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C O N T E N T S

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. ANDERSEN: (In progress) -- we have quite a treat, and on behalf of the South Asia Program here at SAIS, I want to welcome two statesmen who conducted the dialogue that was to have a transformation in the India-U.S. relationship, first, as I recollect in June 1998 here in Washington, D.C., and 13 subsequent times all over the world, what spurred this meeting, of course, was the Indian nuclear test on May 11 and 13, 1998. Their talks focused on the nuclear question, though they ranged over a very wide variety of issues.

Both Strobe Talbott and Jaswant Singh have written books that cover this period. One of the books you will see in the entryway on the outside is Strobe Talbott's "Engaging India." I notice there are a number of copies, so if you wanted to buy a copy, I am sure they will be available out there.

Jaswant Singh has also written a book on this, "A Call to Honor, In Service of Emerging India." We do not have copies here, but if anybody wants to buy a copy, contact me and I can make sure you get a copy of that as well. I have a copy of it.

Since leaving office, Strobe Talbott and Jaswant Singh continue to be significant voices on foreign policy, Strobe Talbott as President of the Brookings Institution, and Jaswant Singh as the leader of the opposition in India's Upper House of Parliament, and an authoritative figure on policy in his own party, the Bharatiya Janata Party.

This is I think the first opportunity for the two of them to discuss their consequential dialogue on a common platform, and I look forward to their

presentations, as I am sure as do you all. The first to speak is Jaswant Singh.

(Applause.)

MR. SINGH: Thank you, Walter and Strobe. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a singular honor to be here, and it is a great honor to be with Strobe again on the same platform and discussing a theme that for several years we discussed at different platforms, but factually it would be an honor to say that this is the first time Strobe and I appeared on the same platform. I think we did appear once in India at a gathering, but that in the United States it is the first time. There is a certain amount of discrimination that SAIS has delegated in that they put Strobe's book on display, but they have not put my book on display, and I think that needs correction quite quickly.

(Laughter.)

MR. SINGH: I am both overawed and humbled by the theme that I have been asked to speak upon. However, to identify certain characteristics of the dialogue that we had, Strobe and I, on behalf of our respective countries. Strobe has written very generously, and greatly, and kindly about that I believe epochal period, path-breaking, but it was without any doubt marked by great trust, a courtesy that I have received from Strobe that I will never forget. There was I believe a certain integrity in the negotiations and the talks that we engaged in, and also I believe remarkable openness. I received from Strobe in Egypt acceptance as an interlocutor despite obvious enough and clear policy position that he individually personally, or the government that he represented and the country

that he spoke for had an issue that they strongly believed in.

How did I approach this responsibility? Some of it I have written about. I did say it I think to Strobe also and to others, I think in this dialogue that we had together, the United States and India, there were a lot of firsts. If was of course the first ever that was so persistent, continuous, and it grew. It grew both in scope in its objectives, and I believe also in its attainments. I did not approach this challenge working on the basis that diplomacy is a synonym for duplicity. It isn't.

There was a village that went to, we didn't identify the village. We continued to search for the way to it, the path to it. I think the United States and India have to reach that village, that remains I believe in it, traveling with Strobe and his great country on this journey was a great journey. It was a true path-breaker, I believe.

I was long delayed I believe that this journey and this engagement that should have taken place at least 50 years back. It was also in a very real sense inevitable. It broke many molds, that dialogue.

One of them was ideologic. We were both, India and the United States of America, prisoners of the residue of cold war. Immediately after 1947, the Iron Curtain descended, the Iron Curtain in that great speech. Unfortunately, the India and United States of American then got locked into opposite camps. India for its own reasons -- historical examination. The United States of America because it pursued a strategic goal of combating and containing -- that both India and United States of America -- in the post-1998 situation. I think we both had to. I don't

know about American bureaucracy so well, but I do know about Indian bureaucracy -- when it comes to bureaucratic obfuscation. Americans are obviously the world champions -- and so we both had to contend with bureaucratic inertia, bureaucratic stodginess. There was this immobility of the inertia of the situation that would have to be broken, and that is why this dialogue was marked by many firsts. It was not my objective to list all those firsts, but some characteristics, after all, "Engaging India," Strobe's book, is an absolutely remarkable account not simply for the readability of it, also for the elegance of its style and for the contents of the book itself.

I have always worked on the basis, and I shared this difficulty with Strobe quite often, that there are two different matters of engagement. The United States of America I still continue to believe works on what I call the checklist style of diplomacy. Your diplomats start in the morning with having a notepad on which you put down your five or seven points that you feel have to be addressed and settled before the sun goes down, and if it doesn't happen, then you treat it as a failure. You move from the specific to the general. I was addressing it from the general to the specifics of what had to be achieved. As far as India was concerned, I was not willing to strike any deals. I did not ask for any quid pro quos. It would have been not at all like Strobe, therefore, in the engagement that we had to offer any quid pro quos. But the level at which we were engaging was truly an attempt to reach a harmonization of views between our two countries. Obviously, it is not to be expected that a country as the United States of America

would abandon its national interests or the government would in any sense give up the principles on which it was working. What we thought was nevertheless a harmonization in which there would have to be an adjustment, an accommodation, an understanding, and an acceptance of India.

