

But it is the future to which we should turn. It is to the next generation. It is to the children who are in school today that we will look to leadership. I would remind them that there is no finer place to look than in history and on the Constitution, and all that this Capitol represents, and to the structures that were set up by our Founding Fathers.

Learn discipline, learn history, study great literature, get a good education, and participate in government. Participate at any level, whether that is running for office oneself, or simply getting out and voting and encouraging others to get out and vote, or working in campaigns. But show that interest.

Learn, study, do what others who having gone before you have done, and be interested enough to protect these freedoms, protect our structure, protect the strongest military in the world to keep America safe while we are strong, and to protect these institutions that are valuable, so our children and grandchildren for years to come will be able to have these great freedoms that were given to us.

Again, it has been my great privilege to have served the U.S. House of Representatives and the people of this Nation in this office. As I leave tonight and say farewell in my last moment on the House of Representatives floor, I want to thank all that I have served with, both the Members and the staff and those who are here tonight, those who work in the U.S. House, work on the floor of this House, work in the cloakrooms of both parties. We owe a debt of gratitude. I want to thank those people.

It has been a great privilege. It will be a great honor to look from the outside as a private citizen and watch the workings of this body, for I know not only what a great institution this is, but what a great institution it will continue to be because of the people who are here, because of the interests served, and because our young people, generation after generation, will continue to revitalize our system of government and make this continue to be the greatest free nation in the history of the world.

THE INDIAN AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP COUNCIL AND STRENGTHENING INDIA-AMERICA TIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take some of the time this evening before I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), to talk about the activities of the Indian American Friendship Council.

I noticed that the previous speaker, and I guess he is now in the Chair, I wanted to say that the gentleman from

Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) who is now presiding over the House of Representatives as the Speaker was, with myself, the founder of the Indian American Caucus and the Indian American Friendship Council which the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) and I are about to talk about, and worked very closely with the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans from the beginning when it was founded to try to bring the United States and India closer together, and to also deal with some of the concerns and issues that the Indian-American community had here in the United States.

One of the accomplishments that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) made, and I am sure he is very proud of, is the fact that the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans has grown now. It is actually the largest caucus in the House of Representatives. The gentleman's involvement with it from the very beginning was a very important part of its success.

Let me say that not only do I appreciate the gentleman's contribution, but I know that the Indian-American community appreciates it a great deal. Whenever I go to any event whether there is an Indian-American community, they constantly make reference to the fact that the caucus has been successful, what we have accomplished, and talk about the various things we have done.

I just wanted to pay tribute to the gentleman as well this evening on another aspect of the many things the gentleman did during his career here in the House of Representatives.

Let me say, the reason that the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) and I are talking specifically about the Indian American Friendship Council is because this session of Congress, which will close this evening here in the House, I think was one of the most successful Congresses in terms of trying to bring the United States and India closer together, and making not only our colleagues in the government but I think the American people in general aware of the need to increase warm relations between the United States and India.

When I was about to get up this evening and mention the contributions of the Indian American Friendship Council, and I looked on their website, I noticed that the lead theme, if you will, was "Bridging the world's two greatest democracies." That is what the Friendship Council is all about, trying to bring the world's two greatest democracies together.

Over the 7 or 8 years now that we have had the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans, I think we have accomplished a lot in that regard. If I go back 7 or 8 years, at that time many people I think both in India and in the United States thought of the two countries as not only not partners, but maybe even I would not say enemies,

certainly, but maybe on opposite sides of the fence on many issues, whether it was the economy or the development of trade or security issues, or whatever.

Certainly over that last 7 or 8 years we have accomplished a lot to change that, and the Indian American Friendship Council has played a role.

I wanted to give particular thanks this evening to Dr. Krishna Reddy, the founder and still the president of the Friendship Council. One of the things that Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle certainly cannot forget is that every year in the summer, usually I think it is in July, the Indian American Friendship Council has a big event, basically a day-long conference, which concludes with a banquet in the evening where many Members of Congress participate.

I think there is more participation by Members of Congress in that conference and in that banquet than any other event put on by the Indian-American community here in Washington.

□ 1945

It is because Dr. Reddy and the people involved in the Indian American Friendship Council who really go out of their way to make it clear that Congressmen and Senators are important, and that the only way, if you will, that we can accomplish the goals of bringing the United States and India closer together is by having the community work with Congress and work with their Members of Congress to accomplish that goal and to basically say what their concerns are.

I went through again the Web site of the Friendship Council, and I saw a list of about 10 goals that the Friendship Council tries to achieve, and every one of these is, I think, very significant in terms of U.S.-India affairs, as well as the role of the Indian American community.

I just wanted to, if I could, very quickly list these. The goals basically say, and the first one is to forge better overall ties with an emerging power that is the world's largest democracy, better ties within the United States and India. That is in general.

Second, to give concrete expression to our shared democratic values and our interests in strengthening evolving democracies. What they mean by that is that the council has played a major role in getting the Indian American community involved in government, involved in civic affairs, whether that means registering to vote, getting out to vote, or working for candidates, or lobbying in a positive way in Washington or a State capital for candidates.

The third goal is to urge Indian progress towards global nonproliferation and security norms; very important, and not an easy task, because we know that with the detonating of nuclear weapons or the testing, I should say, of nuclear weapons in India a few years ago, there was a major concern about whether India will continue on the path towards nonproliferation.

