

Remarks Prior to a Virtual Meeting With Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India
April 11, 2022

President Biden. Prime Minister Modi, it's always good to see you. I'm looking forward to seeing you in Japan, about the 24th of May. And I was honored to welcome you to the White House last September to discuss U.S.-India relations, to meet with our fellow Quad leaders.

And I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak with you today virtually and with your two Ministers and your Ambassador here in person.

[At this point, the President paused briefly and then asked Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken about the translation of his remarks into Hindi by an interpreter.]

Is it contemporaneous?

Secretary Blinken. Yes—[inaudible].

President Biden. Oh, I'm sorry. [Laughter]

As two vibrant democracies who—one is learning how to make sure I can do this contemporaneously, but—two vibrant democracies, we have a—we take the same concerns about the global challenges we face—from COVID-19, advancing health security, and tracking the climate crisis—and we share a strong and growing major defense partnership.

At the root of our partnership is a deep connection between our people—ties of family, of friendship, and of shared values.

On that note, I want to welcome India's humanitarian support for the people of Ukraine, who are suffering a horrific assault, including a tragic shelling in a train station last week that killed dozens of innocent children and women and civilians attempting to flee the violence.

The United States and India are going to continue our close consultation on how to manage the destabilizing effects of this Russian war.

And I'm looking forward to our discussions today, Mr. Prime Minister. Our continued consultation and dialogue are key to ensuring the U.S.-India relationship continues to grow deeper and stronger, delivering our people and our global good that we all are seeking to manage, particularly in your part of the world.

And the floor is yours, Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Modi. President Biden, I would like to, first of all, express my gratitude to you for your warm words. Our Defense and Foreign Ministers will be meeting today in the two-plus-two format in a short while from now.

Our meeting before that is very important, as it will provide direction for the discussions. I also appreciate your initiative to organize today's virtual meeting.

Excellency, when I was in Washington last year in September—and you, in fact, mentioned that—you had said at the time that the India-America partnership can contribute to solving a lot of global problems. I totally agree with you.

As two democracies that are the world's largest and oldest, we are natural partners. And the progress that has taken place in our relations in the last few years, the new momentum that has been created would have been hard to even imagine a few decades ago.

Excellency, our talks today are taking place at a time when the situation in Ukraine is very worrying. A few weeks ago, over 20,000 Indians were stuck in Ukraine, and most of them were young students. After a lot of hard work, we were successful in getting them all out safely. One student, however, lost his life.

During this entire process, I spoke several times on the phone to the Presidents of both Ukraine and Russia. I not only appealed for peace, but also suggested that there be direct talks between President Putin and the President of Ukraine. We had extensive discussions on Ukraine in our Parliament as well.

Recently, the news about the killings of innocent civilians in the Bucha city was very worrying. We instantly condemned the killings and have called for an independent inquiry.

We hope that the ongoing discussions between Russia and Ukraine will lead to peace. Excellency, we have also emphasized the importance of the security of civilians in Ukraine and the unhindered supply of humanitarian assistance to them, and you mentioned this, in fact.

On our part, we have sent medicines and other relief material to Ukraine and to its neighboring countries. And on Ukraine's request, we will be sending them another consignment of medicines very soon.

Excellency, at the beginning of your term in office, you'd used a very important slogan: "Democracies can deliver." The India-America partnership and the success of the India-America partnership is the best means to make this slogan meaningful.

This year, India is celebrating 75 years of its independence, and we are also celebrating the 75th anniversary of our diplomatic relations as well. I am confident that our friendship with America will be an integral part of India's development journey over the next 25 years.

Once again, my thanks to you for organizing this event.

President Biden. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. We're going to hold for just a moment, Mr. Prime Minister, while the press leaves the room.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. from the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Defense Shri Rajnath Singh, Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, and Ambassador to the U.S. Taranjit Singh Sandhu of India. Prime Minister Modi referred to U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III; and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine. Prime Minister Modi spoke in Hindi, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. Joining the President in the South Court Auditorium were Secretaries Blinken and Austin, National Security Adviser Jacob J. Sullivan, Ministers Singh and Jaishankar, and Ambassador Sandhu. Also participating in the meeting were National Security Council Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific Kurt M. Campbell, Senior Director for South Asia Sumona Guha, and Director for India Christopher Commins; and Defense Secretary Ajay Kumar and Additional Secretary Vani Sarraju Rao of India.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : India, Prime Minister Modi.

Names: Blinken, Antony J.; Jaishankar, Subrahmanyam; Modi, Narendra; Sandhu, Taranjit Singh; Singh, Shri Rajnath.

Subjects: Coronavirus pandemic, international cooperation efforts; Environment : Climate change; India : Ambassador to U.S.; India : Defense, Minister of; India : External Affairs, Minister of; India : Prime Minister; India : Relations with U.S.; Russia : Ukraine, airstrikes and

invasion; State, Department of : Secretary; Ukraine : Refugees, humanitarian situation; Ukraine : Russian airstrikes and invasion.

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