Ladies and gentlemen, the task that I had to address had a singularity which on behalf of India, I could not have failed India, because if I failed India, I would be failing I believe a much larger objective. To me personally, the issue was much more than just nonproliferation. Nonproliferation is vital. India has to recognize it, but it was not the only issue. So what did we do about the nuclear issue? I think if you address the whole question of the nuclear aspect of the dialogue that we had, it would be an error to think that India's engagement with the United States of America on the nuclear question is only post-1998. It is not. That is factually incorrect. India's first experimental reactor, as you know, was in 1956 in Apsara, with the great Homi Bhabha, that was the first one that had come into being. The rest is history and I do not wish to go into. From Apsara to partial test ban proposals to control of atmospheric tests. There are many identifying milestones. Please correct me if I'm going too long or if you wish me to stop. There are many identifying landmarks in this.

You could have 1974, but before 1974 you would still have to have Terapur. India and the United States of America cooperated in Terapur. It was at the encouragement of the United States of America that heavy water supplies -- Terapur, Canadian KANDU (ph) type reactors which still function in Rajasthan

for power production, the nuclear cooperation that was interrupted, the first interruption was 1974. The late Mrs. Gandhi in 1974, and NPT had come into existence and under the acronym of PNE, a Peaceful Nuclear Explosion, that was the first nuclear test that was conducted that brought the first break in India-U.S. relations. Thereafter, 1998 -- which set in motion which was really the catalyst of the U.S-India engagement which -- I think the transforming moment both in India-U.S. relations and on the whole question of how these two countries are to relate to one another or engage with one another was President Clinton's visit in 2000. That I do truly believe. I cannot describe to you, ladies and gentlemen, I have been a member of India's Parliament now for seven terms. That is a long enough period to have seen many events in that august institution, and that is no exaggeration. I do not say it because I am standing in the United States of America or in this institution, or I have any interest or position in your elections which are due a week from now, but I have no hesitation whatsoever to say I have never seen the kind of accolade, adulation, almost adoration that hard-headed, cynical, hard-bitten politicians of my country have the kind of reception that they gave to President Clinton in the Central Hall of India's Parliament. It was remarkable. I have never seen that. Never repeated, never earlier.

But from Clinton in 2000, from there we go to January 2004, that is another event. It was illogical. The logic of 2000 and January 2004 with the Republican administration we agreed upon, Strobe, I have always had a very great difficulty with the United States of America because you do believe in

nonproliferation, but there is a proliferation of acronyms.

In January 2004 we had an NSSP which still for Next Steps in Strategic Partnership which had all these components, this Next Steps in Strategic Partnership. We had nuclear cooperation, space cooperation in terms of space, in military, a strategic partnership, technology, and all the components.

From January 2004, then we go on to 18 July 2005 when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh witnesses with President Bush an agreement based on the NSSP 2004. Truly that was the foundation, and I believe that the foundation of NSSP 2004 was really Strobe's efforts having -- for so many rounds of dialogue between 1998 and 2000 and President Clinton's visit. Thereafter we have March 2, 2006, and President Bush as visited India and we have a formal shape given to that nuclear agreement.

How do I describe this journey? I think we are moving, and if I were to describe the journey, it is a journey that has seen cooperation in nuclear terms between India and the United States. It has cooperation; it has seen contention, controversy, and then back to cooperation. It is a kind of circle of relationships on nuclear matters impinging upon other aspects of Indo-U.S. relations. For the United States of America, agreement, if I were to go by what Secretary of State Rice says, is about nonproliferation. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said it is about energy. It is also stated to be part of a strategic partnership, so the strategy has to contain all of this. For India, as always, it is continuously what is the objective, what is the issue involved, it is equality, it is recognition, and it is

security.

What is the issue today insofar as after this we have a question and answer session? I believe I am coming to the end of my 20 minutes, so I don't want to take much longer. What is it that we face today? I believe that today we are faced an extremely complex conundrum. It is the conundrum of our times. It is the paradox of weapons of mass destruction. The very phrase, WMD, weapons of mass destruction, is an ominous and a grim nomenclature. This confronts us with a singular challenge, and I am talking about India. We address as to how to break this nuclear separation, how to assert equal and legitimate security for all as a given verity, a birthright of all nation-states, and yet do so in belief, in conduct, and a voice of reassuring moderation. How could India reduce the centrality, the currency, and the symbolism of such weapons even while acquiring them? India exposed the long-running double-standards of the global nuclear regime, and yet in exposing, to join it, to share those privileges and thus become actually partners in double-standards, but still to be able to stand apart from it all. How do we do this? This is a conceptual and a philosophical challenge of great profundity. It is a challenge to Indian statecraft, and I do believe that if this challenge is to be addressed, India alone can address it. That is why soon after the tests were conducted, Prime Minister Vajpayee had no difficulty, and I'll just slightly build on that, on a five-point program, no first use, nonuse against non-nuclear weapons states -- destroy -- destroy all weapons of mass destruction including chemical and biological, also without forgetting the damage and the great destruction that is

currently being caused by small arms.

This is a very tortuous path. What I say is not easily achievable. India is part of the solution. India is not a problem. And if this is recognized, other things will follow. India has to become a participant in the great global debates that take place on this and other issues of great importance to all humanity.

