

U.S. POLICY TOWARDS INDIA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EAST,
SOUTH ASIA, CENTRAL ASIA,
AND COUNTERTERRORISM**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

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U.S. POLICY TOWARDS INDIA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EAST, SOUTH ASIA,
CENTRAL ASIA, AND COUNTERTERRORISM,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:32 p.m., in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher Murphy presiding.

Present: Senators Murphy [presiding], Shaheen, Van Hollen, Young, Cruz, and Hagerty.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator MURPHY. Good afternoon. I am pleased to bring the subcommittee together today with Senator Young for a hearing on a critical topic, U.S. policy towards India, and we are grateful to have with us today a panel of one, but an august panel of one, Assistant Secretary Donald Lu.

I will introduce our speaker in a moment, but we will begin with brief remarks from both myself and Senator Young.

For the information of the committee, to the extent anybody is listening online waiting to come here, we are going to keep this hearing going through the vote. We will try to switch off to make sure that we make efficient use of all of our time.

The U.S.-India relationship, arguably, has never been stronger, and the United States is grateful to the people of India and Prime Minister Modi for our growing friendship.

Our relationship is growing for good reason. Five years from now, India will become the world's most populous country, home to about one out of every six people.

It is already the world's sixth largest economy and last year it was the world's fastest growing major economy. India possesses the world's second largest military if you look at numbers of active personnel, second only to China. During the global pandemic of the last 2 years, India's biopharmaceutical industry has emerged as a key producer to the United States and the rest of the world of PPE, therapeutics, and vaccines.

Having the world's most populous country be a democracy when so many other large and growing nations are not, is clearly a great benefit to the United States and that is why Democratic and Republican administrations over the course of the last several decades have worked to strengthen this relationship.

For instance, the United States, through the four-nation partnership of the Quad, has a growing and very important defense relationship with India to secure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

India and the United States also work constructively on climate policy. While China was largely missing in action from the most recent climate summit, India made a significant pledge to become net zero by 2060.

Our relationship with India is multi multifaceted and it is, rightly, deepening across a number of critical fields, but as with many countries in the world, we have some important differences in the relationship that we need to work out.

Most timely for today's hearing is India's position on the Russian invasion of Ukraine where, frankly, many of my colleagues and I are puzzled by India's equivocation in the face of the biggest threat to democracy since World War II.

At a time when democracies are closing ranks to condemn Russia's invasion, it is troubling, to say the least, to see India, the world's largest democracy, sitting on the sidelines.

I understand India has a history of nonalignment in foreign policy matters, but this is a unique moment that demands clear-eyed conviction about right and wrong, sovereignty, and democracy.

I note India abstained on today's vote before the U.N. while at the same time many countries that had previously declared neutrality voted with us. We hope that India soon will get on the right side of history.

I am sure we will also discuss today India's recent purchase and acquisition of the Russian S-400 air defense system.

We are in an active debate about whether CAATSA sanctions for that purchase should be waived. I know the ranking member has a view on that, and I look forward to hearing the pros and cons and the options available from our witness today.

Lastly, we need to be able to talk honestly with India about the things that they can do to improve the health of their big, thriving, but still young democracy.

We have got a lot of work to do here at home to strengthen American democracy so we need to be a little careful about being too preachy these days, but India's Muslim minority continues to face discrimination and all too often violence, and Kashmir remains a crisis without any resolution on Prime Minister Modi's promise that the people of Kashmir will have a say in the region's future.

With that, let me turn to the ranking member, Senator Young.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TODD YOUNG,
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Assistant Secretary for appearing before the committee today.

We are holding this hearing at an incredibly dynamic and volatile time. Our thoughts, of course, continue to be with the Ukrainian people, who are suffering under an onslaught by Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Unprovoked aggression by an authoritarian regime is doing something that the experts said was impossible in today's interconnected world.

We are witnessing a ground war in Europe, the largest since World War II. This sobering reality must serve as an immediate wake-up call to the United States and our allies around the globe.

First, that we live in a world where authoritarians in Moscow and Beijing are willing to impose their will on others through force, and second, and more worrisome, is that both governments seem to only respond to strength and hard power.

These dynamics bring along the risk of a catastrophic escalation that we have not seen since the Cold War. It is important to maintain this perspective as we approach today's hearing, examining the critical importance of the bilateral relationship between the United States and India.

Many have said that our interconnected economies make wars of the past unthinkable in today's age. What we are witnessing in Europe challenges this assertion to its core.

Sadly, we must recognize that this same reality is also true in Asia. India has been and remains on the front lines of Chinese aggression with skirmishes breaking out on their northern border.

They remain the only member of the Quad to see members of their armed forces die in direct combat with China's People's Liberation Army.

This reality, coupled with the fact that India has for decades relied upon Russian-made military equipment for their defensive needs, offers some important context for today's discussion.

Again, let me be clear that Vladimir Putin remains a KGB thug who has invaded a peaceful democratic Ukraine. He must be held accountable for the atrocities occurring there.

At the same time, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Chinese Communist Party is a regime hell bent on creating vassal states and fundamentally remaking the globe to serve its interests.

In this complex world it is essential that we prioritize and work to build alliances with the unique challenges of Europe and Asia in mind.

As such, I think it would be foolish and deeply shortsighted for the United States to harm our relationship with India over what is occurring in Ukraine.

Rather, in today's hearing, I look forward to examining how we should encourage India to continue deepening its ties with the Quad.

As we do, we should be mindful of the fact that just a short time ago, India's traditional nonaligned posture made a partnership with like-minded allies to counter a nation like China almost unthinkable.

Yet, today, as a result of fighting along their northern border, the outbreak of COVID-19, and the global predatory behavior of the Chinese Communist Party, we have witnessed a dramatic shift in Delhi's position.

