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India-U.S. Strategic Partnership:
Perceptions, Potential, and Problems

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. STEINBERG: [In progress] —has played a major role in helping to launch what has been an extraordinarily productive era in U.S.-India relations, culminating in the very positive relationships that we have developed today. It has put U.S.-India relations on a stronger footing.

As those of you who've read Strobe's book know, he and Jaswant Singh didn't always see eye-to-eye on all the issues. But what they did was, through the candor of their exchanges and the seriousness of purpose, were able to build a new era in their relationships. Strobe characterized what transpired between the two of them as "impedance-matching"—in effect, trying to find a channel of linkage where the two ends allowed current to pass back and forth rather than to short-circuit. And I think we can see from the long-term fruits of that relationship just the extent to which that has happened.

Now of course you all know of his very distinguished record, and he is really one of the most distinguished statesmen in India today and in India's history. But it's also important to remember that he has a lighter side. For those of you who have not yet had a chance to peruse Strobe's book, I recommend to you his account of Jaswant Singh's performance in a 1998 ASEAN Regional Forum meeting. For those of us who have had an opportunity to appear in those ridiculous skits that the ASEAN countries force us all to perform in—and I had that opportunity in 1994, where, along with Winston Lord and Warren Christopher, we pretended to be the U.S. Olympic team—the

account of Jaswant Singh's performance in the ASEAN Regional Forum shows the lighter and wicked side of his humor.

Not surprisingly, he's going to talk to us today about U.S.-India relations, something that we have all been focusing on. We just had a very important visit in recent months by Secretary Rice to India, and his visit here is part of that continuing and increased intensity of exchanges between the United States and India. And I know that both countries are looking forward to a visit by President Bush in the near future.

So without further ado, I'd like to introduce His Excellency Jaswant Singh, who's going to speak to us for about a half an hour and then he's agreed to take questions and answers after he's finished.

So, Your Excellency?

[Applause.]

MR. SINGH: Ladies and gentlemen, it's always extremely difficult to respond to such a very warm and fulsome introduction. The difficulties are manifold in addressing this very distinguished gathering because, in addition to the great weight of learning this gathering represents, I have returned from an encounter with both the Pentagon and White House. And those of you who have run this obstacle course in these days would sympathize with me if I take a moment or two to catch my breath from that encounter.

I am very grateful for this opportunity. India-U.S. Strategic Partnership: Perceptions, Potential, Problems—these are three separate words, ladies and gentlemen. It's not one word. And so we have to be very clear in our mind that we are addressing a

theme which is really, I believe, one of the most important aspects of the management of India's foreign policy in the present day.

I would, with permission, like to alter—not alter; rather, re-order the three words. Instead of Perceptions, Potential, Problems, I would go Perceptions, Problems, and then Potential, because problems really arise from perceptions, either deficiency of perception or misperception, and that would perhaps be the better order in which to do it.

Strategic partnership. I recollect coming here with Prime Minister Vajpayee during a visit, if I'm not mistaken, of 2001 or 2000, where he said India and the United States of America are natural allies. And we now have a phrase of "strategic partners." I sought to educate myself as to which other countries with which the United States of America has this relationship of strategic partnership, and we find that in some of the countries—and I had to, because I couldn't get this information anywhere else, I had to go to today's great resource bank, Gmail in Google, to inform me that the countries having strategic partnership with the United States—and they are very careful to say the list is not complete—are Afghanistan, Russia, Canada, Peru, Pakistan, Ukraine, Brazil, and under discussion with Israel, and none other in Europe, Africa, or Australia.

I do know I cannot vouch for the veracity of this, but this is the resource that I had. And the reason why I recite this is Prime Minister Vajpayee said "natural allies" and we now have the words "strategic partnership." What is strategic partnership? Both India and the United States need definitely to be very clear about this in their minds.

Before we do so, we need also to briefly—I can only share my views of what are the contours of the 21st century today? We are only five years down the line of this century, but some aspects of the contours of the century are clear enough or have merged with sufficient clarity for us to identify. I don't think all the promise that was contained in the end of the Cold War or the pulling down of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the USSR, the great [inaudible] have been fully realized. We need very carefully to examine what was the promise that was inherent in that great development and why it has not been realized.

