

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Justice Shahabuddin  
Ahmed of Bangladesh in Dhaka  
*March 20, 2000*

Mr. President, Prime Minister, distinguished guests, this has been a day of extraordinary hospitality, insight, and discovery for us. On behalf of the American delegation, I thank you for all you have done to make us feel at home.

For 5 years now, my wife and daughter have been singing the glories of Bangladesh. Finally, I am glad to see for myself. This day has been a watershed for both our nations. Americans admire Bangladesh as a proud Muslim nation, devoted to peace with its neighbors, to peace-keeping around the world, to tolerance and diversity within its borders.

When the great Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, he said this: "I am glad I have done some work to give expression to this great age when the East and the West are coming together." Although he did not live to see the creation of Bangladesh, Tagore would doubtless be proud of all you have done to lead your people into a new century. I believe he would also approve of what we did today to bring the East and the West closer together.

I was deeply gratified this morning to be the first American President to arrive in Bangladesh, and I am proud of the kind of partnership we are forging. It is about more than the ceremony of a state visit. It is about promoting democracy and the values that give meaning to our lives. It is about helping children stay in school and

have a better future, about investing in people who have never been given a chance to succeed before, and investing in a nation that now has a chance to succeed as never before.

Tomorrow the Sun will rise on a deeper friendship between America and Bangladesh. Through our ceremonies and our conversations, we have hastened the arrival of a more peaceful new day, the kind of day that Tagore spent his life imagining, a new day comprehending not only the absence of war and suffering but the presence of mutual understanding and common endeavors.

On behalf of all Americans, I pledge that we will work with you to build on this good day, to soften the hard facts of daily hardship, to make real the poetry of our finest aspirations.

I ask you now to join me in a toast to the President, the Prime Minister, the people of Bangladesh, and the friendship between our two nations. May it grow. May it deepen. May it affect the lives of our people in ways that are truly good.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:30 p.m. in the Banquet Hall of the Bangabhaban. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Ahmed.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Atal Behari  
Vajpayee of India in New Delhi  
*March 21, 2000*

*Prime Minister Vajpayee.* I am delighted to welcome President Clinton to India. His visit provides us a unique opportunity for historic confirmation in our relations. We have just concluded a very productive meeting. President Clinton and I have had an indepth exchange of views on many subjects. Our two delegations have also held extensive discussions. Our discus-

sions have been warm, friendly, and candid, reflecting our common desire to build a new relationship of mutual trust and respect.

Our objective is to forge a durable, politically constructive and economically productive partnership between the world's two largest democracies. I think with President Clinton's visit and