This is a welcome shift and we must encourage our friends in India to continue their wariness of Beijing while partnering with like-minded allies in the U.S., Japan, Australia, and elsewhere.

Today, I look forward to hearing from the Administration on how they are approaching this goal. I look forward to exploring in what areas we can deepen our cooperation with India and addressing how we can strengthen cooperation with India through things like

intel sharing, cooperative logistics, and cooperative defense planning.

How can we help India continue its shift away from dependence on Russian arms toward American-made equipment that will enhance our ability to work together?

Secretary Lu, I believe that we have only scratched the surface in terms of what is possible and I am pleased that we are here to discuss such important matters.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Young.

It is now my privilege to welcome to the subcommittee, Assistant Secretary Lu. He is the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

Prior to this assignment, Assistant Secretary Lu served as a U.S. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic and the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Albania. Ambassador Lu is a Foreign Service officer with more than 30 years of U.S. Government service.

So we thank you for being here today. We will, of course, include your full statement in the record. We would ask you to summarize your remarks before we begin rounds of questions.

Welcome to the committee.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DONALD LU, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. LU. Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Young, our relationship with India is one of the defining partnerships that will determine the security of Asia, of the United States, and of the world.

It is a relationship that we have to get right and the only way we are going to get it right is if the Administration is working with the Congress.

If you will allow me, I would like to share today our thinking on India-China relations, the future of the Quad, cooperation on counterterrorism, defense sales, and human rights and religious freedom in India.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, of course, is foremost in all of our minds. The State Department continues to engage India closely to underscore the importance of a collective response in condemning Russia's invasion.

Just as an increasingly provocative PRC is challenging the United States, it is also provoking India at every turn.

India staged a boycott of a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympic Games after the PRC selected a regiment commander responsible for the attack on the Indian border that resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers as one of its Olympic torch bearers.

Beijing has also recently published new PRC maps reiterating claims to large swaths of territory in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh and renaming India's cities with Chinese names.

We remain committed to accelerating progress in our major defense partnership and strengthening India's capacity to deter PRC provocation through robust naval cooperation, enhanced information and intelligence sharing, and increased cooperation in emerging domains such as space and cyberspace.

I joined Secretary Blinken in Melbourne for the fourth Quad Ministerial last month. I was struck by how much the Quad is accomplishing and the determination of all four Quad partners to support a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The Quad is making huge strides in achieving our goal of delivering 1 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to the world.

The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation has provided \$50 million dollars in long-term financing to an Indian pharmaceutical company to develop manufacturing capacity to produce at least 1 billion doses of vaccine by the end of this year.

The Quad is also working together on maritime cooperation and security. We are sharing data on maritime domain awareness, fighting illegal fishing together, and our four countries have conducted complex and large-scale naval exercises in our annual Malabar exercise.

We also share concerns with India about terrorism. With the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, both of our countries are concerned about the resurgence of terrorist groups operating there.

We have worked to hold accountable terrorist groups responsible for the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

Our cooperation over the past year has included meetings of the Counterterrorism Joint Working Group, the Quad Counterterrorism Tabletop Exercise, and working groups of the Homeland Security Dialogue.

India is the world's second largest importer of defense technology. Over 22 years, U.S. defense sales to India have grown to over \$20 billion, and India is considering purchasing an additional six P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft for \$2.1 billion.

Since 2011, India has reduced its arms imports from Russia by 53 percent and increased its defense purchases from the United States and other partners as well as increasing its own domestic production capability.

India continues to report infiltration by militants into Jammu and Kashmir, although rates of infiltration have reduced markedly over the past 2 years.

Since the 2019 Pulwama attack, which killed 40 Indian soldiers, and under pressure from the international community, Pakistan has taken positive steps to address cross-border terrorism and we continue to encourage Pakistan to prosecute terrorist leaders and dismantle all terrorist groups.

As the world's largest democracy, India has a vibrant civil society, a free media, and an independent judicial system.

However, we are concerned about human rights challenges, including the lack of state assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, and reports of ongoing human rights abuses.

Similarly, across the country, we are closely monitoring reports of discrimination against Muslim communities and other religious minority groups as well as limits on free speech in NGOs.

It is critical that India's partners speak up when we witness troubling events, but that we also support India's democratic institutions, which are the country's key defense against the erosion of human rights.

In conclusion, we see growing strategic convergence between the United States and India. I look forward to working with the Congress to push forward this indispensable relationship between our two great nations.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lu follows:]

Prepared Statement of Mr. Donald Lu

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Young: Our relationship with India is one of the key partnerships that will determine the security of Asia, the United States, and the world. This is a relationship that we must get right. And the only way we will get it right is if the Administration and the Congress work together.

I will today share our thinking about India-China relations, the future of the Quad, climate and clean energy, cooperation on counterterrorism, defense sales, and human rights and religious freedom in India. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, of course, is foremost on our minds, and the Department continues to engage India closely to underscore the importance of a collective response condemning Russia's invasion.

Just as an increasingly provocative PRC is challenging the United States, it is also provoking India at every turn. India staged a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympic Games after the PRC selected the regiment commander responsible for the attack on the Indian border that resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers in 2020 as an Olympic torchbearer. Beijing also recently published new PRC maps reiterating claims to large swaths of territory in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, renaming its cities with new Chinese names. We remain committed to accelerating progress in our Major Defense Partnership and strengthening India's capacity to deter PRC provocations, through robust naval cooperation, enhanced information and intelligence sharing, and increased cooperation in emerging domains such as space and cyberspace.