I will conclude. There is a very fine quotation given by Dr. Kissinger I think in one of his books. He cites -- and he says don't burn the bridge after you have crossed it. The United States of America helped India cross a bridge to the rest of the world. It helped us do it in 2000. That was to my mind the great contribution that Strobe Talbott and I have the privilege and great honor of calling my friend, he contributed to it. You led us across the bridge. India should not now that we have crossed the bridge burn it. Thank you very much, sir. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. TALBOTT: Walter as our moderator and Chairman has given me permission to stay seated in order to facilitate a quick transition into a discussion with all of you.

I would like to start before making a couple of comments in response to what Jaswant has said with an expression of not only gratitude to Walter and to Jessica and SAIS for putting this event together, but also for convening a kind of reunion. I feel very, very much at home for all kinds of reasons with this group as I look out around the room and see a number of faces of people with whom I have

worked over the years on some of the issues that we are going to be talking about this afternoon.

Jaswant was extraordinarily gracious in his comments about both the process and the personalities, and I reciprocate, but not just for reasons of reciprocity the spirit of what he said. One thing he did not say but I know he would agree with is that this was not just an interaction between two jetlagged servants of their countries. It was an interaction between two. He had his entourage of what he called his pundits and his gurus, and I had mine, and a couple of them are here today, notably including Walter who was and is encyclopedic in his knowledge of the region and combines that with a deep sense of how policy ought to work and how diplomacy ought to work. And Rick Inderfurth is here, who was the Assistant Secretary for the region, but much, much more than that in a lot of ways. And then there was this guy, what was his name, Einhorn? I think it was Einhorn. Bob Einhorn was an instrumental part of the team, I think even up to the point of being able to have good interaction with Rakesh Sood, in which there was parity in intellectual throw weight, shall we say, between the two of them. And Francine Frankel was part of a team that came in to brief President Clinton before he made his presidential visit to India, and lots of other folks here, as well as Michael Krepon, who I would often turn to for advice and counsel both during my period in the State Department and since.

You should all get and read Jaswant's book. I picked up a couple of copies when I was in Delhi not long ago. It will be published here in the States I

think in March or so.

MR. SINGH: I hope so.

MR. TALBOTT: If you go on amazon.com and put in Jaswant Singh and Call to Honor, it's up to you how you spell it, I'm sure whether you spell it the English or the American way, you can put yourself on a list to get it as soon as it is available. It is a terrific book, and I might add particularly powerful in its evocation of the Rajisthan of Jaswant's youth. It is a wonderful memoir as well as a book about politics and diplomacy.

Let me pick up on a couple of points that Jaswant and offer my perspective and then throw it open to Walter to lead us in a discussion. I think that Jaswant has both accurately and generously characterized both what we were trying to do, what we did do, and how we tried to do it. To me, the essence of what was important about the dialogue that we conducted over the course of those many meetings is that we broadened the context within which the United States and India managed and have continued to try to manage a substantial disagreement on an important issue. And in so doing, I think we managed belatedly, but better late than never, to put the U.S.-Indian cold war behind us. There should have never been a cold war between the United States and India. Blame it on Mr. Nehru for helping to found the Nonaligned Movement, or blame it on Mr. Dulles for saying if you're not with us you're against us, or better yet, share the blame. It was a great tragedy that for nearly half a century which these two countries, the phrase natural allies should have been applied back at the time

of the birth of independent India, not 50 years later.

In any event, we were able to take a very difficult development in the relationship which was the nuclear test and convert the positive energy that was there and a sense of lost opportunity over a period of decades into a broadening of the agenda.

Those of you who have a chance to read either Jaswant's book or mine will see that while we spent a lot of time on FIZMAT and talk about proliferation of acronyms, FIZMAT and CTBT and all that good stuff, we also talked about Iran and Iraq and China. We talked about what was going on in Indian politics, what was the nature of the BJP itself, what did hindufa (phonetic) mean, to what extent did this raise questions about the extent to which these were kindred democracies or were they very different kinds of democracies, and we talked about the civilizational content and context of politics. And I might just say in a personal capacity that it was immensely educational for me that I wasn't being paid a government salary to get educated. I think it had a political benefit as well in that it got our two governments thinking together about issues where they could work together.

And that in a way leads to the second point I would make, and the only other point I would make, which is where we are today. I think that even though the famous deal which I am sure we are going to discuss in some substance when we go to the Q and A, even though that has created the appearance of putting the nuclear disagreement behind us, in fact I fear it has not entirely put that

disagreement behind us, and the U.S.-Indian relationship may continue to be conducted on a narrower band than the commonality of interests between us requires.

We can already see that in a way in the debate in both countries over the nuclear deal. My own judgment is, and friends from the embassy are here who are following this much more closely than I have and certainly more closely than I have been able to do from China over the last 2 weeks, I still remain very confident that this deal is going to be the law of the land very likely at some point during the lame-duck session of the Congress.

But that isn't going to end the debate, not least because there are certainly going to be aspects to the terms of the congressional action that are going to remain controversial in India, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is going to I think succeed but with some effort in pushing back against those who feel that there are unacceptable provisions in what eventually emerges from the Congress.

I regret that because I think it is going to keep us excessively focused on what is an extremely important area, not just for the United States and India to deal with, but for the whole world to deal with, and that is going to be to the exclusion or at least to the diminishment of the United States and India's ability to broaden in substance as well as in discussion collaboration on issues like the greater Middle East, on the management of China's emergence as a major power, and so forth and so on.

