

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 12, 2009

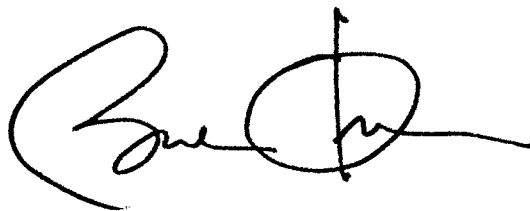
As Indians stood ready to claim their own fate on August 15, 1947, Prime Minister Nehru declared that a “tryst with destiny,” forged years ago, would finally be fulfilled. His words recalled a history of struggle and future filled with hope. Today, sixty-two years since this appraisal, his words still exemplify India’s ongoing journey as it strives to reach new heights.

The history to which the Prime Minister alluded took root in a decades-long struggle for independence. In the 19th century, efforts to challenge aspects of colonial rule reached climaxes in the 1857 rebellion and the founding of the Indian National Congress. The struggle culminated in the civil disobedience movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, and the cause of independence achieved its goal when British rule ended peacefully. Praising Gandhi’s leadership of this movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. remarked, “if this age is to survive, it must follow the way of love and non-violence that he so nobly illustrated in his life.”

India has attained unprecedented milestones as its democracy has matured. Boasting a vast diversity of ethnicities and languages, India constitutes the largest democratic union the world has ever known. Indian politics have given voice to women and countless minorities, and have demonstrated that Indians stand unified in their commitment to human dignity.

Economically, India is also forging a new path. Fulfilling the promise of internationally-competitive institutes of higher education, Indian professionals are leading their nation into a new phase of growth. From Bangalore to Boston, Indian scientists, engineers, and thinkers are generating ideas and prosperity that improve and save lives across India and the globe. In Bollywood and Hollywood, Indians contribute to films that captivate audiences in every corner of the world. As the Indian economy continues along this promising road, millions are being lifted out of poverty and are carrying the hope for a brighter future.

This vibrant and promising India has a natural friend in the United States. Our people are bound by common values and ideals, and Indian Americans contribute to all aspects of American life. Our fates are tied by the interconnected nature of our world and a shared vision of peace, prosperity, and respect for human rights. Marking Indian Independence Day, the United States and its people celebrate the realization of the vision Prime Minister Nehru described and the bright future it continues to portend for the people of India.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.