about Iraq. The President has been very clear in expressing his respect for Ayatollah Sistani, among other clerics, as being prime movers on keeping things calm. Could you characterize, and deepen my understanding, the degree of confidence that the administration has that the clerics will stay on this page, especially the Ayatollah, for instance, and why that is? Why do you have any confidence in that? What should we understand?

MR. HADLEY: Obviously, the destruction of the Golden Mosque, and then the subsequent attacks on Sunni religious sites is very troubling. And the President has been very strong in condemning it. It's a testing time. It's a difficult thing that Iraq is trying to do, to go from 30 to 40 years of tyranny, where sectarian groups were largely repressed and oppressed, to those groups now to try and establish an inclusive democracy, where they all can live comfortably in a unified state.

And there have been challenges to that, both just the problems of putting together a democratic government, a democratic constitution, and all those other things, but of course, these challenges have been made acute by Zarqawi and the terrorists, and the clear targeting of innocent civilians in order to provoke sectarian strife. This is another -- we believe this is just an example.

So what has given us comfort and encouragement is the reaction of the three principal communities and their religious leaders over the two-and-a-half -- two-year period where this has really been going on. And at every critical moment, they have come forward in favor of national unity, reconciliation, and calm. And so there's a track record here by how the clergy have performed.

There's also a track record in terms of how the Iraqi people have performed. It is a hard thing to deal with the kinds of civilian casualties that they are having to deal with at the hands of the terrorists. And yet when they have had an opportunity to express themselves through the two elections and referendum in this last year, they have voted overwhelmingly and increasingly endorsed the democratic political process, which is a political process of inclusion.

So I think this is a time -- it's a serious challenge, it's a time of testing, but I think what gives the basis for the President's confidence is what we've seen from these religious leaders in the past, what we've seen from the Iraqi people in the past, and what we saw yesterday and today. As you know, Prime Minister Jaafari came out with a statement that indicated that there was a coming together of communities, establishing of a national dialogue group and the like. And if you look at the statements in these very difficult circumstances and in the heat of the loss of the Golden Mosque, they have been largely statements of calm.

So it is a time of challenge, but to this point, in similar challenges -- and remember there have been similar challenges, thinking about the spring of '94\* when we had Najaf and Sadr in addition to the terrorists, there have been times of testing and times of challenge. And so far, the government, the religious leaders and the Iraqi people have been up to managing what is a very difficult and challenging situation.

Q Can I follow up on that?

MR. HADLEY: Sure.

Q We hear an awful lot on television and the newspapers about Iraq being on the bring of "civil war." You've described it as a challenge; the President said it was the time of choosing; the Secretary of State said it's extremely hard. Is rhetoric in discussion of a potential civil war appropriate? Is that exaggerated? Characterize where things are in the context of that description.

MR. HADLEY: Well, I mean, it's not new. I mean, there have been people in U.S. media who have talked about the descent into civil war for a year-and-a-half or longer, and have interpreted, for example, elections as exacerbating sectarian tensions. I think if you look at what's happened in the aftermath of those elections, there's actually been a coming together. And I think where we are is, in addition to what I said about the challenge that this represents, what I think we're hearing from people there is this may also be an opportunity.

When people surmount challenges, they sometimes see the value of the unity they've been trying to achieve. And our hope is that Iraqis, having looked at this challenge, will recognize -- and I think we're hearing this from our people in the field -- they don't want a descent into civil disorder. Quite the contrary. If you listen to what the Iraqi people are saying, they want more security and the end of violence, not a descent into sectarian violence.

And what our hope is, that this will actually be an opportunity for the communities to see the importance for them coming together and to accelerate the establishment of a unity government where all of the principal communities participate in developing a common program that -- and a government that can go forward and make the difficult decisions, the challenging decisions that that government is going to have to face.

Q Can I ask you about -- just to clarify, the cricket game is going to be in Pakistan, correct?

MR. HADLEY: Correct.

Q And can you talk a little bit about any concerns, perhaps, of inflaming tensions? I mean, he's going in the midst of this cartoon controversy, and there's been violence in Pakistan. What are the concerns about it may be inflaming passions there with the visit of a U.S. President, and what he's going to -- maybe this cricket thing is a chance to show a different side of him or -- is that the idea?