The last point definitely picks up on what Jaswant said near the end, and

that is, India's determination to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem of nonproliferation, and I have absolutely no doubt whatsoever about not only his own sincerity in that regard, but that of the overwhelming majority of Indians, and certainly all Indians in a responsible position.

The issue for us in the Clinton Administration was never ever, A, that India was going to be an irresponsible custodian of nuclear weapons, or, B, that there was any possibility whatsoever of India undoing or revoking what it had decided to do in exercising its sovereign rights in May 1998. Our concern was always exclusively what were the implications of this development going to be for the nonproliferation regime, and I understand why Indians felt that they were disadvantaged unfairly, indeed outrageously by the accident of timing that allowed five countries to be, as it were, allowed to have nuclear weapons under the NPT and other countries, including the world's largest democracy, not allowed. I understand that. But the question still remained out there in our minds, and it is one that Jaswant and I spent a great deal of time on, what about the rest of the world? If India is granted an exception under the NPT, how can one be confident that India alone will have that exception under the NPT? And that is why at the end of the day, or at least it is one of the reasons why at the end of our day when we were working together, we were not able to come to terms.

The Bush Administration has in effect, I would even say in fact, granted India an exception under the NPT, so now the question is going to be front and center again, not is India going to be a good custodian of its nuclear weapons, but

who else is going to ask for an exception. I just came back from a part of the world where there are a number of people raising their hands and saying we would like to be an exception, too. Mr. Kim Jong-il has rather emphatically raised his hand, as you may have noticed, which is leading other people in that region to say, well, if that guy is going to do it, we had better reexamine our options, and I can tell you that in Northeast Asia there are quite a number of people who are objects of concern in this regard, and that certainly goes for the greater Middle East as well.

I will conclude with I am sorry to say a melancholy, apprehensive observation about the drift of American policy. Jaswant has eloquently reiterated and I am sure will be prepared in response to questions to elaborate on Indian policy. I am going to express a concern about American policy. I think that by granting India the exception that it has under the NPT, the Bush Administration has moved us, and by us the entire planet Earth, away from a rule-based system for controlling the proliferation of dangerous technology, and in particular, nuclear technology, and moved us toward an approach to the preservation of world peace that is norm-based or value-judgment-based in the following sense. Good countries, countries about which we do not need to have concern, deserve leniency. Countries that are friends of the United States deserve leniency or, indeed, exceptions under the NPT. Bad countries, countries that are legitimately of concern or by American lights of concern deserve extra stringency. It is going to be very, very difficult to get countries that we see as in the bad or the

ambiguous category to agree that they are in that category and to behave accordingly. In fact, *au contraire,* I think that is part of what we are seeing in North Korea and perhaps elsewhere. So maybe since there are a number of true gurus in the room on the issue of arms control and nonproliferation we can come back to that in the discussion.

But I do not want to end on a completely melancholy note. Taking my own comments back to the issue at hand which is the U.S.-Indian relationship on the basis of at least two trips a year that I am making to India and on the basis of my knowledge of the quality of leadership that India has now and there is every reason to think will have long into the future, I am very, very confident that in due course the United States and India will find a way not only of working together in a constructive way so that we are both part of the solution to the problem of proliferation, but that we are going to be able to broaden our agenda and work on some of these other issues as well. So, Walter, I will stop right there.

(Applause.)

MR. ANDERSEN: The agreement among the two speakers that we go immediately into the questions and answers, we have three microphones here, so if you would like to ask a question, please stand behind one of the microphones, and while people are thinking about their question, I will ask one. And when you ask a question, give your name and limit the question or comment you have.

This is actually addressed to Jaswant Singh. During the meetings that you had with Strobe Talbott, I know within the bureaucracy there was constantly a

sense that somehow was India going to agree to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty or not. In your view, what was the seriousness of the internal Indian debate at that time over CTBT?

MR. SINGH: Of course, there had been a debate about the CTBT really since before 1996 because, as you know, the evolution into the Comprehensive Test Ban was via the Partial Test Ban. After the Partial Test Ban, India was in fact promoting a Partial Test Ban. Thereafter, when the Comprehensive Test Ban came in the manner in which it came and one particular provision of it, an article of it, it said that if these 43 countries don't subscribe it doesn't come into force, et cetera, of course, all this increased, it further deepened the sense as if all this was being done to discriminate against India. Of course, this resulted in a great deal of internal quite often very intense debate. It hasn't entirely left India yet, I might tell you.

MR. TALBOTT: Could I just add two points from my own memory and perspective?

First of all, one of the reasons that I so value this guy as an interlocutor is that he, I always felt, played straight with me. The CTBT assumed a kind of primacy among the so-called four benchmarks, and I felt that Jaswant was always giving me his best assessment of what the prospects were, given the realities, and they were changing realities, of Indian politics at the time. That has, among other things, undergirded the trust that we were able to carry over into other areas.

The second point is that in strictly public policy terms -- this is not a

personal comment, but in strictly public policy terms -- just about the worst day of my life was the day that the United States Senate refused to ratify the CTBT in 1999. I think that was a black day for the cause of nonproliferation in this world and it, of course, totally put the kibosh on any possibility whatsoever of getting our Indian friends to sign, not to mention ratify, the CTBT. So that was a classic case of one branch of the United States Government knocking the legs out from under the other branch.

MR. ANDERSON: A question over here?