I joined Secretary Blinken in Melbourne for the Quad Ministerial last month. I was struck by how much the Quad is accomplishing and the determination of all Quad partners to support a free and open Indo-Pacific. The Quad is making huge strides in achieving our goal of delivering 1 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to the world. The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation provided \$50 million in long-term financing to Biological E Ltd to develop manufacturing capacity to produce at least one billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines by the end of 2022. We have held discussions via the Quad on critical and emerging technologies and are also cooperating to support clean energy and decarbonization efforts in the Indo-Pacific region, including through green shipping and clean hydrogen initiatives. The Quad is also working together on maritime cooperation and security. We are sharing data on maritime domain awareness, fighting illegal fishing together, and our four countries have conducted complex and large-scale naval exercises in the annual Malabar exercise.

India will be the largest source of global energy demand growth through 2030 and could become the world's largest carbon emitter unless it can change its current trajectory. We are focused on mobilizing finance and technology to accelerate India's clean energy transition through the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership.

We also share concerns with India about terrorism. With the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, both of our countries are concerned about the resurgence of terrorist groups operating from there. We have worked to hold accountable terrorist groups responsible for the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans. Our cooperation over the last year has included meetings of the Counterterrorism Joint Working Group, the Quad Counterterrorism Tabletop Exercise, and working groups of the Homeland Security Dialogue.

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India continues to report infiltration by militants into Jammu and Kashmir, although rates of infiltration have reduced markedly over the past 2 years. Since the 2019 Pulwama attack which killed 40 Indian security officials and under pressure from the international community, Pakistan has taken positive steps to address

cross-border terrorism. We continue to encourage Pakistan to prosecute terrorist leaders and dismantle all terrorist groups.

As the world's largest democracy, India has a vibrant civil society, a free media, and an independent judicial system. However, we are concerned about human rights challenges, including the lack of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and reports of ongoing human rights abuses. Similarly, across the country, we are closely monitoring reports of discrimination against Muslim communities and other religious minority groups, as well as limits on free speech and NGOs. It is critical that India's partners speak up when we witness troubling events, but that we also support India's democratic institutions which are the country's key defense against the erosion of human rights.

In conclusion, we see a growing strategic convergence between the United States and India. I look forward to working with Congress to push forward this indispensable relationship between our two great countries.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your testimony and for your service. I will begin rounds of 5-minute questions and let me start on this question of India's dependence on Russian military equipment.

This is a legacy dependence. It predates a decision to integrate more fully with the United States and our military, but the reality is you still have the majority of its air force, submarines, and its main battle tank force using Russian equipment.

So let me just ask a simple question. What limits does that reality impose on our security cooperation with India?

Mr. LU. Senator, thank you for that important question.

It is a question that we are looking at very closely as the Administration is looking at the broader question of whether to apply sanctions under CAATSA or to waive those sanctions.

It is critical that with any partner that the United States is able to assure itself that any defense technology that we share is sufficiently protected, and so we are in the process of trying to understand whether defense technology that we are sharing with India today can be adequately safeguarded, given India's historical relationship with Russia and its defense sales.

I have been working on India for almost three decades. Three decades ago, we could not have imagined selling anything to India on the defense side. The amount and the sophistication of what today we are transferring to India is staggering.

I mentioned the P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft. India is the first foreign partner to get that capability and that capability will allow them to patrol the Indian Ocean and also to secure their land borders to make sure that they understand threats that are coming from Chinese opponents coming by land, but also Chinese submarines in the Indian Ocean. It is critical not only for India's security. I would argue it is critical for American security.

I am of the belief that for every bullet, every radar, every fighter plane that we sell to India, that is one piece of defense equipment that we will not have to field ourselves in Asia.

Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. I think the integration of Indian security interests and U.S. security interests to the extent they now overlap in greater measure is one of the most important developments for U.S. security in the last two decades.

At the same time, we have to have eyes wide open that while much of this dependence comes from prior commitments, even since CAATSA has been passed India has made decisions, in particular

with the S-400, to continue to move forward on integration with Russian partners. Maybe in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine that may change.

I found your comments on a reduction in terrorist transit across the border over the last 2 years as encouraging.

I wanted to ask you to maybe go a little bit deeper with respect to the threats from these militant groups, whether it be LeT or JeM coming out of Afghanistan.

What does the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan mean for India and India's security, and what is India's thought process around—it had a presence in Afghanistan. Even though it is a developing nation, it was contributing to the redevelopment of Afghanistan.

How do our interests in Afghanistan overlap right now with Indian interests? We are obviously struggling with this question of what to do with the Taliban, what to do with the humanitarian crisis, how to continue to track terrorist groups there.

What is the potential overlap?

Mr. LU. Thank you. I see tremendous convergence in our interests with respect to Afghanistan. As you mentioned, India has for 20 years been a key player there, invested heavily in society.

As you may have seen, they have recently sent 50,000 metric tons of wheat as humanitarian assistance just at the same time that the EU and the United States and many other countries are stepping up to prevent a collapse of the economy in the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

The place that we share the most common interest is this question of the possibility that there could be emerging terrorist threats coming from Afghan territory. We are far away from Afghanistan, yet, we have felt terrorism that has emanated from that soil.

India is very close to Afghanistan and feels every day that the fall of Kabul is a turning point in their estimation of the threat to India, but also to other partner countries within South Asia.

On the subject you raised of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, we remain concerned that these organizations are present in Pakistan.

As a result of work that we have done with Pakistan, other partners have done with Pakistan, the Financial Action Task Force has done with Pakistan, we have seen real progress forward in prosecution of leaders of these groups, dismantling of some of these groups.

As you point out, these groups still remain and we are working with Pakistan to encourage them to fully dismantle and to prosecute members of these terrorist organizations.

