

The steps we're taking today will help to bring new life to our Nation's seniors by bringing a new level of quality to America's nursing homes. Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Washington Home.

Exchange With Reporters at the Dedication of the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial

September 16, 2000

India-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, how would you describe the visit, overall, of the Indian Prime Minister? What has this visit meant to Indo-U.S. relations?

The President. Well, I think it's been a great success. It sort of rounds out our efforts to take a different turn in our relationships, to deepen and broaden them. As I have said many times, I am profoundly grateful for the reception that I received from the Prime Minister, the Government, and the people of India when I came with my daughter and my mother-in-law a few months ago.

I hope that this change in partnership goes beyond my service, into a whole new era of partnership between India and the United States.

You know, one thing I didn't mention a moment ago is that, in addition to the Government of India, Americans who are of Indian heritage also contributed to this magnificent memorial. There is probably no country outside India that has been more enriched by Indians than the United States. So that's another reason, and I think it's important we continue to go forward together.

Mahatma Gandhi

Q. Mr. President, has Mahatma Gandhi made an influence on your life, sir, in any way?

The President. Well, when I was a boy, actually, I was a profound admirer of Martin Luther King, and I began to read all his writings. And when I read that he was so influenced by Gandhi, then I began to read about Gandhi. I was, I don't know, 17, 18, or something like that.

H-1B Visas

Q. Mr. President, since you talked about the Indian contribution—about immigration, H-1B

visas, does your administration want to do something?

The President. Let me say this, the number of H-1B visas will be increased in this Congress, I believe. I'll be quite surprised if it isn't. The issue is, how much will it be increased by, and can we use the occasion of increasing the quotas to get some more funds from the companies that are hiring people for the training of our own people, who could also do these jobs—the people who are already here—if they had training? So there's no question that we're going to increase the visas.

India-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, the fact is, you said you're very excited; it was a very positive visit. In concrete terms, where do you see the alliance going now? Where in concrete terms do you see India and the United States as natural allies going ahead?

The President. Well, I hope in the years ahead we'll be better economic partners, better political partners. I hope we'll work together through the United Nations and other international forums. I hope we'll both be able to help to turn back what could otherwise be a dangerous tide of proliferation of dangerous weapons, not just nuclear warheads on missiles, either, chemical weapons, biological weapons. I hope we'll be able to turn that back.

And I hope some day that there will be some constructive role we could play as a partner in working with India and others to bring peace on the subcontinent.

Q. Will you be a strategic ally? Will we be a strategic ally?

The President. We've done enough talking today. [Laughter] If you want to ask the Prime Minister a question—[laughter]—

Travel to India

Q. Mr. President, do you see yourself going back to India after post-Presidency?

The President. Absolutely. Absolutely. I hope I'll be able to go back to India for the rest of my life. I don't mean permanently, but I mean to keep going back, always.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:04 a.m. in a park at Massachusetts Ave. and 21st St. NW., near the Indian Embassy. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India; and the President's mother-in-law, Dorothy Rodham.

Statement on the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption
September 16, 2000

Yesterday I joined the leaders of 19 nations in the Western Hemisphere in ratifying the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption.

The Convention establishes a treaty-based regime among members of the Organization of American States (OAS) to combat official corruption. OAS members who have ratified the Convention will have to criminalize acts of corruption if they have not already done so. Most important, they will have to criminalize the bribery of foreign government officials, a practice that punishes honest businesses, undermines economic development, and destroys confidence in law. The United States pressed for this provision, and it is a breakthrough in our effort to

persuade other countries to adopt legislation similar to our Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

The Convention will strengthen America's ability to cooperate with and receive assistance from countries in the hemisphere in efforts to prevent, investigate, and prosecute corruption through extradition, mutual legal assistance, and other measures. It will also enhance law enforcement capabilities in other areas, given the links between corruption and organized criminal activity.

This Convention was the first multilateral agreement against bribery to be adopted anywhere in the world. It is a victory for good government, fair competition, and open trade through our hemisphere.

Remarks at a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Dinner
September 16, 2000

Thank you very much, Chairman Clyburn; dinner chair Eddie Bernice Johnson, my friend of 28 years—and didn't she give a great introduction to the Vice President? You better go on the road, girl. *[Laughter]* Our foundation chair, Eva Clayton, and all the members and former members of the CBC, especially to my friend Bill Clay. We wish you well and Godspeed on your retirement, and I thank you for 8 years of our good partnership.

To Mrs. Coretta Scott King and all the distinguished citizens in the audience, but especially to the two whom I had the great honor to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Marian Wright Edelman and Reverend Jesse Jackson, thank you for being here with us tonight.

I thank Lou Stokes and Phylicia Rashad and want to join in congratulating the award winners, my friend Arthur Eve, whose son did such a good job working for the Clinton/Gore administration; Kenneth Hill; Rodney Carroll, who has been great on our Welfare to Work program; Tom Joyner, who lets me jaw on his radio program from time to time. Even I never got an eight-page spread in *Ebony*; I don't know about that. *[Laughter]*

To Tavis Smiley and to the family of our friend LeBaron Taylor; Bill Kennard, and Ambassador Sisulu, thank you for what you said about our friend Nelson Mandela. I thank General Reno and Secretary Slater and Secretary Herman and Deputy Attorney General Holder