QUESTIONER: [off mike] I am Naeem Salik from Brookings Institution. My question is to Mr. Jaswant Singh. From your presentation, what I gathered was that the U.S.-India nuclear deal was a natural transition from the courses of dialogue which you started with Mr. Talbott and continued with President Clinton's visit and then onwards to the NSSP to the deal. But what I have seen in the public statements and the position which India and taken and Mr. Vajpayee has given some very strong statements against the deal.

MR. SINGH: I think both are correct; what you say, my assertion is that it was a natural evolution of what Strobe and I endeavored to, followed by President Clinton's visit, followed by NSSP 2004. After all, NSSP 2004 was, in fact, executed when Prime Minister Vajpayee was Prime Minister.

The difficulty is not with the direction of India-U.S. cooperation on nuclear matters. The difficulty is not in the direction. The difficulty is in detail. The parliamentary debate observations, this is an obligation of the tallest political

leader in the country today who is really the architect, the architect of India-U.S. relations today, and he has pointed out the pitfalls that the present government is going into.

MR. ANDERSON: Over here?

QUESTIONER: Thank you so much. I am a student at SAIS here.

I thought I will ask if you think, in your opinion, as some individuals do, who say that the American and Indian relations is over-hyped in the sense that there are individuals in this City who claim that India will not really do what is expected of it to do by America. At the same time, there are individuals in India who say that India is starting to come too close to the American camp. What would your response be to that charge? Would you agree with it, in the first place?

MR. SINGH: To whom are you asking this question?

QUESTIONER: You both, actually; both of you.

MR. SINGH: I think the scope of Indo-U.S. relations is vast. What is the present reality and if you pragmatically examine it, there are certain components today of Indo-U.S. relations in which the respective priorities of cooperation, of working together are different. For America, as I said, obviously, it is nonproliferation. That is not so for India.

There are other difficulties. For example, on climate change, on globalization, we have difficulties on how the United States/America is an external equalizer or has a policy of external equalization. When it comes to the

neighborhood of India, that is to the detriment of India. When you have pursued policies for 50 years, you cannot easily abandon them. So we have to treat it with a degree of pragmatism.

I think the path is correct. Is it an eight-lane highway? No, it isn't an eight-lane highway. You have to negotiate and you have work at the cause because this is the correct path. That is why I called it an inevitability. That is when the Prime Minister, when he said we are natural allies, he wasn't using a rhetorical phrase. I do believe, not because I am his colleague or I was his Minister of External Affairs, but that, I think, very aptly describes that we are natural allies. It doesn't mean that we will agree on everything all the time, but we must continue to work together.

MR. TALBOTT: I would actually like to add something.

I agree with the implication of the question. I think that there has been a degree of over-hyping on both sides, and I think that there has been a gyration, an unhealthy gyration, in both mood and expectations. It has been apparent to me as a regular visitor to India where in the immediate wake of, for example, both Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visit here and President bush's visit to India, there was something close to euphoria, but that seems to, at least when I was last there which was a month or two ago, I guess, that seems to have largely dissipated. It was little bit like passing through the looking glass, in some way, because there is still so much focus on the nuclear deal that what had originally been perceived in India as a great triumph of Indian diplomacy, and I think probably should have

been perceived that way, was all of a sudden perceived or at least criticized as a terrible giveaway by the Manmohan Singh Government and that the Americans had somehow had their way with India in this deal which was bizarre to those of us who follow the debate from the American side.

I haven't heard the phrase, natural allies, used for a while.

MR. SINGH: Oh?

MR. TALBOTT: From you, of course, Jaswant.

But it was certainly noticed in this town in official circles that when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh came to this hemisphere, it was to go to Havana for the Non-Aligned Movement Summit, where he played a very constructive role, by the way, in diluting what would otherwise have been really a very obnoxiously anti-American sentiments communiqué. One has the sense that, had he wanted to, he could have stuck around elsewhere in the hemisphere and perhaps had a chance to meet with President Bush. So there is a sense, at least in Washington, which I associate myself with, that the Prime Minister is making not fundamental or any strategic adjustments away from the idea of natural alliance but definitely some tactical adjustments to deal with this volatility in the mood on the Indian side.

As for the American side, I think there is some volatility there, too. I worry about the Iran issue. If the Iran issue continues to heat up -- and there is every expectation that it will -- and it becomes contentious in some sense in U.S.-Indian relations and India doesn't seem to be as supportive of the United States as

we would want, there are going to be a lot of people in this town who are going to say: Hey, wait a minute; we just passed this great deal for you. We are natural allies. What about that?

I don't worry overmuch about that because I think the fundamentals of the U.S.-India relationship are very strong, and there are a lot of reasons for that, including the very welcome strength and activism of the India-American community. But I do think it is going to require a conscious effort on the part of the leaderships on both sides to kind of steady things down a little bit. Part of doing that will be broadening the agenda, so that we are talking about more things rather than this damn nuclear issue that always seems to be the monster that ate Cleveland, as we say in my part of the country.

MR. ANDERSON: We have a question over here.

QUESTIONER: I would like to address this question to Jaswant Singh. I am Tom Graham with Arthurian Power Limited [phonetic] and other associations.

The question I would like to ask is based on a hypothesis. Let us say the heavens somehow opened and everything changed in Washington, and the United States decided to ratify the CTBT and China followed suit. What would India's attitude be toward the CTBT under such circumstances, should they occur?

