

Exchange With Reporters After Signing the Book of Condolence at the Indian Embassy January 3, 2005

Q. Mr. President, you have come this far; are you planning to extend your visit someday to India? It could be before your Presidency——

The President. Well, I appreciate that very much. I was just telling the Ambassador, when I spoke to the Prime Minister I assured him that my intentions were to make it this year to India. In the meantime, though, our country stands with the people who have suffered. We want the Indian Government, the Indian people to know that we'll help in any way we can. I've asked President Clinton and President Bush to lead an effort to raise private contributions to go to the families of those who have suffered and to help provide food, medicine, water, shelter, whatever the Indian Government thinks is necessary.

I want to thank the Indian Government for taking a lead in this issue. One of the

first things that we did was to put together a core group of nations, nations that are capable of organizing relief efforts around the region. And the Indian Government has been especially strong as a part of this core group. And I told the Ambassador to thank the Prime Minister for his very strong leadership.

Our navies are coordinating together; our search and rescues are coordinating together. And now the American people and the American Government want to help where help is needed.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India; and India's Ambassador to the U.S. Ranendra Sen.

Remarks at a Reception for Newly Elected Members of Congress and Their Spouses January 3, 2005

The President. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House. Hope you're feeling pretty excited about what's about to take place. We are excited for you. After all, we ran together. [*Laughter*] And there's nothing like winning. [*Laughter*]

I want to welcome you all here. Laura and I are so thrilled you're here. We want to welcome your spouses. I particularly want to say a thanks to your spouse for having supported your run for the Congress or the Senate. Laura and I know how hard it is on a family to be in the political arena. It's the ultimate sacrifice, really—sacrifice your privacy, sacrifice time with your kids.

But you're going to find it's worthwhile. Serving this great country is an unbelievable honor, and both the elected official and the spouse are serving our great country.

The Vice President and I share something else in common with you, besides having run together in 2004, is that we've all run for the Congress. I'm the only one who never won. [*Laughter*] I ran in 1978, came in second in a two-man race. [*Laughter*] The Vice President won, as did Dan Lungren. Welcome back.

Representative Dan Lungren. Thank you.