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 so hopefully some day 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, for the Indians to 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 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, politically, 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. allies 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 recognize the personal commitment of 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 for elected representatives 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, and they do not. But 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 develop resources and expand 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 American capability to protect its security interests in Asia and beyond. The President’s current plan to
Mr. LEVIN. Recent events in Iraq have created great concern. The terrorist 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 needs to be translated 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 in Iraq, 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 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 is that even though the United States and its allies in the region—particularly the United States has extensive ties with our Sunni, Shia, Kurds, and religious minorities—join together in a formal representation for the battle against ISIL. 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 praised 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 Sunni or Shia or Kurds but together as Iraqis. Iraq's most influential Shia cleric, 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 one 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 the strategic interest in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve the strategic interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve the strategic interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve the strategic interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve the strategic interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve the strategic interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve the strategic interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve the strategic interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not serve the strategic interests in Iraq, but further military involvement there will not 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 and of Iraqis. 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.

Iraq

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I thank my good friend from Arizona for not only his remarks but also the thoughtful strategic pronouncements 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.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

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