

achieving that vision that we will work together to achieve. Your efforts, Mr. President, as well as your vision, both help us and the Israelis to work very hard during the last year and since the convening of the Annapolis conference. Hope will remain, Mr. President. We cannot live without hope. We will continue to work to achieve and realize that hope.

And, Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and thank the United States for the help and the support and the aid that you have given us, and as well as the efforts that you led to mobi-

lize the world to help the Palestinian Authority in—on the economic front as well as on the security front.

Mr. President, we will continue to work with you, and we will continue to keep the hope alive in order to reach a political solution for our issue and for the Middle East.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:13 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Members of Congress *September 25, 2008*

I want to thank the leaders of the House and the Senate for coming. I appreciate our Presidential candidates for being here as well.

We are in a serious economic crisis in the country if we don't pass a piece of legislation. I want to thank the spirit of bipartisan cooperation that's taking place here in Washington. One thing the American people have to know is that all of us around the table take this issue very seriously, and we know we've got to get something done as quickly as possible. And this meeting is an attempt to move the process forward. My hope is that we can reach an agreement very shortly.

I want to thank the Secretary of the Treasury for working hard with the Members. I thank the Members for working long hours like they've been doing to come up with a solution that's bipartisan and that will solve the problem.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Barack Obama, Democratic Presidential nominee; and Sen. John McCain, Republican Presidential nominee. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India *September 25, 2008*

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, once again, it's my honor to welcome you back to the Oval Office, and it will be my honor to share a meal with you tonight.

I thank you for coming to Washington from New York. It's very kind of you to come. I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate your leadership.

You and I have worked hard to change the relationship between our countries. India is a great country with an incredibly bright future. And it's in the U.S. interests to have a good, strong strategic relationship with India. And we've worked hard to achieve that.

One such sign of that relationship is the India-U.S. civilian nuclear agreement. This has taken a lot of work on both our parts, a lot of courage on your part. And of course, we want the agreement to satisfy you and come—get out of our Congress. And so we're working hard to get it passed as quickly as possible.

We talked about trade. We talked about the environment and how technologies will make it such that we can grow our economies and be good stewards of the environment.

I'll never forget my visit to your country, Mr. Prime Minister. I remember telling my friends, when I got back, what an exciting place India is. There's a vibrancy and energy, and there's a entrepreneurial spirit that's very strong. And I congratulate you and your Government for enhancing that entrepreneurial spirit.

I thank you for your advice on a range of matters. I appreciated very much your briefing on the neighborhood in which you live. It's very informative, and it helps me make decisions and helps me formulate policy.

All in all, ours is a very strong relationship, at a state level and at a personal level. And I appreciate you coming.

Prime Minister Singh. Mr. President, I know how busy you are with problems relating to the management of the financial crisis. That despite all these enormous pressures on your time, you have found it possible to receive me is something I deeply appreciate, deeply value. And the last 4½ years that I have been Prime Minister, I have been the recipient of your generosity, your affection, the show of your friendship. It means a lot to me and to the people of India.

In these last 4½ years, there has been a massive transformation of India-United States relations. And, Mr. President, you have played the most important role in making all this happen. Your efforts towards cooperation with regard to civil nuclear energy, I know these were difficult issues, and at each stage, it was your leadership, your personal intervention which resolved all the difficulties that were affecting the progress of this negotiation.

I sincerely hope that the settlement which is now before the U.S. Congress will be approved in a manner which will be satisfactory from the point of view of both our countries. And when history is written, I think it will be recorded that President George W. Bush played an historic role in bringing our two democracies closer to each other.

I am mentioning civil nuclear initiative because for 34 years, India has suffered from a nuclear apartheid. We have not been able to trade in nuclear material, nuclear reactors, nuclear raw materials. And when this restrictive regime ends, I think a great deal of credit will go to President Bush. And for this I am very grateful to you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

Prime Minister Singh. But there has been enormous transformation in our relationship in many other respects. The United States is India's largest trading partner. The United States is the largest investor in our country. And at President Bush's initiative, we set up a two-country CEOs forum which has come forward with many innovative ideas to bring the business communities of our two countries closer to each other.

We have taken new initiative in the field of education. We have today a new architecture of bringing the academic communities of our two countries—the new scheme of Fulbright-Nehru Scholarship will unite the intellectual community of our two countries in a manner which gives me immense satisfaction.

In areas of science and technologies, in areas relating to environment management, in the areas relating to climate change, in areas relating to health, in areas relating to knowledge initiatives in agriculture—all of these initiatives have emerged as a result of the historic meeting that I had with President Bush on 18 of July of 2005. These are the reasons we have now a strategic partnership with the United States. And all that has happened has happened because of the strong personal commitment of the President.

India is a functioning democracy. And I know how much President Bush appreciates that fact, that a country of a billion people with tremendous poverty, with all the diversities of the world, is yet trying to find its economic and social salvation

in the framework of a functioning democracy. President Bush and I have discussed this aspect of India's functioning several times, and he has shown enormous respect for India, for Indian democracy.

So, Mr. President, this may be my last visit to you during your Presidency, and let me say that—thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Singh. The people of India deeply love you, and all that you have done to bring our two countries closer to each other is something history will not be able to destroy.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on the National Economy *September 26, 2008*

Good morning. My administration continues to work with the Congress on a rescue plan. And we need a rescue plan. This is—it's hard work. Our proposal is a big proposal, and the reason it's big and substantial is because we got a big problem.

We also need to move quickly. Now, any time you have a plan this big, that is moving this quickly, that requires legislative approval, it creates challenges. Members want to be heard. They want to be able to express their opinions, and they should be allowed to express their opinions.

There are disagreements over aspects of the rescue plan, but there is no disagreement that something substantial must be done. The legislative process is sometimes not very pretty, but we are going to get a package passed. We will rise to the occasion. Republicans and Democrats will come together and pass a substantial rescue plan.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. on the Colonnade at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the United States Ocean Action Plan *September 26, 2008*

Thank you all. Please sit down. Thank you, Secretary Clough, for the introduction. And congratulations on the opening of the

Sant Ocean Hall, which, by the way, opens tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock. The Secretary and I just had a fabulous tour. These