We have some very beneficial and encouraging developments. The first, I believe, is that the major powers of today—the United States, Europe, China and Russia, Japan, and if I might, without any self-aggrandizement but certainly with realism, add India to that list—these powers are not engaged in domination struggles with one another. And because these powers are not essentially engaged in domination struggles, what the globe has is a period of relative quiet, relative order and yet an absence of order. The absence of order is not on account of any struggle between the great powers of today; there are other factors that have contributed to it.

And those factors, again, very briefly, because I want to stick as closely as possible to the 30-minute deadline. My ilk, I know, when offered a microphone, never really leaves either the microphone or the podium. But I want to stick to the 30 minutes and then offer myself to such questions as may be presented.

Some of the fault lines—and some of them are also ideological—are that the world faces the challenge today of what I would call fundamentalism/terrorism. Early in the 20th century had appeared as a political idea, the anarchists. And the

anarchists sincerely, as a conviction, believed that global anarchy had an answer in it. Today's terrorists are, again, a throwback to the word "assassin." Where does the word "assassin" come from? Now this is a very great challenge that we all face.

There is, ladies and gentlemen—and we must recognize it—there is a certain kind of divide that has occurred between the globalizers and the anti-globalizers, the pro-globalization and the anti-globalization. That is yet another development of significance. And I cite these because we have to examine the perception of strategic partnership between India and the United States.

And the third—though this is not an exhaustive list—is that we have, the world has today entered the era of a kind of a triad, which is the NGO, the media and the television, becoming both contributors and therefore formulators of policy. So policy becomes, policy gets driven by these three. And yet the accountability factor remains constant with the implementers of the policy. This is a very new development. The arrival on the policy structure, conceptualization scene of the NGO, of media, and television. This is really a very significant global development almost.

If you reflect on what the 20th century left us as a legacy, the 20th century left us with primacy of democracy globally. But this primacy is, in application and subscription, selective. Nations that subscribe, or ascribe, to democracy, or practice democracy, are themselves driven by the demands of real politik, but selective about where democracy is asserted and where it is not asserted. What marks the 21st century, as indeed what marked the end of the 20th century, both the demise of the Soviet Union and the dominance by the United States of America which in historical terms is unmatched. Humanity has never seen the kind of primacy that the United States today

has in terms of military power, technological power, economic power, sadly—I say this as an Indian, because some aspects of it [inaudible]—also in terms of cultural dominance. I would be much happier if the world was not subject to the total domination of blue jeans and Coca Cola. But that is the reality. And Hollywood and all the rest of it is aspect of the cultural domination of the United States of America.

This is, ladies and gentlemen, the 21st century is increasingly demonstrating that what we are in today is the Age of, the Era of Asymmetrical War. What asymmetrical war has done is to redefine power. I have often used a thought that deterrence will work only against those that are deterrable. There has to be an essential element of sanity in the recipient or the subject of deterrence theory. If that sanity is not there, then where will deterrence work? This is one of the contributors to the asymmetry.

There is yet another contributor. And we in India have known this, have lived with it, have contended with it, and have found answers to it. It's very new to the United States of America. How do you combat them or he or she who's ready to fight with no consideration for life, either his or her own, and no distinction between combatants and noncombatants, women, children, cities, war zones/no war zone? This is the realm into which the world has been thrown.

There are various phrases. Each of these is a stock phrase now— asymmetrical war, the assault of—or the age of the suicidal warrior. And it is because of this that, despite the dominance, and such total dominance, in all spheres of human endeavor by the United States of America, there is an absence of peace. And the tension globally on occasion is palpable. We have lived with this what you might call

fundamentalism, or terrorism or suicidal warriors or asymmetrical war for almost, now, for almost two decades in India. For us in India, it's not a new phenomenon.

I have had the benefit of serving my country's parliament now for seven terms. I've seen the emergence of this challenge to humanity, and I've seen how nations have responded to it. I'm struck by how, for the first time ever, a great nation like the United States of America, which had the most—the degree or the kind of sense of security against any foreign attack has now evaporated. And I find that this land of the free and this country which is synonymous with democracy and human rights and human freedom is today besieged by, if I might use the word, a kind of a siege mentality. I came here very soon after September 11th, 9/11, which has now become a stock phrase.