Senator MURPHY. Great. We have got plenty of other questions. I will save them for a second round and turn it over to Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Assistant Secretary, each of us has spent a little bit of time discussing the Russian-Indian defense partnership.

I know successive Indian governments have valued Russian-produced weapon systems. India continues to have all manner of Russian legacy systems, and as they acquire new weapons they cannot immediately sever their weapons supply from what are interoperable systems.

So it is going to take some time to wean themselves off of the Russian defense industrial sector.

Can you help me contextualize? Can you put a little meat on the bones of that defense relationship between India and Russia and explain, from the Indian standpoint, why that relationship is so important to the government and their people?

Mr. LU. Interesting question. I certainly think India is able to articulate its own relationship with Russia far better than I could.

As an American diplomat who spent many years in India, I would say that that is a relationship of the Cold War, just as our very deep relationship and alliance with Pakistan was so critical during the Cold War years.

Yet, as we emerged from the Cold War 30 years ago, a new India emerged, a new Pakistan emerged, a new Russia has been created.

Yes, it is true that much of India's land-based forces, some of its navy, a few of its aircraft, are either of Soviet origin or now of Russian origin.

I would argue, of the major defense systems acquired over the past decade, the majority of the major defense systems have been American, European, Israeli. They have come from a diversity of countries.

Senator YOUNG. So let me pick up on that thread.

Mr. LU. Please.

Senator YOUNG. I asked the original question that of what H.R. McMaster called strategic empathy trying to understand your allies, your adversaries, and everyone in between, as opposed to what we occasionally engage in, which is strategic narcissism—trying to impose our vision of the world on other countries and leaders.

So given the predicate you have laid, what are the Biden administration's priorities for further advancing the position of the U.S. and our allies as alternative suppliers to India's future defense needs?

Mr. LU. Let me say, to begin with, that it is my view that it is going to be very hard for anyone to buy major weapons systems from Moscow in the coming months and years, given the sweeping financial sanctions that the Administration, with the support of Congress, has leveled on the Russian banking system.

Senator YOUNG. I am sorry, could you—

Mr. LU. Please.

Senator YOUNG. We are going to be voting momentarily and my team is doing its job, which is whispering into my ear, but it happened to occur at a moment of time which you were covering something that I need to get clarity on.

So in coming months, perhaps years, it will not be very easy for governments to procure weapons systems from Russia. I could imagine a situation where their defense export industry will become increasingly important to the Russian Government.

So maybe you could walk me through the challenge.

Mr. LU. If you do not have a banking system, it is very hard for other countries to pay millions of dollars in rubles—

Senator YOUNG. I understand.

Mr. LU. —or in yen or in euros to pay for these defense systems. So I do think many countries that have these legacy Russian systems will be worried, not only worried about buying new fancy systems like the S-400, but worried just about getting ammunition, spare parts, basic supplies for Russian legacy systems that they al-

ready have. I would guess that India is one of those countries worried about that.

It does, in my opinion, provide an opportunity for the United States, opportunity for Europe, and an opportunity for many countries around the world that produce advance defense technology now to go after new markets, to make sure we are not only selling the high end, we are selling the middle and the low end as well.

I would think—if I was a consumer right now of Russian technology, I would want to make sure that I have diversity because we are seeing—we will see a problem for Russia's customers in securing reliable suppliers.

Senator YOUNG. Absolutely. With the Chinese Communist Party on their border and with the recent aggression we have seen towards the Indian Government and its people, I agree with that assessment and I also see an opportunity.

I will yield back to the chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Assistant Secretary Lu, thank you for being here this afternoon.

I want to continue the discussion about the relationship between India and Russia because I have been disappointed.

I recognize the weapons connection that has been discussed, but I did not think that that also covered values. India is the world's largest democracy, and so I had hoped that India would side with the rest of the world's democracies in support of Ukraine in this current war on Ukraine that Russia is waging.

So I was really disappointed to see India abstain and sit on the sidelines at the U.N. rather than weighing in in support of Ukraine as the rest of the world's democracies did.

So can you speak to that a little bit?

Mr. LU. Senator Shaheen, wonderful to see you again today.

I want to describe a pitched battle we have been having. Secretary Blinken has been on the front lines of that battle.

The President, other senior officials in the State Department, have been relentlessly conducting very serious, high-level dialogue with their Indian counterparts over Ukraine over the course of months now, but culminating in this past week.

We can already see an evolution in some of India's public position. I will describe that, but maybe first I will say I had several conversations with Indian officials in the last 24 hours.

You may know, yesterday an Indian student was killed in the Russian bombing in Kharkiv, and what we can see already very quickly is that action has begun to turn public opinion in India against a country they perceived as a partner. Undeniably, that partner has just killed an Indian young person who is an innocent victim in Ukraine.

Let me say that all of us have been working to urge India to take a clearer position, a position opposed to Russia's actions, but what have we seen so far? We have seen a number of abstentions. We have seen this interesting evolution just in the past couple of days.

So you may have seen yesterday the Indian Government said it would send a humanitarian airlift of humanitarian supplies from

India to Ukraine. That is important. That is a request that is coming from Ukraine's leadership.

Second, it said in a U.N. session that it called for all states to abide by the U.N. Charter, to respect sovereignty and the territorial integrity of other states. That was not criticism of Russia, but a very clear reference to Russia's violation of the U.N. Charter and a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty.

So we are making small steps, Senator Shaheen. I assure you we are on this and working every day to make sure that we are trying to close the gap between where we are and where our Indian partners are.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I appreciate all of the State Department's diplomatic efforts in this regard and, again, it seems to me that India should be on notice that this is a time when it should stand up for its values and that an important value in a democracy is that you do not wage war on other sovereign nations.

