

since the 1980s. It shows how far our relationship has come in recent decades. Mutual misgivings have given way to mutual benefits in both the economic and security spheres. We are now key trading partners. We are the two largest democracies in the world. Our relationship is an important one, and there are more benefits that can be shared from future cooperation.

Today's address by Prime Minister Modi provides an important opportunity for all involved—an opportunity to hear his perspective on India's economic growth and how he feels we can strengthen the strategic partnership between our countries, an opportunity to learn more about his ideas for pursuing areas of common ground and advancing shared interests, and an opportunity to better understand his view of the challenges currently facing India and his outlook for overcoming them.

We welcome Prime Minister Modi. We are interested in learning more about his vision, both for India and for the country's continued partnership with the United States in the years ahead.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I join the Republican leader in welcoming the Prime Minister from India to America.

Mr. President, in my office I have a wonderful memento of my first meetings with Indians. I went to school at Utah State University in Logan, UT. It was so cold. My wife and I lived off campus, and we would drive a couple miles up a hill to the Utah State campus. Along the way, I would see Indian students walking to school. They were engineering students and agricultural students at the college. I would give them rides. I did that for a couple of years.

When it came time for me to graduate, one of the Indians I had gotten to know asked if Landra and I would be willing to stay over an extra day and they would make us a traditional Indian feast. We did that. It was a feast. They were dressed in their Indian garb. They had worked a lot on that food. It was the first Indian food we had eaten. We have eaten a lot of it since. It was a wonderful, warm occasion that we will always remember.

They gave us some presents, and with five children and moving quite a bit, most of those presents are history. I don't know what they were. But one that I have always protected is a little bone-carved statue of Gandhi that they gave me. He is in his regular clothes that we see him in. He has a staff in his hand like he had most of the time. It is finely carved. You can pull that staff out even today. It is a miracle that it

made it through my five children, but I have done everything I could to protect it. Now I have it in my office in a little glass enclosure, and I show my Indian guests that meaningful memento of mine.

The other reason I am going to have the opportunity in an hour or so to meet with the Prime Minister with Senator McCONNELL, the Speaker, and Leader PELOSI—I hope I have the opportunity to tell him of my fondness for Indians but especially those named Modi because the spokesperson's name from the group of Indians that I met was Modi. I have come to the realization in recent years that that was his last name. Everybody called him Modi. He was an engineer. He moved to New Jersey, and we kept in touch.

I am happy that the Prime Minister is going to be able to address our Nation in the House of Representatives, and I am sure his people look forward to that.

Again, I tell everyone here about my warmness for India, this great democracy. The second largest Muslim population in the world is in India. So it is a friend that we have, and we must maintain that friendship.

ZIKA VIRUS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I just left a meeting, a stunningly important meeting where every one of the guests were prominent, but the two I want to refer to briefly are Dr. Frieden, head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Fauci, head of one of the health institutes at the National Institutes of Health, Infectious Diseases, among other things. What they told us was very frightening. As we speak, there are three confirmed cases of babies born in the United States with the Zika virus. Of course, they are all very sick. The life expectancy is not very long.

They said in unison how vitally important it is and has been for months to get them some money so they can do the research needed to stop the spread of this virus. They have borrowed money from malaria research, TB research—all terribly difficult problems we are having in the world and the United States—to take care of the immediate funding for research on Zika. They have taken huge amounts of money—more than half a billion dollars—out of the Ebola fund, which is still a very serious problem. There are active cases as we speak.

This is not an effort we can just walk away from. This money has been needed for a long time, and it is sad that the Presidential request of \$1.9 billion has been opposed.

The senior Senator from Florida was at the meeting today talking about how every day there are new cases in Florida. Yesterday there were five new ones. We needed to do something on that yesterday, not wait until the fall, as has been suggested by my Republican colleagues.

DONALD TRUMP AND FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Senate Republicans are waiting with gleeful anticipation for Donald Trump to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court. Donald Trump, who last week attacked a Federal judge because of his Mexican heritage—even though the judge was born in Indiana—said that District Judge Curiel shouldn't be allowed to preside on his case because of his ethnicity. Donald Trump, moments later, said that he would feel the same way if the judge were Muslim.

This is the man—Donald Trump—for whom Senate Republicans are blocking a supremely qualified nominee for the Supreme Court, a man by the name of Merrick Garland. This is the man—Donald Trump—for whom Republicans are abdicating their constitutional responsibility. This is the man—Donald Trump—whom Senate Republicans want to determine the makeup of the Supreme Court for at least the next generation.

The Senate Republicans are united in blocking Judge Merrick Garland's nomination to the Supreme Court. Republicans are united in refusing to provide their advice and consent to President Obama's nominee to the Supreme Court. The Republicans are united in doing it for Donald Trump. They say so. They should be ashamed.

It is hard to imagine anything more humiliating than holding a Supreme Court seat open so that Donald Trump can fill that seat. Is this why my Republican colleagues entered public service—to march in lockstep behind a man who spews hate and attacks the basic rule of law in America?

The Republican leader says: "We know that Donald Trump will make the right kind of Supreme Court appointments."

This is sad for the Republican Party. If my Republican colleagues aren't embarrassed, they aren't thinking very well.

President Obama has nominated a moderate, experienced, brilliant jurist to the Supreme Court, but instead of giving Judge Garland the impartial treatment he deserves, Republicans are refusing to do their jobs. And for what? So Donald Trump, a man who routinely insults Republican Senators to their faces, among others, denigrates Senator McCain's heroism, says people's heritage makes them unable to perform their jobs, and all the terrible stuff about women, handicapped people—we want this man to appoint someone to the Supreme Court? The Republicans should come to their senses. It is time to drop the charade and give Garland a fair hearing and a vote.

AMENDMENT NO. 4549

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on another subject, Americans share many common values, and one of the most fundamental is this: If you make a commitment, you should keep it. If you reach