

U.S.-INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, next week I look forward to traveling to India, where I look forward to meeting with Prime Minister Modi, his national security team, and other Indian leaders. I am excited to be returning to New Delhi, and I am so hopeful about what the Prime Minister's election could mean for the revitalization of India's economy, its rising power, and for the renewal of the U.S.-India strategic partnership.

National elections in India are always a remarkable affair. Over several weeks hundreds of millions of people peacefully elect their leaders—the largest exercise of democracy on the planet. But even by Indian standards, the recent election that brought to power Prime Minister Modi and his party, the BJP, was a landmark event. It was the first time in 30 years that one Indian political party won enough seats to govern without forming a coalition with another party. This gives the Prime Minister a historic mandate for change, which Indians clearly crave.

I want Prime Minister Modi to succeed because I want India to succeed. It is no secret that the past few years have been challenging ones for India—political gridlock, a flagging economy, financial difficulties, and more. It is not my place or that of any other American to tell India how to realize its full potential. That is for the Indians to decide. Our concern is simply that India does realize its full potential, for the United States has a stake in India's success. Indeed, a strong, confident, and future-oriented India is indispensable for a vibrant U.S.-India strategic partnership.

It is also no secret that India and the United States have not been reaching our full potential as strategic partners over the past few years, and there is plenty of blame to be shared on both sides for that. Too often recently we have slipped back into a transactional relationship, one defined more by competitive concession seeking than by achieving shared strategic goals.

We need to lift our sights again. To help us do so, I think we need to remind ourselves why the United States and India embarked on this partnership in the first place. It was never simply about the personalities involved, although the personal commitment of leaders in both countries has been indispensable at every turn. No, the real reason India and the United States have resolved to develop the strategic partnership is because each country has determined independently that doing so is in its national interests.

It is because we have been guided by our national interests that the progress of our partnership has consistently enjoyed bipartisan support in the United States and in India.

This endeavor began with closer cooperation between a Democratic administration in Washington and a BJP-led government in New Delhi. It deep-

ened dramatically during the last decade under a Republican and a Congressional government. It reached historic heights with the conclusion of our civil nuclear agreement—thanks to the bold leadership of President Bush and Prime Minister Singh. This foundation of shared national interests has sustained our partnership under President Obama, and it is the common ground on which we can build for the future as a new prime minister takes office in New Delhi.

When it comes to the national interests of the United States, the logic of a strategic partnership with India is powerful. India will soon become the world's most populous nation. It has a young, increasingly skilled workforce that can lead India to become one of the world's largest economies. It is a nuclear power and possesses the world's second largest military, which is becoming even more capable and technologically sophisticated. It shares strategic interests with us on issues as diverse and vital as defeating terrorism and extremism, strengthening a rules-based international order in Asia, securing global energy supplies, and sustaining global economic growth.

India and the United States not only share common interests, we also share common values, the values of human rights, individual liberty, and democratic limits on state power, but also the values of our societies—creativity and critical thinking, risk-taking and entrepreneurialism and social mobility—values that continue to deepen the interdependence of our peoples across every field of human endeavor. It is because of these shared values we are confident that India's continued rise as a democratic great power—whether tomorrow or 25 years from now—will be peaceful and thus can advance critical U.S. national interests. That is why, contrary to the old dictates of realpolitik, we seek not to limit India's rise but to bolster and catalyze it—economically, geopolitically, and, yes, militarily.

It is my hope that Prime Minister Modi and his government will recognize how a deeper strategic partnership with the United States serves India's national interests, especially in light of current economic and geopolitical challenges.

For example, a top priority for India is the modernization of its armed forces. This is an area where U.S. defense capabilities, technologies, and cooperation—especially between our defense industries—can benefit India enormously. Similarly, greater bilateral trade and investment can be a key driver of economic growth in India, which seems to be what Indian citizens want most from their new government. Likewise, as India seeks to further its “Look East” policy and deepen its relationships with major like-minded powers in Asia—especially Japan, but also Australia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam. Those countries are often U.S. al-

lies and partners as well, and our collective ability to work in concert can only magnify India's influence and advance its interests.