So I hope that it is paying attention and will continue to listen to the diplomatic overtures that are underway.

I want to switch topics a little bit because one of the concerns that has come to the fore in India in the last several years has been the plight of women, and I wonder if you could talk a little bit about how you and USAID are working to address the rights of women in India and also to improve access to family planning, which has been a concern in India.

Mr. LU. Senator Shaheen, I last worked in India about a decade ago and during that assignment there was this terrible case of rape and murder that you may remember. This young student, she was a physiotherapy student, boarded a bus in New Delhi and she was then raped and assaulted and died of her injuries a few days later.

Senator SHAHEEN. Yes, I remember that.

Mr. LU. In the press, they called her Nirbhaya. It is a Hindi word for fearless one, but it galvanized the whole country to recognize that its laws were weak and that its enforcement of those laws were even weaker on questions about gender-based violence.

I saw a hundred thousand people—men, women, young people, and old people—pour into the streets of New Delhi and demand that their government make change. The laws were passed within a week.

It is, to me, a sign that democracy really works in India that the people have a voice, and the people will not put up with this sort of violation of rights.

I had a chance to meet with the family of that young woman. The Secretary of State at the time awarded her posthumously the International Woman of Courage Award, and we had the opportunity to present it to her. This issue of gender-based violence is very close to my heart and the heart of my family.

We are doing a couple of important things right now in Mission India. One is that we have dedicated programs to advance women's safety and empowerment, and those include law enforcement programming and broader public outreach to counter gender-based violence.

One of the new exciting things that Samantha Power announced when she visited India earlier at the end of last year was a public-private partnership between USAID, the State Department, the In-

dian private sector, academia, and civil society that is called the U.S.-India Alliance for Women's Economic Empowerment.

I was just out in Silicon Valley meeting with business leaders to talk about how they can get involved. The goal of this is to figure out how we catalyze our civil society, their civil society, all of our governmental efforts to support the rise of women in India.

So many new businesses are women-owned businesses and, yet, they lack the resources, the financing, the mentorship that their male counterparts have.

One of the goals of this alliance is to mentor a million Indian women. We have got a commitment for a hundred thousand at this point and we are moving very quickly towards a million.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Can I just do a follow-up, Mr. Chairman?

I appreciate that and I was heartened to see the reaction among the Indian people to that horrific and tragic killing.

I want to just follow up on the family planning aspect of that question, because India has a long history of family planning programming, but it has struggled to make modern contraception available countrywide to families.

So can you talk about whether we are doing anything in that sphere to help support their efforts?

Mr. LU. Senator, my experience with that issue goes back to decades. So what I want to do, if you will allow me, is to make sure I have the most up-to-date information so I am giving you the straight facts and not a story from 10 years ago.

So if I can take that as a taken question we will get you a clear and precise picture of what we are doing on family planning.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I would appreciate it.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lu, welcome.

India and America, I believe, are natural friends and natural allies. India is the world's largest democracy. We share values.

Under President Trump our countries moved together significantly. We saw a significant closing of the relations between the two countries.

I traveled to India in 2019. I had the privilege of welcoming Prime Minister Modi to Texas, to my hometown of Houston when he came to the United States.

In the past year under the Biden administration, relations with India have worsened significantly, as was manifested, among other things, in their latest abstention at the United Nations on the issue of Russia and Ukraine.

Assistant Secretary Lu, why is that? What mistakes has the Biden administration made to cause the relationship between our nation and the nation of India to deteriorate over the last 14 months?

Mr. LU. Thank you, Senator Cruz.

I will acknowledge that India and the United States have not voted the same at the United Nations over this past week.

I assure you that we continue to have an important dialogue with India at the highest levels to try to narrow that gap and to

help India to see the importance that we place on a coordinated message to Moscow.

Let me say, though, that in our outreach to India, we have not failed to try to leverage India's relationship with Russia to try to call for a Russian withdrawal and a ceasefire, that in the days immediately following the Russian invasion we have been in touch with Indian leaders and Prime Minister Modi called both President Putin and President Zelensky to call for an end to the fighting.

In addition, we are asking for India to do more and as I mentioned—

Senator CRUZ. Mr. Lu, the problem is I recognize you are asking them to do more, but the relationship keeps getting worse, and one of the aspects that has driven that; India is a critical part of the security architecture that coalesced during the Trump administration against China.

Countering China's aggressive behavior requires viable partners in Asia and beyond, and the U.S.-India relationship is a cornerstone of our multilateral efforts.

As you know and as we have discussed, our efforts to counter China were institutionalized in recent years in the Quad framework, but under the Biden administration, the security dimensions of the Quad have been significantly deprioritized in favor of other priorities such as climate change and developmental assistance.

Meetings in March and in September emphasized those issues at the expense of countering China. The Quad statement for March emphasized climate change, but did not even mention China.

Candidly, I am worried that these moves—about these moves and I have also heard from regional partners that they are also worried about these moves.

Why has the Biden administration shifted the focus of the Quad to issues like climate and away from vital national security interests and, in particular, why has the Biden administration pivoted the Quad away from countering Communist China?

Mr. LU. Senator, one thing I will agree about your statement is that one of the key ways that we will help our Indian partners to become more aligned with the world's position towards condemning Russia's actions in Ukraine is by making sure we continue to talk about the Russia-China nexus.

This is critical in terms of India's interests. It is critical in terms of our interests. I completely agree that part of the answer here is that India understand what is happening in Ukraine will affect China's behavior.

Senator CRUZ. Okay. Mr. Lu, you are a talented diplomat and so you know that you are not answering the question I asked.