MR. SINGH: Sir, you are presenting a scenario which is very close to what I said about no first use, non-use against non-nuclear weapons states, de-alert, et cetera. I asked my very valued friend, Madeleine Albright, I think last year or the year before last, what is your reaction, what is America's reaction to

no first use? She said, Jaswant, take it from me, no U.S. Administration will ever agree to no first use.

Now, I do believe that the entire global community has to find an answer to the dilemma of weapons of mass destruction. They are not war-fighting weapons. But we are not able to find the answer. Therefore, when the NPT is extended indefinitely without any amendments, and it was last amended, then I think, Mr. Graham, for you to pose a hypothetical question if the United States and China and the whole world transformed, India is part of the solution. It held a part of the problem.

Thank you, sir.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

Did you have a question in the middle?

QUESTIONER: Nasha Cathry [phonetic] from the University of Pittsburgh.

I have a question about the role of nuclear weapons in the Kashmir peace process. Do you feel that the two countries having nuclear weapons has contributed to a better dialogue between the two sides or not?

Also, going along with this question, is there anything that you feel the United States can do further to work with our allies, India and Russia, to secure nuclear weapons to prevent them from getting into the wrong hands of terrorists or any other organizations?

MR. SINGH: Is this a question to me?

QUESTIONER: Both, yes.

MR. SINGH: Both of us.

MR. TALBOTT: I think the first question on Kashmir is certainly for you.

MR. SINGH: You are asking if the fact that both Pakistan and India are in possession of nuclear weapons, does it facilitate or hinder? Personally, having dealt with this issue, being in the driver's seat as it were, or if I am being responsible for any mistakes that were to occur because for success, to success, there are many fathers, I would say that when it comes to dealing or engaging, possession of nuclear weapons is a non-issue. The nature of the relationship is not governed by that, has not been governed and is not likely to be.

I have seen observations and comments and writings about the imminence, et cetera. It is a different subject. I have difficulty in accepting because we were, after all, in taking the decisions, and I say this without either any exaggeration or any additional deletion from the reality, there was no question of any nuclear angle at any stage whether in Kargil or subsequently. I have said so. We did see certain degree of movement near Jhelum where the missiles, the Pakistan missiles are, and we saw them moving towards redeployment. We assessed this carefully, and we came to the conclusion that this was diversionary, that it would be a great error on our part to respond in kind or in a fashion. There was no question of India taking that part.

Does it facilitate what you call a peace process? To peace, there is no

alternative. I think there has to be recognition that what has contributed to this is not the possession or otherwise of nuclear weapons. It is not state actors or states that, in my reckoning, are the principal danger. With weapons of mass destruction, it is non-state actors and for non-state actors and weapons of mass destruction, the question is then not limited only to nuclear. The reality is that much greater harm will be done by a glass full of biological weapons. That is the reality.

So, therefore, what is happening within Pakistan is better understood, to my mind, by the United States of America.

MR. TALBOTT: I would add something on this.

At a number of points in the dialogue which, by the way, also included a parallel dialogue between the United States and Pakistan, either Indian or Pakistani interlocutors, that is, participants in the dialogue, would say something along the following lines: You guys, you superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, you had a Cold War for almost 50 years. Mutual assured deterrence worked. You never had a nuclear war. So we will have mutual assured destruction and deterrence.

Well, there are a couple of comebacks to that. One is that we came very, very close to the brink a couple of times, and the other is that the United States and the Soviet Union have a very different history and are geographically separated in a way that, Jaswant, your phrase was we were not borne of the same womb, with all that meant, nor did we share a common border that was in dispute

and so forth and so on.

So I think while it is reassuring to hear what Jaswant says and the India Government is much to be congratulated for having shown restraint during the crises he refers to, in the one that I remember best which was Kargil in 1999, I can tell you that our experts took quite seriously the danger of the situation spinning out of control, and it was not reassuring when President Clinton took Nawaz Sharif aside privately and alerted Nawaz Sharif to things that we were seeing that were worrisome, and Nawaz Sharif seemed to have no idea what the President of the United States was talking about. Now, we got past that.

But the good news is that situation is that (a) nothing untoward happened, and (b) thanks very largely, I think, to Jaswant, to the Prime Minister of India at that time, who had enough trust to, as it were, let the President of the United States have some very intense conversations with the Prime Minister of Pakistan during the July 4th weekend that ended with Pakistan doing the right thing which was undoing the wrong thing it had done by crossing the line. That was really a watershed moment in the relationship.

MR. SINGH: With your permission, Strobe, I do wish to say that was a watershed. It was the first time in the last 60 years virtually that we had the United States of America recognizing the ground reality. It is very difficult for me to explain, ladies and gentlemen, how it transformed the national mood, that it was not simply a question of convincing the political leadership of the country. The country, India, saw immediately that the United States of America, they had

taken a moral stand and they had taken a stand for the right thing. That still continues to be marked as, what Strobe has said, a watershed.

MR. ANDERSON: We have two more here, one over here and then one over here and then Harold.

QUESTIONER: Harrup Singh [phonetic], retired diplomat.