Put simply, I see three strategic interests that India and the United States clearly share, and these should be the priorities of a reinvigorated partnership:

First, to shape the development of South Asia as a region of sovereign democratic states that contribute to one another's security and prosperity; second, to create a preponderance of power in the Asia-Pacific region that favors free societies, free markets, free trade, and free comments; and, finally, to strengthen a liberal international order and an open global economy that safeguards human dignity and fosters peaceful development.

As we seek to take our strategic partnership with India to the next level, it is important for U.S. leaders to reach out personally to Prime Minister Modi, especially in light of recent history. That is largely why I am traveling to India next week, and that is why I am pleased President Obama invited the Prime Minister to visit Washington. I wish he had extended that invitation sooner, but it is positive nonetheless. When the Prime Minister comes to Washington, I urge our congressional leaders to invite him to address a joint session of Congress. I can imagine no more compelling scene than the elected leader of the world's largest democracy addressing the elected representatives of the world's oldest democracy.

Yet we must be clear-eyed about those issues that could weaken our strategic partnership. One is Afghanistan. Before it was a safe haven for the terrorists who attacked America on September 11, 2001, Afghanistan was a base of terrorists that targeted India. Our Indian friends remember this well, even if we do not. For this reason I am deeply concerned about the consequences of the President's plan to pull all of our troops out of Afghanistan by 2016, not only for U.S. national security but also for the national security of our friends in India.

If Afghanistan goes the way of Iraq in the absence of U.S. forces, it would leave India with a clear and present danger on its periphery. It would constrain India's rise and its ability to devote resources and attention to shared foreign policy challenges elsewhere in Asia and beyond. It could push India toward deeper cooperation with Russia and Iran in order to manage the threats posed by a deteriorating Afghanistan. And it would erode India's perception of the credibility and capability of U.S. power and America's reliability as a strategic partner.

The bottom line here is clear: India and the United States have a shared interest in working together to end the scourge of extremism and terrorism that threatens stability, freedom, and prosperity across South Asia and beyond. The President's current plan to

disengage from Afghanistan is a step backward from this goal, and thus does not serve the U.S.-India strategic partnership.

For all of these reasons and more, I hope the President will be open to re-evaluating and revising his withdrawal plan in light of conditions on the ground.

Another hurdle on which our partnership could stumble is our resolve to see it through amid domestic political concerns and short-term priorities that threaten to push our nations apart. For most of the last century, the logic of a U.S.-India partnership was compelling, but its achievements eluded us. We have finally begun to explore the real potential of this partnership over the past two decades, but we have barely scratched the surface, and the gains we have made remain fragile and reversible, as our largely stalled progress over the past few years can attest.

If India and the United States are to build a truly strategic partnership, we must each commit to it and defend it in equal measure. We must each build the public support needed to sustain our strategic priorities, and we must resist the domestic forces in each of our countries that would turn our strategic relationship into a transactional one—one defined not by the shared strategic goals we achieved together but by what parochial concessions we extract from one another. If we fail in these challenges, we will fall far short of our potential, as we have before.

It is this simple: If the 21st century is defined more by peace than war, more by prosperity than misery, and more by freedom than tyranny, I believe future historians will look back and point to the fact that a strategic partnership was consummated between the world's two preeminent democratic powers: India and the United States. If we keep this vision of our relationship always uppermost in our minds, there is no dispute we cannot resolve, no investment in each other's success we cannot make, and nothing we cannot accomplish together.

I thank my beloved friend from Michigan for allowing me to speak, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I thank my good friend from Arizona for not only his remarks but also the thoughtfulness of his remarks on the U.S.-India relationship. I listened to them carefully and am glad to join in and look forward to his report. We have had a historic relationship with India as the two preeminent democracies, and we have a great opportunity to build on this relationship. I know my friend from Arizona has contributed vitally to that effort.

IRAQ

Mr. LEVIN. Recent events in Iraq have created great concern. The territorial gains by the ISIL, a violent ex-

tremist group, are not just a threat to Iraq's security but a security challenge to the entire region, and indeed to the United States. By its words and deeds, ISIL has made clear that it is deeply hostile to American interests and to universal values of freedom and human rights. That hostility can easily translate into plans and threats against us.

