

Progress made on nuclear energy, defence, trade: Richard Verma on Modi's visit to US

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Washington: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's three-day visit to the US this week was "every, very rich and productive" as significant progress was made in wide range of areas from civil nuclear energy to defence and trade, America's top diplomat in New Delhi has said.

US Ambassador to India Richard Verma

"This is a very very rich and productive visit," US Ambassador to India Richard Verma told PTI after the conclusion of Modi's visit, during which the Prime Minister held meetings with US President Barack Obama and addressed a joint sitting of the Congress.

"I think the takeaway was deepening and broadening of the relationship in so many ways. It was a real testament to our friendship," said Verma, who was present in most of the meetings Modi had with US government officials including with Obama at the White House on Tuesday.

"The Prime Minister said there is a new symphony ready to play," said the top US diplomat of Indian-origin, referring to Modi's speech to the Congress.

"Substantively we did so much as well, civil nuclear, defence, climate, energy, new consulates, people-to-people contacts, cyber, trade, across the board," the Ambassador said referring to various agreements reached during and in the run up to the Prime Minister's fourth trip to the US.

Verma said the two leaders spent several hours together at the White House on Tuesday.

"The mood was exceptionally positive. They had very good discussions on regional issues, economic issues, it's a whole range. They really had very important set of discussions. I think the mood was quite constructive," he said.

Observing that defence is the "big part" of India-US relationship, he added that "now we have moved well beyond just defence".

"We have so many other areas. Clean energy finance, education, increasing consular, travel, India's admission into global entry programme, for example. So we are putting into place all those pieces to really make the relationship as the Prime Minister and President said the defining relationship of the century," Verma said.

"I think, this relationship stands on itself," he said when asked about the apprehensions in the Chinese media on a strong India-US ties.

"The Prime Minister said it best that our two countries can have such a positive impact on peace, on prosperity and security. And that such a great result of this friendship is getting stronger," he said.

The President and Prime Minister, meeting seven times in less than two years, he said, is part of their effort "to make sure that we solidify the gains made".

"I think, they enjoy getting together. And they know that the issues that we confront together are serious and require their personal attention. So just to give you the example of the Paris Climate Agreement, which would not have

happened without the President and the Prime Minister coming together.

“That’s the model of global leadership that our two countries can play in the future. And so these meetings are helpful in that regard,” he said.

- PTI