All these are factors that influence thinking, that influence policy, and that you must take into account when we consider a strategic partnership. Whether you call it strategic partnership or you call it natural allies, we are considering in essence the same dimensions, which, again, to somewhat simplify, are political, military, and economic.

Before I come to that, a very brief analysis of the perceptions. And I'll be, ladies and gentlemen, as candid about the perceptions as I can be, because the foundation of strategic partnership, or of natural allies, can only be candor. It cannot be subterfuge. And as I've often [inaudible] four and a half, five years, I had the responsibility of managing my country's foreign policy. And I have never believed that diplomacy is a synonym for either deceit or a kind of dissimilitude.

What are the perceptions? So far as the United States is concerned, it considers that India continues to live in the shadow of the Cold War, that some of the

historical precepts of that period have not really left Indian policy-making, that India is really a kind of hidden cold warrior and a Russophile. I think there's some substance in this. This impression that India can raise, particularly to United States of America and others, is not without substance.

In turn, what does India think about the United States of America on the same field? India feels that the United States of America judges India far too much against the backdrop of the historical overhangs of the Cold War.

It is— The second— This cannot be an exhaustive list. It is to illustrate the point.

The United States of America, and, again, not without reason, thinks that India, Indians, Indian governments moralize too much. Every time there's a need to do something, they're sort of doing something; India begins to moralize on great issues, on huge canvases—a lot of vapor, very little substance. This, again, is not without substance. It is borne of the characteristics of the people.

What does India think? India thinks that the United States of America continues to wrongly consider that India is a problem. I believe, and this is my conviction and this is the manner in which I've attempted to relate to the United States of America, India is not a problem. India is in fact a part of the solution, part of the solution to the great global issues that we face today.

The third—I'm listing only four or five problems. The United States of America thinks that India has done great wrong by being a nuclear proliferator. Just what a stable nuclear regime was coming, India came and disturbed it.

India feels that as a country that was not a signatory to the nonproliferation treaty, that did not subscribe to the test ban treaty, and having earlier been initiators of the entire nonproliferation-disarmament debate — it went down this path because it found that the comprehensive test ban treaty had been designed as if to punish India, and the indefinite extension of the NPT was not an answer. It was as if those that had entered the compartment wanted to shut the doors permanently to India. We engaged on this and some of these issues.

Just one [inaudible]. The United States of America thinks that India has not stood by the United States of America in the past 50 years. Again, not without reason.

India thinks that the United States of America has had an adversarial attitude to India. Even though India was a democracy, it preferred the military dictators, and commentators in India never tired of citing earlier experiences of CENTO, SEATO, et cetera, which [inaudible] of '71 or that aircraft carrier which steamed into [inaudible] during '71. And these have become part of the atavistic response mechanisms of India.

The United States thinks India has not stood by us whenever we wanted to on global issues. India thinks that the United States does not accord to the country what's due to India. This does not carry conviction with the United States of America. It's also the view that at time, when I said it earlier, the commitment of the United States of America to democracy is really a matter of convenience.

There is one, and that is a very significant aspect troublesome, that there is to us in India an impression that on these great issues of today, which are really in the forefront of our consciousness in the 21st century, there is an apparent lack of a clear

enough approach. There is confusion, and therefore the response is not, again, meaningful, direct, and result-oriented. These are the great issues that India is very vitally and very closely connected with.

Terrorism of a post-Taliban Afghanistan—and I on purpose called it a post-Taliban Afghanistan because one has to reflect very carefully where we are there; Iran, Iraq, and proliferation in the backdrop of the knowledge that the United States of America has had about the proliferators. It then begins—the approach that the United States of America, then, has to this issue begins to lack conviction, it begins to lack credibility.