The council has made it clear that that is the path that both the Indian government, the U.S. Government and all governments should proceed down. Nonproliferation is a goal. I commend the Friendship Council for having that goal.

Fourth is to maximize our partnership and trade investment and information technology exchanges with one of the world's largest economies, and one of the world's largest middle classes. We do not even need to comment on that one. Obviously, there has been a tremendous growth in trade between our two countries. There are tremendous opportunities in the information technology field. Indian Americans have played a major role obviously in the information technology field here in the United States as well as in India.

Next is to broaden and deepen our relations with the world class Indian players in the vital area of information technology. Again, we have explained that, and, furthermore, to enhance our joint efforts on urgent global issues including terrorism and narcotics.

When President Clinton went to India in March, and in that historic visit, which the council had been urging for a long time and Dr. Reddy have been preparing the way for for a long time, one of the major issues that was addressed was terrorism. And it was also addressed when Prime Minister Vajpayee came here to the United States before the House of Representatives in September, and significant progress has been made between the two countries on the goal of trying to get rid or trying to address international terrorism.

And another goal was team up to protect the global environment with clean energy and other initiatives where Indian leadership is essential. When I was in India with the President in March, we made some major progress with regard to environmental concerns.

We were at a hotel next to the Taj Mahal when an agreement was signed between the United States and India to try to improve the environment, to improve access to energy. And, again, the Friendship Council had been in the forefront of trying to stress the environmental and energy needs and the fact that our two countries, one, the United States, being the leader in the developed world and the other, India, being a leader in the developing world on these environmental and energy issues.

Finally is to join hands in the global campaign against polio, HIV/AIDS and other public health problems. Dr. Reddy, himself, is a dentist. He is very concerned about public health. He has been honored by the Indian government and by other organizations here in the United States, because of his concern, his public health concerns; and obviously, this is another area where the Friendship Council has been playing a major role and many members of the Indian caucus have taken the leadership in trying to improve the public health environment in India.

Let me just say that I just want to conclude my portion, if you will, of the Special Order by saying that I really admire the work of Dr. Reddy and the Indian American Friendship Council. I know that many of my colleagues do.

This is a bipartisan organization that works with Democrats and Republicans and certainly will continue to do the excellent job they do in the next Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

THE INDIAN AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP COUNCIL AND STRENGTHENING INDIA-AMERICA TIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for the remainder of the minority leader's hour.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to work with the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) on strengthening the ties between the United States and Israel.

I want to join with him in praising the Indian American Friendship Council and discussing how important U.S.-India relations are for the people of the United States and the important work of the Indian-American Friendship Council in strengthening those ties.

Mr. Speaker, just a few years ago, half a billion Indians went to the polls to choose a new parliament, five times as many people who participated last month in the U.S. Presidential election. Frankly, a higher level of participation in democracy than we enjoy here in the United States.

India has demonstrated to the world that democracy is not just a system of government for the developed world, but, in fact, is a system of government that can work anywhere. Where else would democracy face such incredible challenges? A Nation of a billion people, perhaps the most ethnically and religiously diverse nation on the face of the earth, with one democratically elected parliament.

India has surprised the world, not only with its ability to maintain and strength its democratic institutions but also with its economic growth. It serves as a model to the entire world.

The Indian-American community has also served as a model. It is now the most highly educated of all of America's ethnic groups. Forty years ago, there were 35,000 Indo-Americans. Today, there are 35,000 Indo-American physicians, not to mention the tens of thousands of Indo-Americans who are in the various other professions who have succeeded in business, particularly information technology and who have participated in the cultural and political life of America.

Clearly strengthening ties between India and the United States is an important mission, and no organization performs that mission to a greater de-

gree and with more finesse and capacity than the Indian-American Friendship Council.

The Indian-American Friendship Council has prominent chapters in networking groups, in many cities and States across this country. As the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) pointed out, every year the council hosts a major annual event here in Washington, which attracts scores of Members of the House and of the Senate and serves as a platform for discussion between the Indo-American community and other supporters of the U.S.-India relationship and elected Members of the Congress.

Mr. Speaker, not only does the Indian-American Friendship Council serve as a bridge to those who serve in Congress, but it also serves as a bridge to the State Department and the other departments involved in international economic and diplomatic policy of this country.

I am particularly proud of Dr. Krishna Reddy, the founder of the Indian-American Friendship Council, who I am proud to say is a Southern Californian. So while the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) has accomplished much for the Indo-American relationship, he cannot claim that his region is the home of Dr. Reddy, whereas we, in Southern California, can.

With that in mind and knowing of all the gentleman has done for the U.S.-India relationship and to support the Indian-American Friendship Council, I would at this point, yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), for any parting words about the importance of the Indian-American Friendship Council.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), and I agree that I cannot lay claim to Dr. Reddy, because he is from the gentleman's part of the country. I will say that about a year or two ago, Dr. Reddy started a chapter of the Indian-American Friendship Council in New Jersey.

They are now very active, and I have been to some of their meetings where there were maybe 200 or 300 people, and so even though he is from California, his name and his activities have now spread to my great State as well.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that Southern California is spreading wisdom to the far shores of New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), who has been here long before I was involved in the India Caucus and in strengthening ties between the world's richest democracy and the world's largest democracy.

ISSUES THAT WE NEED TO CONFRONT TO AVOID CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS OF COMING DECADES

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin the speech I had planned to give tonight.

Mr. Speaker, you have been here on many occasions when I have addressed