



## AMERICA, MY AMERICA US Independence Day Special

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# PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: INDIA, ISRAEL AND AFRICA'S BEST FRIEND

No matter that a small minority of Indian Americans voted for him in 2000 and 2004, George W. Bush became the most pro-Indian President in the history of America.

According to the conventional wisdom of those presiding in the political left, the 43rd President of the United States, George W Bush, was (and is) a “dummy”. This son of the 41st president’s ascent from a minor owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team to governor of Texas to his election as President in 2000 and re-election in 2004 was, according to his vast army of detractors, the result of family connections and the work of the political wizard Carl Rove, whom, they point out, Bush himself named “the architect” of his political triumphs.

Putting aside the irritating disclosure that Bush had a far above normal IQ of 125, just 10 points below that of Bill Clinton, long deemed a virtual genius by almost every Democrat and even a large number of Republicans, Bush might well have been a dummy- at least, in the political definition of the word.

The 43rd President of the United States actually, rather, embraced them. And the world is a better place because of it. Just look at India, Israel and Africa as prime examples. There are almost three million people of Indian origin living in the US. Of those of voting age, 51% are registered Democrats and a mere 6% are registered Republicans. While no exact data can be found concerning how Bush -- with the remaining 49% of independents thrown into the mix -- fared with the Indian American voters in 2000 and 2004, it can be estimated that he tallied between 10% and 20% of

trading peer, supporting the world’s largest democracy seemed to come naturally.

In late September 2001, just weeks after the 9-11 terrorist attacks against America, President Bush, as if signaling his understanding that India and America face the same deadly terrorist enemies, lifted the sanctions imposed under the provisions of the 1994 Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act by the Clinton Administration against India in late May 1998, following the country’s nuclear tests earlier that month.

In November 2001, just two months later, President Bush and then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee held meetings in which both leaders agreed that India and America would begin a new era of cooperation and friendship that would provide political, military and economic benefits to both nations. The transformation of the Indo-US relations had begun.

And as history teaches us, that new relationship would reach new heights during Bush’s two terms in office. This blossoming of the relationship between these two great nations would include: increased military cooperation – during the Bush years India and America conducted joint military exercises unparalleled in scope before and since; expanded collaboration in the war against terrorism -- in the aftermath of 9-11 and continuing throughout Bush’s following seven years in office India and America steadily increased their exchange of intelligence information; escalated commerce - bilateral trade between the two nations tripled during Bush’s second term in office; a strengthened nuclear power partnership - the “123 Agreement” (finalized during Bush’s last months in office) freed American and Indian businesses and corporations to work together in nuclear power related projects. The “123 Agreement” proved to produce technical advances and economic benefits that continue to be felt in both countries to the present day.

George W Bush did not fare too much better with the Jewish vote in 2000 and 2004 than he did with that of voters of Indian origin, winning

only 19% of the Jewish vote in 2000 and a slightly improved 24% four years later. Yet, as in the case with India, Bush did not allow domestic political factors to enter into his foreign policy calculations.

A student of Christian and Jewish history, Bush presumably knew that if Jews, persecuted and murdered over the past 200 centuries culminating in the genocide of 6 million in the European World War 2 Holocaust 70 years ago, were the same proportion of the world population in the 21st century as they were in the time of Christ, the Jewish population would stand at 200 million, rather than the scant 12 million (half of whom currently live in Israel) who exist today.

Bush also presumably knew that the Palestinians, rather than being the victims of the Israelis, have in alliance with their fellow 100 million Muslim neighbors waged wars of annihilation against the Jews of the Middle East for more than a century -- both before and after the creation of the State of Israel. A cornerstone of the Bush foreign policy was to assure that Israel’s enemies would not succeed and that Israel, the only democratic nation in the Middle East, would survive.

Bush implemented that policy by furnishing Israel with more economic aid and loan guarantees than had any other White House since the founding of the Jewish nation. He also supplied Israel with advanced weaponry including in 2006 “bunker buster” bombs used to destroy the trenches from which Hezbollah guerillas launched attacks against Israeli civilian populations; and, perhaps, just as importantly, Bush provided Israel with unprecedented diplomatic support: Most notably unlike previous both Democratic and Republican administrations which had viewed the building of new Israeli settlements as an impediment to the peace process, Bush referred to them as the new “realities on the ground” which the Arab world, he intoned, had to acknowledge in its future peace negotiations with Israel.

However poorly Bush performed with Indian American and Jewish voters, Bush fared even far worse with the African American electorate,

never exceeding 10% of their vote in either presidential contests. Yet, Bush may have well been the best friend in the White House that the continent of Africa ever had. At the time that Bush became President, HIV/AIDS was ravaging the continent. But only 50,000 Africans were on the disease fighting anti-retroviral drugs. Bush was to change that. In 2003, the 43rd POTUS initiated The President’s Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (Pepfar). By 2007, 1.3 million Africans were on this medication, supplied mostly by America.

Bush’s policies scored similar success in fighting malaria, which, while receiving less media attention than HIV/AIDS, was killing millions of Africans throughout the continent. As a result of programs initiated under the Bush Administration, the number of people falling victim to malaria was cut in half in 15 African nations.

Add to this the fact that Bush supported the cancellation of thirty four billion dollars of the debt that 27 struggling African states cumulatively owed to America; add further that he led the international isolation of North Sudan to punish it for the mass murders of Christians and Animists in Darfur, consequently bringing the Muslim nation to the negotiation table with South Sudan, and you might understand why Bush was known to be loved and continues to this day to be loved by the people of Africa.

Five years after he left the Presidency, Bush is also known to still be loved by a major portion of the people of India and Israel, many of whom, along with the people of Africa, might perhaps long for the good old days when a “dummy” sat in the American White House.



A strengthened nuclear power partnership - the “123 Agreement” (finalized during President Bush’s last months in office) -- freed American and Indian businesses and corporations to work together in nuclear power related projects. The President is seen here with India’s PM Manmohan Singh.

In politics, intelligence is sometimes defined as the ability to identify your base and pursue policies that will lead them to vote for you and, conversely, identify your detractors and laugh in their faces. While Bush in the most part was friendly to his conservative base -- supporting a strong military, declaring a “you’re with us or against us” American led international war against Islamic terrorism, lowering taxes on all Americans -- he never laughed in the face of those voting blocs which voted against him, or for that matter voted against virtually every other Republican candidate, in overwhelming numbers.

their vote.

It proved fortunate for the more than one billion people living in India that Bush did not allow conventional domestic political factors to enter into his policy considerations. Bush, rather, became arguably the most pro-Indian President in the history of America.

For Bush, who viewed India as a counterbalance to the increasing power of China, an ally in the fight against the terrorist threat emanating in Pakistan, a partner in regulating and policing the internationally economically vital Indian Ocean water lanes from the Suez Canal to Singapore and a major

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