There is a difference in how India views its strategic role and how the United States of America views it, and it really starts from the question, where is Asia? This is not a rhetorical question. It is very important that both India and the United States of America are clear in their minds as to where Asia is. For India, it is a viewpoint that is articulated by many, that it's really that India sits in the center of what it calls the Indian Ocean basin. And this Indian Ocean basin is where India's strategic interest and the challenges to India have come together in a complex web, not as just disaggregated security problems. India is a political, economic, and military role model, therefore, for this region. India, in fact, stretches from the Central Asian republics to the Antarctic, from the Straits of Malacca to the Persian Gulf. This is not something that I'm saying. Very early this was cited by I think one of the most forward looking viceroys that India had—Curzon. Not exactly in these words, but words to that effect have also been used by a great practitioner of diplomacy, Henry Kissinger.

As far as the United States is concerned, no such basin exists. How does the United States describe or define Asia? This confuses us. I hope it doesn't confuse you. For the United States, there is a Middle East, there is a Southeast Asia, and there is a Southwest Asia. And I once asked, where is this Southwest Asia? Well, Southwest Asia is Afghanistan. So there is a Middle East, there is a Southeast Asia, there is a Southwest Asia, there is a Central Asia, there is a Near East, there is a South Asia, there is a Northeastern Asia, and then there is the Asia Pacific.

This is not—I'm not playing with words. It's very important that India and the United States of America sit together on this. Because I believe that geography and an understanding of geography—geography, of course, as a determinant of history, but geography is also a very important contributor to the evolution of current situations. This is a great mismatch and we need to, in strategic terms sit together and work this out. For some strange reason, India becomes part, therefore, of the Pacific Command. But India's not part of APEC. These mismatched definitions are troublesome.

What is the problem? And let me be very candid about the problem. The problem—I'll be very brief now—is that there is an insufficient harmony between promise and delivery—in both the countries. India promises much more than it delivers; so does the United States of America. I would cite to you, ladies and gentlemen—there are great students of diplomacy here—the theory of unintended consequences. This is part of the problem. And the theory of unintended consequences is really best exemplified by the promotion by the United States of America of Taliban and the consequences that Taliban brought in its wake.

I don't want to cite the present problem areas, other problem areas, like Iraq or Iran, but they're very much there. I don't also want to cite that great commentator on international relations, Hans Morgenthau, who spoke of not just unintended consequences, but as an inability to harmonize two equally matching requirements of state policy.

Take the two equally matching requirements of state policy for the United States of America, for example. You wish to stand by our western neighbor and equip it with some military hardware. Entirely your right. It's entirely the right of Pakistan to so commit itself to that. But there are unintended consequences of that. [inaudible] the consequence — the United States hasn't been fully assessed and is part of the total spectrum of unintended consequences. This, too, India needs to sit with the United States of America, for this entire region, ladies and gentlemen, today could well become an arena where the theory of unintended consequences has a play which will be destructive. It has earlier been damaging; now it could be very, very damaging.

And regrettably, most unfortunately, what happens in this region, and this region is really Central Asia—Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq; also further east in Bangladesh and Southeast Asia—what happens here is of vital consequence to India. Because the bills of all the occurrences in these regions have an uncanny ability to arrive at India's table. That's why, again, this is an area of difficulties. It is a problem area and we need to agree. The hierarchy of priorities that the United States of America has, it's not possible that the old priorities would be exactly matched by the priorities of the Indian policymakers. But we need at least to sit together and talk about this hierarchy of priorities so we are able to understand the persuasions of each other.

The United States of America is marked by self-confidence, I believe, because of a very different kind of experience almost of 250 years of rather unequal relationship with the British, India being only 50, 60 years down the line of independence. The confidence level of the United States of America as a great power is not fully matched. There is a degree of diffidence in the conduct of policy in India, which diffidence India must shed. That, too, is part of the problem.

There is one thing which I cite as a great difficulty—our conversation, engagement with each other so that we are able to talk to each other is only episodic, occasional. In the hierarchy of priorities that you have, this is fitted in, oh, we have to sit with India now, as a kind of an afterthought. This is a thing which really is neither—it doesn't contribute or feed the strategic partnership or the natural alliance.

