

commitments that the United States Government has made to the Government of India, as recorded in the 123 Agreement. The agreement also grants India advance consent to reprocessing, which will be brought into effect upon the conclusion of arrangements and procedures for a dedicated reprocessing facility under IAEA safeguards.

This agreement sends a signal to the world: Nations that follow the path of democracy and responsible behavior will find a friend in the United States of America. The American people are proud of our strong relationship with India. And I am confident that the friendship between our two nations will grow even closer in the years ahead.

Laura and I send our best wishes to the hundreds of millions of people in India and around the world who will begin cele-

brating the ancient festival of Diwali later this month. As we offer our prayers for a happy new year, we can be thankful that the relationship between the United States and India has never been more vibrant and more hopeful.

And it's now my honor to sign the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to India's Ambassador to the U.S. Ranendra Sen; U.S. Ambassador to India David C. Mulford and his wife Jeanne; former U.S. Ambassador to India Robert D. Blackwill; and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. H.R. 7081, approved October 8, was assigned Public Law No. 110-369.

Statement on Signing the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act *October 8, 2008*

I am pleased today to sign into law the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act, which approves the U.S.-India 123 Agreement. The passage of this legislation by the Congress marks another major milestone in achieving the vision that Prime Minister Singh and I set forth on July 18, 2005, to transform the relationship between our two countries and to establish a strategic partnership. This act will strengthen the relationship between the United States and India and deliver valuable benefits to both nations.

The legislation does not change the terms of the 123 Agreement as I submitted it to the Congress. That agreement is consistent with the Atomic Energy Act and other elements of U.S. law. This legislation

is important as it enables me to bring the 123 Agreement into force and to accept on behalf of the United States the obligations contained in the agreement.

The agreement grants India advance consent to reprocessing, which will be brought into effect upon conclusion of arrangements and procedures for a dedicated reprocessing facility under IAEA safeguards.

In addition, the legislation does not change the fuel assurance commitments that the U.S. Government has made to the Government of India, as recorded in the 123 Agreement.

The passage of this legislation reflects the common view of my administration and the Congress as to the value of nuclear cooperation and is in the interest of the United States and India.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. H.R. 7081, approved October 8, was assigned Public Law No. 110-369.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Ivan Gasparovic of Slovakia October 9, 2008

President Bush. It is my honor to welcome the President of Slovakia to the Oval Office. Slovakia is an ally and friend of the United States. And in my time as President, I have come to admire this President. He's an easy man to talk to. He's got good, strong opinions, and I appreciate his values.

We talked about a variety of subjects. I assured him that the United States will take strong action in dealing with the current economic situation. And I also talked about our common desire to have a—to work with our European friends to develop as best as possible common policy.

During my Presidency, I was pleased to support Slovakia's ascension into NATO. I was confident that Slovakia would be an excellent partner and ally in NATO, and history has proven me correct. And I thank the people of Slovakia for supporting the Government's decision to deploy troops into Afghanistan to help that young democracy never again be a safe haven for terrorists and to serve as an example of the transformative power of freedom.

Finally, we talked about visa waiver. I told the President that Slovakia has made a lot of progress on visa waiver. And I expect that in mid-November there will be a positive decision for the people of your good country, Mr. President. And I congratulate you and your Foreign Ministry for working hard on this issue. And I'm glad to welcome you to the Oval Office.

President Gasparovic. Mr. President, allow me to start by thanking you for inviting me. This is an extraordinary day for me. And I believe it is also a satisfaction to the people of Slovakia for them to see that Slovakia has a favorable disposition to-

wards our country, and that we have good relations. I believe that in the history of our relations, we are currently at our highest point.

It was during his Presidency that President Bush supported Slovakia on its way to NATO, which in turn helped Slovakia to become a member of the European Union. These were two very important steps and decisions that allowed Slovakia to build its reputation as a credible country. And it is this credibility that allows Slovakia to attract foreign investment into our country. Slovakia continues to be a prosperous country and a country that has and maintains its credibility in foreign policy as well.

We talked about many difficult issues. We talked also about the financial crisis and about the steps that need to be taken in order to overcome this crisis and to reinvigorate the financial system.

I'm very glad that Slovakia and its economy is currently in a situation where we will not likely be taking a direct hit from this financial crisis. Slovakia is in a position where we're able to mitigate many impacts of this crisis. On the other hand, Slovakia is the world's largest per capita car producer. This means that Slovakia's exports and foreign trade will suffer. However, we believe that we can take steps to mitigate this impact.

I was glad that in my capacity as the President of the Slovak Republic, I was able to reassure the President that Slovakia will continue to stand behind its commitments and its dedication to NATO and that we will continue to be present in Afghanistan. Moreover, Slovakia will increase the