Mr. LU. I look forward to answering that question. So I was at the Quad Ministerial in Melbourne. I saw our cooperation on defense and security.

That includes serious discussion and an action plan on growing interoperability, on intelligence sharing, discussion of the sale of advanced U.S. defense technology, complex multi-service exercises between our militaries, including now our Quad partners of Japan and Australia.

Senator CRUZ. Mr. Lu, let me try one more time. Why has the Biden administration significantly deprioritized countering Communist China in the Quad?

Mr. LU. I sat in on every session of Quad discussions and in every session of those discussions we, together with our three Quad partners, were talking about countering China.

We were talking about countering China with security and defense activities. We were also talking about countering China with COVID vaccines as we know that this is part of China's reach into the Indo-Pacific.

So I take exception to that statement. That is not what I witnessed in Melbourne.

Senator CRUZ. It is what the public record indicates, and I will say your efforts with respect to India, they are not working and they are harming America's relationship with India to the detriment of both countries.

Senator SHAHEEN [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Cruz.

Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Ambassador Lu, it is good to see you.

I want to pick up where Senator Shaheen and some of my colleagues have left off, which is expressing extreme disappointment in India's decision to abstain on the vote to condemn unprovoked aggression in violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, an attack on a democratic country.

As you well know, India is the most populous democratic country in the world and you would think this would be a moment that India would stand up in support of the people of Ukraine.

So I would like to ask you what efforts were undertaken by you and the Secretary and at what level to persuade India to vote with 141 other countries in the world to condemn the attack on Ukraine?

Mr. LU. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen. Wonderful to see you today.

We have spared no effort to try to convince India both to vote in U.N. sessions, but also to show support for Ukraine at this critical moment. Those efforts were led by Secretary Blinken. He has multiple times been on the phone with Minister Jaishankar.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Ambassador, let me—if you could, because I heard your testimony about the humanitarian assistance and other things. Let me ask it a little different way.

What was India's rationale? When Secretary Blinken said, vote with us to condemn this violation of sovereignty, what was the response from the Indian foreign minister?

Mr. LU. Thank you.

India has focused on two things when trying to explain its position: one that it continues to want to leave on the table the possibility of a diplomatic resolution of this conflict and, as we have said, that looks more and more unlikely as the Russian troops continue to pound civilian targets in Ukraine, but this remains their public position. It remains what we hear from them in private.

The second thing that they emphasize is that India has 18,000 students still in Ukraine, and they are trying to work with both the

government of Ukraine and with the government of Russia to safeguard those—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I would think if they were concerned about their students, as we are concerned about our students, that that—all the more reason to vote to condemn unprovoked aggression.

Let me ask you about the CAATSA sanctions, because I am one of those who was very open to the idea that we might want to consider a waiver for India to the CAATSA sanctions.

I thought there were good arguments. I think it is clear that CAATSA covers India's planned purchase of S-400s. So then the question was going to be whether or not a waiver is granted.

Will this vote by India in any way impact the Administration's consideration of whether or not India should be covered by CAATSA?

Mr. LU. Senator, maybe I could just restate, I think it is going to be very hard for any country on the globe to buy major weapon systems from India because of the sweeping sanctions now placed on Russian banks.

What we have seen from India in just the last few weeks is the cancellation of MiG-29 orders, Russian helicopter orders, and anti-tank weapon orders, and I can assure you that the Administration will follow the CAATSA law and fully implement that law and will consult with the Congress as we move forward with any—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Will this be—look, you just have—had Russia, obviously, invading Ukraine, and these are S-400s, a major air defense system. Will this be a factor in the Administration's consideration of whether or not to waive CAATSA?

Mr. LU. What, unfortunately, I am not able to say is to prejudge the decisions of the President or the Secretary on the waiver issue or on the sanction issue, or whether Russia's invasion of Ukraine will bear on that decision.

What I can say is that India is a really important security partner of ours now and that we value moving forward in that partnership, and I hope that part of what happens with the extreme criticism that Russia has faced is that India will find it is now time to further distance itself, including on the—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Right. Mr. Ambassador, evolution, which is the phrase you used for India's sort of progression on this issue, moves very slowly.

In my final seconds here, if I could ask you, there are two other countries in your jurisdiction under South Asia—obviously, you have the Stans as well—Pakistan and Sri Lanka, that also voted to abstain from this vote.

Can you talk briefly about your disappointment in those decisions and what efforts were made with respect to those countries?

Mr. LU. I was on the phone at 6 o'clock last night speaking to the Sri Lankan ambassador here. My colleague in the bureau was on the phone with the Indian DCM.

We have worked very hard—I am sorry, the Pakistani DCM—to try to convince them to vote in favor of this resolution. What is—it is disappointing how many countries have abstained. I would also look to how many of the countries voted in favor—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Can I just ask, Mr. Ambassador, did anybody in the Administration pick up the phone and call the Pakistani foreign minister or the Prime Minister of Pakistan?

Mr. LU. No. As you know, our chargé has met recently with the Pakistani foreign minister, but as you may know—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. On this topic? No, on this topic?

Mr. LU. On votes in the U.N.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. On the Ukraine vote?

Mr. LU. On the Ukraine—on Ukraine votes not specific to the U.N. General Assembly vote, but as you may know, Prime Minister Khan has recently visited Moscow, and so I think we are trying to figure out how to engage specifically with the Prime Minister following that decision.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. As you know, there was a meeting in Delhi with the Russians as well. The point is we need a strong concerted effort with respect to all of these countries—Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and India. I understand that you made some efforts. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator MURPHY [presiding]. Senator Hagerty.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Lu, it is good to be with you today. I would like to talk with you first about Taiwan, if I might.