And I believe, ladies and gentlemen, that the greatest difficulty that those of us have, the greatest problem, is that both the United States of America and India face what I call the great and impenetrable barriers—a barrier reef, really—of democratic obscurantism. Now, this barrier reef is impenetrable. And when the last assessment was made, I believe that India was winning this race by a short head; but quite often, the United States, in a turn or something, and it just puts its head ahead of India. This impenetrable barrier reef of democratic obstructionism is a common problem we have to exist with.

I will conclude. The potential is immense. In political, we need for it the factor of will, trust, candor, and above all continuity—not episodic. We have to engage ourselves to somehow find an answer to the legal and the legislative problems which

must be converted into the legal and legislative legs on which the strategic partnership can stand.

As far as economic partnership is concerned, really, the sky is the limit. I don't want to cite figures and hog all the time. We have not yet fully even touched upon the potential of the economic cooperation between India and the United States of America. And I'm not a very good what is called shopping, but when I come here sometimes, against my great resistance my wife tells me to go somewhere and buy something for her. If I can do it, I assign that task to someone else. But whenever, unfortunately, I'm required to go into any of your shops and malls, it's remarkable how you are today the best salesmen for the peoples of the Republic of China. It's amazing how you are promoting Chinese goods and selling them with great glee. That economic cooperation between India and the United States is a solution of the total issues that—again, the sky is the limit.

In military cooperation, which is ahead of the other cooperations, I believe that we mustn't have what I would call just a buyer-seller relationship. We must address the military relationship in the context of the warfare of tomorrow, not of yesterday. And [inaudible] the respective powers of the two nations, your great technological ability and strengths, India's proven excellence in terms of knowledge as industry, the nano-technologies which are going to be tomorrow's technology, and the warfare that we have known is going to be very different from the warfare that is going to come.

We have in the field of energy a great deal that can be done. But more than the United States of America, India has to do more here than the U.S. And amongst

them all, I think energy here is a synonym, really, for cooperation, for peaceful cooperation on nuclear energy. India will have to readdress the whole question of privatization of nuclear industry. If it has privatized power generation to the extent that it has, and when we were in government we had begun to address this question, India will have to address this question if it wants a meaningful cooperation in the energy field.

There are various separate areas that I could go into. It is not an easy thing on which stay within half an hour. I have already exceeded my time. But thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I will endeavor what questions you have.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. STEINBERG: Thank you for that characteristically insightful set of comments.

I'm going to abuse the privilege of the chair to ask you the first question, if I may.

There's been a lot of debate in the United States about the future structure of international relations, particularly in the different geographies of Asia that you mentioned in your talk. And certainly some in the United States have begun to talk about India as part of a formal or informal alliance or coalition of countries, including Japan, Australia, and others, that in one form or another could provide a counterweight to or a containment of a rising China. Conversely, there's also been some discussion about the possibility of India developing alignments with others, including Russia and China, to provide a multipolar balance to the United States.

I wonder if you could just comment a little bit about how you see this strategic landscape going forward.

MR. SINGH: [Inaudible.] Again, for example, I know that my distinguished successor and practitioner of diplomacy, who spent all his life in the world of diplomacy, is today in Vladivostok, where the foreign ministers of China and of Russia and India are coming together, the first time outside of any other formal forum.

Now, the first time that India, China, and Russia foreign ministers met, it just so happened, I had the responsibility. And I made it quite clear then that, yes, we are meeting, because it becomes an additional forum, additional avenue for exchanging notes and ideas by the three foreign ministers, the three Asian countries of great relevance. Russia, of course, is confused. Ever since Peter the Great, it does not know whether it is in Asia or in Europe. It aspires to be in Europe. It cannot just wish away the entire land mass which is in Asia.

I once asked [inaudible]—he was then in EU—how will you deal with Russia if it enters EU? All the others will have to leave [inaudible]. And is it a Western country, a European country? He reflected for a bit, and he said, no, Russia is not Asia, it is not also Western, but it's there.

So why are we sitting? No, not to form yet another grouping which stands in a kind of confrontation with the United States of America, as a ballast, or balance—those are the words used. I think Peoples Republic of China is very clear in this matter, and they have also made an announcement [inaudible]. We have also clearly said this coming together is to exchange ideas, but is not any alternative platform which

is provide what you call ballast or balance. That is the reality. And I don't see much beyond that happening.