You just talked about Pakistan, sir, problems with India and India's problems with Pakistan. I feel that there is a great deal of unease in India about the neighborhood –- terrorism, and now I saw in a recent meeting on Bangladesh Barometer that the radical Islamists are gaining an upper hand, especially at election time. Maldives in our neighborhood used to be a very secular country. Now, it has an onslaught of people from the Middle East, giving money and preaching and Imams. Did you all discuss to friendly interlocutors and the friendly countries, the situation with China on the north, a member of the nuclear club with a permanent seat on the Security Council?

I feel very uneasy when I think about India's security. Except for Bhutan, we don't have a reliable really friend in the neighborhood. I wonder what the U.S. and India jointly can do to make India feel more at ease.

MR. SINGH: I presume that is a question addressed to me. Is it?

QUESTIONER: Both of you.

MR. SINGH: Both of us.

Two things; firstly, I would not want the United States of America to pull India's chestnuts out of the fire. It was a great contribution that President Clinton

made during Kargil. It was good; that is without doubt. But our problems, India's problems, India has to settle.

Secondly, I think it is correct, and this is factually correct, that one of the great failures of independent India's diplomacy has been its inability to manage its relations with all its neighbors. That is a fact. If I don't admit it, then I am denying an existing reality. It is only after I admit it, that I will be able to address it.

India is most possibly the largest country of its size, along with the People's Republic, with an unsettled land border, both with the People's Republic of China as well as with Pakistan. These are signal shortcomings. It is India that has to answer.

Where there is a difficulty is when U.S. policy acts in the region, in the entire region, as an external equalizer. Whenever the United States of America has pursued its policies in borders, a phrase which I don't like, such as in South Asia, because without Afghanistan, what is South Asia? Whenever the United States of America has pursued a policy, it has pursued a policy of bolstering up Pakistan, which then encourages Pakistan to box well above its weight, if not two weights, at least one weight. Then the United States of America loses interest; and then Pakistan on its own begins to flounder; and when it flounders, there are difficulties for India. When the United States of America bolsters up Pakistan, there are difficulties for India. This is a reality.

It is no good asking the United States of America, please do something

about it, because the United States of America, so far as its policies in Pakistan are concerned has run into a blind alley. Forgive me, but that is the reality. There is no other option for the United States of America but to continue with its policy with Pakistan that it has. Therefore, India will have to continue to pay a price, but we have to find an answer to this.

What is a better answer? We have to beat it internally and we have to beat it bilaterally because the nature of the situation there -- Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq -- this is our own neighborhood. In this neighborhood, we are only eight and a half minutes away. The United States of America is 8,500 miles away. We have to deal with it.

MR. TALBOTT: Could I offer two thoughts, both picking up on what Jaswant has said and also on your question?

With regard to Pakistan, what Jaswant just said reminds very much of what was a light motif in our conversation. I think we Americans have a lot to learn from our Indian friends, a lot more than we have learned, about a great deal, notably including about India, I might add, but also about countries in the neighborhood that India understands better than we do. I think if we had taken a crash course on, just say, Iraq or Iran, from a country that has a lot of experience with both, it might have helped us understand what we were getting into and maybe getting into.

We also have a lot to learn from our Indian friends about Pakistan, but we know a lot ourselves about Pakistan because we have a longstanding relationship

with that country. One of the implications sometimes heard, not so much from Jaswant but elsewhere, although occasionally even from Jaswant, is that the United States facing a kind of zero sum choice between India and Pakistan and a request or a suggestion or an urging that the United States choose India and give up on Pakistan. Now, that is a caricature of it but, in any event, you knot what I mean and it is advice that, if we hear it, we should argue against it and not take it.

To go back to the positive which Jaswant underscored a moment ago, one of the terrific things about the otherwise dreadful and dangerous situation over Kargil is I think we broke out of that zero sum mentality between ourselves.

Now, with regard to China, there is good news in this world, believe it or not, ladies and gentlemen. One is that if there are three countries that are a candidate for the most important triangular relationship on the face of the Earth, they are India, China, and the United States. Not very long ago, all three legs of that triangle were not in good shape. The U.S.-India relationship was not in good shape for reasons we have discussed for 50 years. The U.S.-China relationship was under a lot of strain for a very long time, and God knows the India-China relationship was bad for a long time including going to war in the Himalayas.

I can remember conversations even during the time that you and I were working. In fact, one of the interesting little footnotes to what Jaswant and I worked on was that he said let us get our China specialists talking to each other. I arranged to have Susan Shirk who was the Senior Sinologist in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs come and spend 10 days in India, talking to your

experts, and she learned a great deal from that.

All three of those legs are now strong. Now, it is interesting to look in to the future to wonder whether it will be a quadrangle. It depends on whether Europe ever gets its act together. Otherwise, Jessica, I think someday you are going to want to change this logo up here and substitute Mumbai or Shanghai for Bologna. I know Bologna is a very nice place, but in terms of the geopolitical possibilities of the century or maybe just add a fourth if the Europeans can get it right in what they are trying to do.

MR. ANDERSON: That is a great idea.

We have two more and only 10 minutes, less 10 minutes, so keep your questions short if you could. One here and then Harold and then you, actually three questions.

QUESTIONER: Mr. Talbott mentioned during his talk that the Bush Administration has granted, according to him, exception to India through this deal. I would like to ask: How does Mr. Singh feel about it? Does he also think that this was an exception granted?

And very briefly to both of you, how would you like to address the same concern when Pakistan has this concern for the United States as an important ally in the War on Terror and for India as a neighbor?

