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HOUSE POLICY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 22, 2006

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ERIC DELL
CHIEF OF STAFF

Dear Colleague,

I am pleased to send you the March 2, 2006 editorial from the *Post and Courier* of Charleston, South Carolina, regarding President Bush's historic visit to India and the nuclear agreement between the U.S. and India. Once we carefully consider all aspects of this deal, we can safely conclude that it will strengthen nonproliferation efforts, create U.S. jobs, and partner India with the IAEA. I urge your co-sponsorship of H.R. 4974.

Very truly yours,



JOE WILSON

Member of Congress

Historic Reconciliation with India

President George W. Bush's whirlwind, five-day visit to South Asia is almost certain to have lasting significance. By visiting India, the world's largest democracy, and also making a previously unannounced stop in Afghanistan, one of the world's youngest developing democracies, the president continues to demonstrate his commitment to political freedom.

The embrace of India, after decades of strained relations, follows a five-year personal courtship by President Bush. It ranks as one of the president's most important diplomatic achievements. Its lasting success depends on maintaining the right balance in America's relationship with Pakistan, a vital strategic ally in the war against al-Qaida-led terrorism, and also with China. After three days in India, Mr. Bush flies on to Pakistan, the subcontinent's rival nuclear power and India's foe in three wars.

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United States and Indian interests intersect in many areas: in the fight against Muslim terrorism; in promoting democracy through a joint Global Democracy Initiative and a new United Nations Democracy Fund; in combating threats to public health such as AIDS and pandemic flu; in developing new energy technologies, including nuclear energy; and in trade. Economic ties are strong. United States exports to India rose 30 percent in 2005, and despite the controversial outsourcing of American service jobs to India, the United States trade surplus with India was \$1.8 billion last year.

United States friendship with India also helps counterbalance China's rising economic and military power in the Asia region and keep the pressure on Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf to suppress Islamic fundamentalist movements. The administration's most controversial initiative towards India--a proposal to share peaceful nuclear technology with a nation that has not joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty--is moving forward. The president was conducting negotiations up to the last minute by telephone from Air Force One. If and when details are ironed out, and India opens its peaceful nuclear activities to international inspection, New Delhi will take its responsible place in the rank of the world's nuclear powers. That will place great pressure on Pakistan to follow suit.

The street demonstrations held to protest, peacefully, the president's visit, were mostly by Muslims. They served not only to underscore India's commitment to democracy, but also to emphasize by contrast the warm reception the president and first lady were given by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who broke with protocol to meet them at the airport.

Polls show that the vast majority of the Indian people welcome what Prime Minister Singh described as "an act of historic reconciliation." This visit is already being compared to Richard Nixon's breakthrough journey to Communist China. By forging a new era in United States relations with South Asia, the president continues to build a foreign policy legacy.
