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US, India agree on nuclear and defense deals

**During her visit to India, Secretary of State Clinton also announced that Prime Minister Singh will make the first state visit under Obama.**

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#### WASHINGTON

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton paved a path to expanding relations with India during her three-day visit there, announcing accords that secure multibillion-dollar contracts for US nuclear power-plant builders and that open the door to billions of dollars in sales for American defense contractors.

But it was another announcement that, even more than the others, demonstrated the Obama administration's designation of India as a crucial partner for the United States in the 21st century. On Nov. 24, Secretary Clinton said, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will be President Obama's guest in a White House state visit, making Mr. Singh the first foreign leader to make that level of visit under the new American leader.

The importance bestowed on Singh may be fitting, some regional experts say, given India's booming economy, its example as a stable multiethnic society, and its status as the world's largest democracy.

But it should not surprise the Obama administration if the attention to India and Singh causes problems with another crucial US partner in the region: Pakistan.

The state visit for Singh "says the US wants to strengthen diplomatic relations with India, a rapidly growing power and one that will be critical to addressing the big global issues Obama wants to address, so the level of visit is appropriate," says Malou Innocent, a South Asia expert at the Cato Institute in Washington.

At the same time, she adds, the US can't neglect the issues that keep India and Pakistan rivals – especially Kashmir, as well as sectarian extremism and nuclear competition. In fact, the US should expect the attention lavished on India to cause fresh tensions with Pakistan, she says.

"India wants to separate itself from Pakistan in the eyes of the world, but we can't deal with India in a vacuum," says Ms. Innocent. "Islamabad is going to see this [the Obama invitation to Singh and India's elevated status in Washington] as a snub, so we can expect new pressure between the US and Pakistan."

In New Delhi on Monday, the Indian government announced it was designating two nuclear power-plant sites for exclusive development by US companies. At the same time, the government agreed to honor so-called "end-use monitoring" arrangements for high-technology military sales, which allow the US to sell military equipment in sensitive markets while ensuring that the equipment is used only for designated defensive tasks.

The agreement will allow US military contractors to participate in India's updating of its mostly Soviet-era aircraft and other equipment – a five-year program that will cost India an estimated \$30 billion.

In addition, Clinton and her counterpart, foreign minister SM Krishna, established a "strategic dialogue" to be pursued by working groups in nonproliferation and counterterrorism, education, economics, science and technology, and energy and climate change.

That last category proved to be an area of stark contention between the two countries during Clinton's visit.

Obama has pressed India to commit to legally binding greenhouse-gas cuts as part of global negotiations on climate change to be concluded in December.

But Indian officials on Sunday surprised Clinton by publicly expressing their frustration with American pressure on binding reductions – suggesting the new strategic dialogue between the superpower and the emerging 21st-century power will have its share of disagreements.

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