Faced by these developments, President Obama's decision to send a small number of U.S. military advisers is prudent. They will help assess the situation on the ground, they will support Iraqi efforts to defeat the Islamic militants Iraq faces, and help the Iraqis make best use of the intelligence support we are providing.

The President is right to say that U.S. troops will not return to ground combat in Iraq. The President is also right to say it is not our place to choose Iraq's leaders, because doing so is only likely to feed distrust and suspicion, and there is already too much of that in Iraq and in the Middle East.

What we can do is promote moves toward the political unity that is so essential for Iraq if it is going to weather the crisis and make progress toward a stable, democratic society. The problem in Iraq has not been a lack of direct U.S. military involvement but, rather, a lack of inclusiveness on the part of Iraqi leaders. That is why I believe we should not consider any direct action on our part, such as air strikes, unless three very specific conditions have been met:

First, that our military leaders tell us we have effective options that can help change the momentum on the ground in Iraq. In other words, only if our military leaders believe we can identify high-value targets—that striking them could have a measurable impact on the ability of the Iraqi security forces to stop and reverse the advances of the ISIL on the ground, and that we can strike them with minimal risk of civilian casualties and without dragging us further into the conflict.

Second, any additional military action on our part should come only with the clear public support of our friends and allies in the region—particularly moderate Arab leaders of neighboring countries. The United States has engaged in a comprehensive diplomatic effort to coordinate our response with Iraq's neighbors. If our strategy is to have the effect we want, it is essential that we have broad support in the region.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we should not act unless leaders of all elements of Iraqi society—Shia, Sunni, Kurds, and religious minorities—join together in a formal request for more direct support.

There is an obvious need for Iraqi leaders to form an inclusive unity government for their country's long-term success. But that process is likely to take some time, weeks or even months. But a unified formal statement requesting our further military assistance would be an important signal that

Iraq's leaders understand the need to come together.

It could not only be a sign that additional action on our part would be effective but also could be an important step toward creation of a national unity government.

So far, the signs that Iraqi leaders are prepared to take the steps they need to take are mixed at best. Prime Minister Maliki, who has too often governed in a sectarian and authoritarian manner, delivered a speech recently in which he said national unity is essential to confront ISIL—which is true—but then he signaled little willingness to reach out to other groups. A number of prominent Shia leaders portrayed the conflict in starkly sectarian terms, and Shia militias, including those under the control of Moktada al-Sadr, have marched through the streets of Baghdad. There is little doubt also that Iran is pursuing its own sectarian agenda in the region. Some Iraqi Sunni leaders too have made statements that promote sectarian interests over the common good, and there are also fears that the Kurdish minority may exploit the situation. But on the other hand there have also been some signs that the Iraqi leaders recognize the need to confront the ISIL threat not as Sunnis or Shia or Kurds but together as Iraqis.

Iraq's most influential Shia clerk, Ali Sistani, has called on all Iraqis “to exercise the highest degree of restraint and work on strengthening the bonds of love between each other, and to avoid any kind of sectarian behavior that may affect the unity of the Iraqi nation,” spreading the message that “this army [the Iraqi Army] does not belong to the Shia. It belongs to all of Iraq. It is for the Shia, the Sunni, the Kurds and the Christians.” That is the message from Ali Sistani—a very powerful message and a unifying message in contrast to the messages that should come, for instance, from Mr. Sadr.

The United States has national security interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve those interests unless Iraq begins to move toward the inclusiveness and unity that is necessary if our involvement is to have a positive impact. Put another way, we cannot save Iraqis from themselves. Only if Iraq's leaders begin to unify their nation can help from us really matter.

The ISIL is a vicious enemy. It is also the common enemy of all Iraqis—of all Iraqis and of Iraq's neighbors. If this vicious common enemy cannot unite Iraqis in a common cause, then our assistance, including airstrikes, won't matter. Only a unified Iraq governed by elected leaders who seek to rule in the interest of all their people can stand up to this threat.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

REMEMBERING HOWARD BAKER

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, before I begin, I want to pay tribute to