In the Quad leaders' joint statement from back in March of 2021, they talked about a shared vision based on rule of law, democratic values, respect for territorial integrity of states, and while they did not mention Taiwan specifically, I have got to believe that Taiwan security would remain crucial to the perspective of all of the Quad members.

As a member of the Quad, I think India can play a very important and critical role in Taiwan security, particularly on the economic dimension, and India and Taiwan have actually started discussions to create a semiconductor manufacturing hub.

This is designed to meet growing demand in India. I think it has a great opportunity to deepen economic ties and I think that the United States should be supportive of cooperation between our allies like India and Taiwan.

I was hoping that you might give me an update on the latest with respect to India's engagements on economic ties with Taiwan, if you might.

Mr. LU. Thank you, Senator.

This was, indeed, discussed during the Quad meetings in Australia. We are very focused on critical supplies like semiconductors and looking for ways that we can partner not only between the four Quad countries, but we can have partnerships beyond the Quad to other key partners.

When we think of semiconductors, we absolutely think of Taiwan. We think of Singapore, South Korea. There are natural partnerships to be had there.

India has, at the level of prime minister, signaled a desire to be a powerhouse in semiconductors for the same reason that Taiwan is able to produce these very sophisticated pieces of equipment. India has those same attributes—a very talented workforce, highly educated.

India graduates a million engineers every year. We graduate 70,000. India has relatively low labor costs. All these things suggest India could be successful in this. I have also seen that India is exploring close relationships with Taiwan.

As you know, India is a naval power. It has one of the longest coastlines of any country in the world. They have, historically, a very powerful navy. We have seen the Indian navy sail into the Taiwan Straits.

I think that is symbolically very important at a time when we all are looking to provide reassurance to Taiwan about their security.

Senator HAGERTY. I could not agree more. Freedom of navigation is critical to the region. India can play an important role there.

I appreciate everything that you can do, you are doing, and that you will continue to do to help facilitate deeper economic ties.

I would like to stay on Taiwan, but turn to a different perspective now and that has to do with China. I am certain that China is watching very closely what is happening in Ukraine right now.

I am sure they are watching with an eye toward what that might mean for their intentions with respect to Taiwan.

I fear that Xi Jinping may be drawing all the wrong lessons from what he is seeing take place there, and I think it is absolutely critical that we work with our Quad partners to deter China and to prevent them from any adverse undertaking toward Taiwan.

I understand that India may not want to be militarily involved, but can you take me through how you are thinking about how India could be helpful to us in deterring China from taking an adverse move toward Taiwan?

Mr. LU. Maybe I will start with what we are doing to support India at the line of actual control and then move to what the Quad is doing to support countries throughout the Indo-Pacific, but including Taiwan.

So you may know we have been working very actively with India in the last 2 years to safeguard their sovereignty after provocations by the Chinese along the Indian border.

We are looking very closely at the talks that the Chinese and the Indians are having along that border. Our policy is to support direct dialogue, but what we are seeing is that the PRC has shown no sign of any sincere efforts at deescalating the situation.

We see a clear pattern, a clear pattern not only with the Indians, but with other neighbors of the PRC attempting to intimidate its neighbors, and it is a time when we need to stand by our Indian partners.

As concerns to Quad and security, all four countries are committed to working on the security of the Indo-Pacific and that means interoperability of our militaries.

That means intelligence sharing between our four countries, but also beyond those four countries with other partners in the Indo-Pacific, the transfer and sale of advanced U.S. and other Quad country technologies in the defense fields so we are properly armed for this new challenge, complex multi-service exercises.

Tiger Triumph is an exercise we do every year with India that has some of our most elite forces working with Indian forces, and the Malabar exercises have not only the United States and India,

it now has Japan and Australia participating annually in a major naval exercise that must have the Chinese going crazy.

I believe we are going to see more of that, going forward, particularly with what is happening with Ukraine.

Senator HAGERTY. I can only encourage you to keep that up. I have had the benefit of witnessing the Yama Sakura exercises year over year. I have seen the increased competence that that delivers.

I think we should continue joint exercises. I would encourage you to do everything you can to continue to streamline the FMS—the foreign military sales—process so that we can become more interoperable.

We will do everything we can here to help in that process, but it is a big process. It is far too big, from my perspective, in terms of the number of bureaucratic entities that touch the FMS process.

It is critical, particularly, given the speed and rate of technology development right now that we figure out how to compress the time and speed that up.

Finally, I would encourage you—I just had a meeting with the South Korean Ambassador to the United States. They can play an important role, too.

As I think of the Quad, I think, as you might as well, we need to think about our allies broadly in the region, and South Korea can play a role.

Mr. LU. Completely agree. Thank you, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you. Thank you, Ambassador.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Hagerty.

We will begin another round of questions. I know there may be a member or two arriving or joining via the Web.

Let me begin on the topic of climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report earlier this week which spelled out in pretty harrowing terms how India is going to face the devastating impacts of climate change sooner and more harshly than other parts of the world, water scarcity, in particular, from rivers that are relied upon as water sources drying up, flooding threats from Glacier Lake melt, hotter summers that are going to come with it pretty significant health consequences to populations.

It is a big topic, but let me drill down on the feasibility of the commitments that India has made already. I mentioned that they made a significant commitment at the Scotland conference. They have also committed to reach 500 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030.

How feasible are the commitments they have made? What help do they need from the United States in order to get there?

Mr. LU. Thank you, Senator.

The commitments are not feasible at all if they do not get the help of the whole world, and I think Prime Minister Modi knows that. He has thrown on the table this concept of India having 500 gigawatts of installed non-fossil fuel clean energy and he knows they are not on track to do that. They are not even close to being on track.