QUESTION: Bolshir Marea [ph], I support OSDPNE [?].

Do you in fact believe in what China espouses as a peaceful rising, or do you see them as a threat?

MR. SINGH: I think the Peoples Republic of China is currently so engaged with the great issue that confronts them as a country that there is no free play available for that country to engage in conflict. They do want another 20 to 30 years of consistent development in which they can address what they have themselves identified as the great modernizations and as also economic development. It has always been China's strategic philosophy that if your adversary is humbled without conflict, then that's a much better way to humble. And it's the assessment of the Peoples Republic that if they're able to grow economically, as they're demonstrating today, then in the foreseeable future of just about a decade or so, it has already—I mean, my [inaudible] the achievement that the Peoples Republic has demonstrated and the acclaim that the world has accorded to it has already conferred upon it the great power status that they seek. They don't have to go to [inaudible] for that purpose.

QUESTION: Michael Krepon, the Stimson Center.

Sir, you're quoted in Strobe Talbott's book, and I'm paraphrasing, that your western neighbor's future is foreordained and that that future is not a happy one. Has anything transpired in the last five years for you to change that prediction—assuming of course that Strobe has quoted you accurately, and we all assume that he has.

MR. SINGH: I didn't fully hear, but I must—there's a confession to make here, as I have confessed to Strobe. I actually have not read Strobe's book. And that is a very clear purpose, which is that I thought that if I had registered—earlier the idea was that Strobe and I, we would jointly author a book. Then he abandoned that line because I was until then still in office. And he can't, he doesn't want to wait too long. I haven't read it because—it was on the basis that if I'd read it, it's bound to influence what I have to write about that period. And I'm in the process of writing it. I want to be able to write.

I think it was one of the most remarkable experiences of my political career to have had this great chance to engage with the United States of America with as remarkable a representative of your country as Strobe, who brought to his task such dedication and such transcendent absolute commitment to his country. And so therefore the biggest tribute that I can pay him is to be as honest as I can when I, in the process of writing what I have to.

That's one. And if he said that—and Strobe has written something about my saying something that was published then. And I've said there is some—I don't know what particular aspect of Strobe's book it is, but I believe that we need to address this question of the conceptual strengths and weaknesses of Pakistan. We need to do it objectively for the sake of peace in the region, not just South Asia. He's a very distinguished foreign minister, Mr. Kasuri, and it's a very interesting piece that he propounded just the other day, which I chanced to read. A very distinguished foreign minister. He said Pakistan lies at the intersection of three concentric circles, of South Asia, of Central Asia, and of Middle East. Very interesting thought.

I recollect very well—he, again, is another very great practitioner of diplomacy. I'm sure you know him, [inaudible]. And he has said—I know, because I worked with him also, though I hadn't had the benefit of working so much with Kasuri. And he said, well, he would really be, if he could only speak Arabic, then we would really not be here. But what am I to do? I'm so saddled with this wretched Punjabi. I just got rid of it.

So that is the reality. We need to address this much more purposefully.

QUESTION: I'm Al Milliken, affiliated with Washington Independent Writers. I do some work with the American Film Institute also.

You mentioned the cultural domination of the United States and you specifically named Hollywood. How do you see the future of Bollywood in the role Indian cinema and television will play in the world's cultural future?

MR. SINGH: Oh, dear.

[Laughter.]

MR. SINGH: Frankly, I don't see Bollywood. But it's astonishing what a great influence these things have become. When I was a schoolboy, then, of course, the heroes of my schoolboy period were cowboys and red Indians, and books like "The Last of the Mohicans." This vivid picturization of cowboys shooting—without seeing—and killing three people with one bullet, that sort of thing, it's [inaudible]. All that I know of Bollywood is amazingly, incredibly beautiful girls who are made to do all kinds of things by the producers and directors which, in normal life, nobody in India does, it turns out. But now the school boys and girls begin to ape those, but I find really [inaudible].