MR. HADLEY: Well, the reporting we have is that the demonstrations and the violence associated with the cartoons has subsided. The President has made clear in a couple statements how he sees that whole issue. And I think it's very clear that he wants to go, and that his Pakistani hosts want him to come, and therefore, we're going.

Q Can you tell us whether there might be any additional stops on this trip? Or is that to be determined, and to be announced?

MR. HADLEY: The schedule that is -- the one I described is a trip to India and Pakistan, and obviously



if there are changes in that schedule, we will announce them in the ordinary course.

Q Sir, you mentioned that in both schedules, the President will be meeting the U.S. embassy personnel, which reminded me that the United States is shifting the diplomatic resources around the world, as was announced. Frankly, I don't remember how India fares under this new schedule. But I remember that my native country, which is Russia, is a big loser. Should we take this as an indication of the relative importance the U.S. attaches to different countries and regions of the world? And if not, then why not?

MR. HADLEY: Well, the Secretary of State did an able job of describing her decisions with respect to the allocation. And I think my recollection of that is you should take nothing for it other than the need to look at allocations that many times have been unchanged since not just since the Cold War, but in some sense even earlier.

And one of the things that the President has challenged all his Cabinet Secretaries to do in the post-Cold War world and the post-9/11 world and the challenges we now face in the 21st century, let's make our resources match the requirements. And that's what she's trying to do.

Q Could you we just go back to the port situation for a minute? It seems that one of the key pieces here is a difference of opinion in the understanding of what rises to a national security concern between the legislators and the executive branch who didn't feel that this did, and many legislators who do, and who are not accepting the administration saying, trust us. What can you say to them, and perhaps to the American people beyond "trust us" to allay their concerns about this national security concern as they see it?

MR. HADLEY: We're not saying, trust us. We had a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee where I think you had four or five Cabinet or sub-Cabinet level officials explaining very clearly how -- the process we followed and what we found. And one of the reasons the President supports the notion of a decision by the company in its own -- exercise of its own discretion to allow for more time is so that we can provide more information to the Congress, so the Congress is in a position to make a judgment. And the President is confidence is when the Congress has all that information and makes the judgment, it will come to the same conclusion that the executive branch process did.

Q Some of the administration supporters say that the relationship with India will help counter the rise of China. How does the relationship with India affect the U.S. relationship with China?

MR. HADLEY: The relationship with India is because it is the relationship with India. If you look at the President's comments even during the campaign, he recognized that this nation had an enormous affinity with India, the world's largest democracy. We share common values. We increasingly share common interests. And he recognized that India was going to be a big player, not just on the regional scene, but on the global scene. So back in '99, he was saying one of his priorities was to develop and intensify and broaden the relationship with India. And he's trying to do that.

He's tried to do the same thing with his relationship with Pakistan, and really establish the principle -- as he said on Wednesday, we think we've established the principle that good relations with Pakistan

by the United States don't harm the relationships with India, and good relationships with India don't harm that with Pakistan. They are, in fact, mutually reinforcing.

We seek good relations with India, with Pakistan, with Russia, with Japan, with the EU. We seek those good relationships because they are in our interest. We don't seek them because it's a balance to China or anything else.

Last one. Sir.

Q Just before leaving to India, President Bush will receive for breakfast Prime Minister Berlusconi. Which is the meaning of this visit for President Bush? And will President Bush have announcement to the request yesterday by Prime Minister Berlusconi to close Guantanamo?

MR. HADLEY: The significance is that the Prime Minister was going to be in town and asked to see the President. Italy and the United States are strong allies, and the President and the Prime Minister are good friends and have a good relationship. And he was going to be in town, and the President, of course, wanted to see him.

In terms of Guantanamo, obviously, this is something known to all of you. This is something that is an element of the war on terror, and people have said publicly, at the end of the day we hope there can be no Guantanos. That would certainly be a good thing. But we have a war on terror, and the President is committed to fighting and winning.

Thank you very much.

END 4:34 P.M. EST

\* 2004

---

**Return to this article at:**

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060224-3.html>



CLICK HERE TO PRINT