MR. SINGH: As for as the first part is concerned, January, 2004, it is not just 2000, President Clinton's visit, but also January, 2004, Prime Minister Vajpayee has initiated all this and in January of 2004 with United States of

America's Republican Administration, we concluded NSSP 2004, which was in the month of January. What we are witnessing today, I don't much like the word, deal. It is not as if there is a deal between the U.S. and India, but there is an agreement on working together further on issues of nuclear nonproliferation, energy, also strategic partnership.

Secondly, you ask me if Pakistan were to seek such a thing, that is what I mean by Pakistan wanting to box at a higher weight. But you are most welcome to want to do that. The question that arises then is that a great deal will have to be transformed internally within Pakistan, e.g., democracy, all the tumults that there are in that sector. I don't want to go into all that. That is part of the internal policy of Pakistan.

I have also said just earlier that I believe India believes in equal and legitimate security for all. I cannot claim that India alone has a right to be secure in the region, of course not. All the countries have a right to be secure and feel secure. I am not being idealistic. I am actually being realistic, certainly in the context of my region which includes what is loosely called West Asia and the Gulf Region, also Central Asia.

MR. TALBOTT: I might just pick up on one point here having to do with the extent to which this agreement. I think to call it a deal, in a way is to give the Bush Administration the benefit of the doubt. It is to suggest that the Bush Administration got something out of the deal. I think we have already touched on that in passing.

It is certainly seen as an India-specific exception by some important players including China that we were talking about a moment ago. Once this agreement has become the law of the land -- Michael you were helping me with this the other day -- 45 members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group are going to approve it by consensus, and one of those members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group is China. Having just been in Beijing, I can tell you that while the Chinese are picking their words very, very carefully -- this is a paraphrase for anybody taking notes and this is not a representation of the Chinese position -- I got the distinct impression that the Chinese are reserving the right in the Nuclear Suppliers Group to raise the question of whether this should be a country-specific arrangement or whether there should be some either general or specific language attached to the NSG's approval of it that would permit China to look out for its client, Pakistan -- which is to say that is one more dimension of the way in which this thing is going to go on and on and on with a lot of ups and downs both in Washington and in Delhi among the people who are following it closely, which is a lot of people.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

Harold Gould, you have a question, and yours may be the last, given time.

QUESTIONER: I am Harold Gould [phonetic] from the Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Illinois. I said Illinois because that is where I once came from, but I meant to say Virginia. So I apologize to Virginia for my slip of the tongue.

Actually, my question is a kind of devil's advocate question, and it has to do with this issue of your own reaction, Mr. Talbott's reaction, to the fact of the Senate failing to ratify the CTBT treaty. That is this: It strikes me that it might have actually been a blessing in disguise because it strikes me that perhaps that gave you more flexibility to deal with the Indian perspective on nuclear nonproliferation in a way which didn't require you to be as, shall we say, rigid and dogmatic as possibly you might have been, had the United States already ratified the CTBT. I mean then the two of you in a way, as you yourself said, you had to become, you had to feel a sort of humility yourself about talking to India about nonproliferation. Therefore, it strikes me that possibly that opened up a little avenue of equality of feeling and position that maybe facilitated your negotiations as much as inhibited them.

MR. TALBOTT: Actually, maybe I could go first, Jaswant, simply because it was directed to me.

If that was a blessing in disguise, it was a lot better disguise than any of the trick-or-treaters had who came to my door last night. I still don't see it as anything like a blessing. I think it was an undisguised curse and an act of consummate shortsightedness on the part of one branch of the U.S. Government at a decisive moment.

There is a premise in your question that I would like to take exception to, and that is that our position was rigid and dogmatic. The starting place for our part of the dialogue, the American part of the dialogue was to accept what India

had done and to say, okay, India, contrary to our hopes, preferences, and advice, has decided to exercise its sovereign right to become a nuclear weapons state outside the bounds of the NPT.

Now, let us take that as a reality and see what we can do, picking up on Jaswant's phrase, to work with India, so that India and indeed the United States are part of the solution rather than part of the problem of nonproliferation. Let us also take India's declared doctrine which was to have a minimum credible deterrent and see if we could work with our Indian friends so that they might define what that meant operationally in a way that met any reasonable definition of minimum credible deterrent and also ask India to do no more and no less, which is a phrase I am playing back to our Indian friends, than other NPT-sanctioned, as it were, nuclear weapons states were doing which is to say have a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, have a ban on the production of fissile missiles, fissile material, exercise strategic restraint and have world class export controls. So there was nothing rigid whatsoever in what we were suggesting in the benchmarks.

MR. ANDERSON: Well, that is 2:00 and I want to thank both of you.

MR. SINGH: Just one sentence, I wish to add: Firstly, our dialogue when the Senate took the stand that it did. We continued. I have to say that from the U.S. side and the side that Strobe was concerned, if they were disappointed, as clearly they were disappointed, they hid that disappointment extremely well and they pursued the objectives of their Government with us continuously until after

President Clinton's visit.

Also, second sentence, it was not limited only to the CTBT because there were aspects, as Strobe has said, many other aspects from fissile material control to strategic dimensions of it. So, that all continued.

Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you very much, both Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott.

[Applause.]

MR. ANDERSON: I think you saw this as an unusual engagement. Thank you.

[Whereupon, the event was concluded.]

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