

Flushing, NY— Sunday, Rep. Steve Israel (D–Long Island) joined with leaders in the Indian community for a prayer vigil and delivered the following remarks (printed as prepared):

Not long ago, I was in New Delhi with a Congressional Delegation. Another Congressman – Tim Ryan from Ohio – and I decided to split apart from our delegation in order to visit the Gandhi Memorial.

It was a very hot day in Delhi as we walked where Gandhi walked, and stood where he fell on his way to evening prayer just less than 60 years ago.

History is filled with those who feel to violence and extremism. Gandhi fell. Thousands fell on 9-11. More than 180 fell last week. And each time, it is not an attack upon them, it is an attack upon us all.

A follower of Gandhi understood that more than most of us, he said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Martin Luther King said that. He fell as well.

An attack on a hotel in Mumbai is an attack on us all. An attack on a parliament in Delhi, or bus stop in Tel Aviv, or two towers in New York is an attack against us all.

There is a line in the world between people who teach kids how to blow things up, and people who teach kids how to put things together. Between those who use bullets, and those who use ballots. Between those who believe in the bright hope of the future, and those who would force us into the dark recesses of the past.

On one side of that line: Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Taliban, Jaish-e-Muhammad.

On the other side: The United States and India. The world’s oldest democracy, and the world’s largest democracy.

Today, we stand on one side of that line, united in grief. But that’s just today.

On all other days we are united in strength and hope. In the strength of a nanny who whisked a 2 year old to safety when the terrorists struck a Jewish communal institution. In the strength of a New York City firefighter or an ironworker who rushed to Ground Zero on 9-11 to help. In the strength of King and Gandhi and what they stood for: That the lower our adversaries go into depravity, the higher we must take the world with democracy. That the more cowardly they are, the more courageous we must be.

Now, these things don’t require hope alone. They require resolve. The resolve that the United States must show in providing India with the means and the resources they need to protect their people and their democracy from the brutality we saw. And, when we return to Congress, I will be proposing a U.S.-India counter-terrorism package. Because that is what one friend does

when another has been wounded.

Today we grieve on our side of the line, but tomorrow we will join together – India and America – and continue our leadership in the world.

Guided by this timeless lesson of Gandhi: “When I despair, I remember that all through history the ways of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end they always fall. Think of it – always.”

People – good and evil – fall in the search for peace. But in the end, our principles and values cannot be defeated.

In the end, the U.S. and India will not allow 10 men in Mumbai, or thousands elsewhere, or one man anywhere to extinguish the light that we bring to the world. The light of democracy and justice.

The inextinguishable light of a better world, a safer world, for that two year old who was saved by one woman’s humanity amidst the deafening and blinding explosions of inhumanity.

That is what unites us today, and forever. Thank you.

*Rep. Israel serves on the House Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations.*