I mentioned it once or twice because some schools called me to give them their graduation talks and things like that. Why they do so, I don't know. But Bollywood has now started teaching the young that girls really are most influential if the boy stands in front and starts dancing and singing. The young boys and girls of college days or school days really start doing these things with girls, and it's most distasteful to the girls in that.

In similar fashion, the earlier phase of Hollywood, sometimes when I'm very tired and wish to relax, I switch on a channel which is called Movies of Old, which are black and white movies—Humphrey Bogart and such names. I don't know if they are even known now. But I'm so struck by how simple those movies were, simple in the sense of how free of the kind of obscene violence that we witness today. There's not a single Hollywood film that today does not come on the screen with unbelievable violence.

And you—I must tell you, sir, and I say this, my wife once told me why are you watching all this bilge; it's because look at what Hollywood does. She told me that some Hollywood film, well before 9/11, had actually made a film showing airplanes coming and striking against tall high-rise buildings. But Hollywood does not stop there. It's now devising all kinds of other things. It's very destructive. There's no government that can control it.

But it is something that we need to recognize. This is not something that—you have a dominant position here in the United States of America, but this is not a position that, frankly, I admire. I admire your technological ability and your great centers of learning. Also the preponderant military power and industrial power that you

have. I really, truly wish that the United States had an equal and matching greatness of its culture.

QUESTION: Gary Mitchell from The Mitchell Report.

I hesitate to take you off the discussion of film, but I wonder if I could ask you to talk just a bit more about the subject of strategic partnership. I'd be particularly interested to hear you talk about, in the history of your country, what has been the most successful strategic partnership that India has had and what were the characteristics, or what were the components? What made it work? And if you care to go beyond that, in your own study of history, when you look at those kinds of relationships, what are the marks that you look for?

MR. SINGH: I'll tell you this, with your permission, sir, I think this is a very important question. This really is at the heart of today's—what we have tried to share, these ideas. I'm not engaging in revisionist history. This is my viewpoint. I have written a book, ladies and gentlemen, called "Defending India," which incidentally is on sale but it isn't selling too well. I cite it not as self-promotional.

I don't think India has had a satisfactory strategic partnership. It's quite often cited that earlier USSR, Russia was our great friend. I don't think so, frankly. And some examples like Russia coming to India's aid, assistance during '71 and the global tilts that Nixon [inaudible]. I personally feel that this is not strategic partnership, but absence of strategic partnership. It is a Great Power using the partner and, understandably, for the Great Power's own benefits. That is not partnership.

You don't have to define strategic partnership when you talk of Great Britain and the United States of America. Why? Because there is the great evolution of

these countries which some, and somewhat pejoratively, call the "cozy club of Anglo-Saxon cousins." They're natural partners. I have seen how countries like Canada, Australia, or New Zealand have, at the slightest indication from the United States of America, done exactly what the United States of America want, because I've had to deal with it. But I was struck; they're not in the list of strategic partners.

So we need therefore—I don't think India has had strategic partners in that sense of strategic partners as equals. As equals and with candor and with trust. You relate to one another and you then address the great issues of the day. I believe that India and the United States of America must be strategic partners. The two countries must understand what is it that they mean by "strategic partner" or "natural ally," and this concept should not be which, instead of bringing us together, divides us. We could well be divided if the approach to strategic partnership is so different and we don't sit together and address it.

I don't want to go into further detail, because then it becomes a critique of some of the policies of the United States of America in the region. Do we in India have any policies that disturb you in your ideas of vital national interest? Then you the United States must sit with us and engage with us as partners. And if there are aspects that disturb us, India, and if we are strategic partners, then the United States must be able to sit with India and engage in say what it that is troubling you is. Let's jointly try and find an answer.

Which doesn't mean that the United States of America is to abandon any of its national interests, any of its commitments to national security or the welfare of its citizens in the country or abroad. But it must not be at the cost of India. Likewise, India

must not do anything at the cost of the United States of America, whether economic or political or military. Culturally we can try and [inaudible] each other.

MR. STEINBERG: On that very eloquent note, I think we'll bring this session to an end. I want to say that, since I shamelessly promoted Strobe's book, it's only fair that you should be able to shameless promote yours as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

MR. SINGH: Thank you.

[Applause.]