The only way they get to do that is if the whole world gathers together to provide the technology and the financing for India's search for cleaner sources of fuel.

Deputy Secretary Sherman uses this term all the time with respect to India—it is going to be the biggest everything. By 2030, as you suggested, the biggest population. It is also going to have—will, potentially, be the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases unless we do something now. This is like if we could have caught China 20 years ago before its big surge in growth, what would the climate picture look like today? Very different.

We are doing several things in the Administration. President Biden announced the Agenda 2030 Climate Action Program which has two parts.

One of those parts is led by the Secretary of Energy with her counterpart in India, and that is focused on the technology, making sure India has access to the latest green technologies so that it can efficiently and in a cost-effective way move to a greener energy future.

The second part is John Kerry's part, which is on finance mobilization. John Kerry is looking for the money all around the world. It is not just American money. It is money from international financial institutions, from the EU, from everywhere, to make sure that this climate miracle in India is possible and it is financed and it is realistic.

Senator MURPHY. Let me just ask a follow-up question on finance. I assume this is some mixture of subsidy and creative finance. One thing I am greatly frustrated at is the artificial limits that we put on U.S. international development finance, especially in the area of renewable energy.

I assume that India's system is so inefficient that there is a mechanism by which to gain something on climate with a return to the investors that are putting in money.

Is this a question of subsidy or is this a question of trying to come up with some creative finance vehicles for renewable installation?

Mr. LU. It is absolutely going to have to be based upon return on investment. We have taken the lead. Ours is the first major investment of what we hope is a whole series of international investments in clean energy.

The Development Finance Corporation just announced in December half a billion dollars for a U.S. company called First Solar to create a solar farm in Chennai, in the south of India, that will fuel huge cities across the south of the country.

It will be the biggest solar farm you have ever seen and it is going to make money. We know that right now. We have looked at the books. We looked at the business plan. DFC will get its money back with interest, and that is how we are going to have to do this.

No one is asking for handouts from the world. We are asking banks to provide money that will be returned with returns on investment because we can see that is possible, given the tremendous demand for energy in India.

Senator MURPHY. There is, obviously, a tremendous possibility for the expansion of manufacturing and assembly in India of renewable technology. China saw this train coming and made the investment early on.

India is playing catch up, but it is, certainly, a win-win for India in the long run to be able to reduce their emissions while also making a lot of this domestically.

Let me, quickly, turn to some domestic political topics. As I mentioned, we have got to be honest about our points of disagreement.

There was a report recently that Prime Minister Modi used this NSO spyware to target a range of his political opponents and perceived critics, including his top rival, Rahul Gandhi.

The United States has added NSO to what we call our Entity List for engaging in activities that are contrary to our national security interests.

Have we raised concerns with the Modi Government about their use of this spyware and what does this alleged weaponization of spyware against the Prime Minister's political opponents tell us about the state of democracy and political competition in India?

Mr. LU. Senator, I think much of that controversy when it was in the front pages happened before my time in the bureau. I am aware of lots of issues we are raising in terms of digital trade, digital economy.

On the specific issue of the spyware, if you will allow me to take that back as a taken question, we will get you exactly the answer of who raised it, in what context, on which dates.

I am confident it has been raised, but I could not give you the details today. If it would be helpful, I would be able to talk about the digital economy and what we are doing on that score.

Senator MURPHY. I guess my predicate was a lead into a broader conversation about the state of political competition in India today. Again, India is the world's largest democracy. Our interests in aligning with India are, certainly, tied to our mutual security interests, but also our mutual values.

So maybe a word on the state of political competition, the health of electoral democracy, in India today.

Mr. LU. I am a political officer by training. What I have done for 30 years is go into embassies and report on politics. India is politics as it was meant to be. It is a blood sport. They are ruthless in their politics.

We are just ending now a series of local elections in India. One of the great things about Indian democracy is despite the fact that it is winner take all between political parties, the electoral system—the biggest in the world—is able to function so efficiently and without any sense of a challenge to the legitimacy of this massive system that operates around the country including in places like Kashmir and the northeast that have had security problems.

One of the great things that I feel confident about, as someone who has spent a lot of time in India, is that the electoral system itself is very strong. Is there a lot of political competition today?

I think we are going to see in the election returns that come out in March later this month that the current ruling coalition retains a lot of authority in India. We will see.

The returns are, largely, in at this point. They have rolling elections, but Prime Minister Modi and his party appear to me, as an observer from the outside, to retain a lot of support within the country.

Senator MURPHY. Let me just ask one final follow-up. Do you attribute that to the organic popularity of the ruling party or are there tactics utilized?

Again, I am referencing one that maybe predates your time, but are there tactics utilized by the governing party to achieve such popularity that would be outside the bounds of norms in the United States?

Mr. LU. I have served overseas for almost 30 years. I have seen some terrible elections in parts of the globe. I have never seen that in India, honestly.

I have not seen the kind of dirty tricks and the stealing of elections and the use of anti-democratic tools that I have seen in many, many places that I have served. It does not mean they do not exist. Maybe they are just better at hiding them, but I do not see that.

What I see today, having lived in India under Congress Party rule and under BJP rule, is, today, I think the Congress Party is really trying to find its identity again. I think it is searching for its appropriate leaders and its message to the Indian public, and I think until the Congress Party is able to do that it is going to be very hard for the opposition to coalesce and to reform.

Senator MURPHY. Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Assistant Secretary Lu, you discuss all the reasons why we might believe that India will come to play an increasingly important global role in the 21st century, from the many highly-educated graduates of top STEM programs to its massive and growing population to its strategic location.

I have become hopeful about the possibilities that might exist as we partner, increasingly, with the Indian people. I think about the Quad and how it might, potentially, become a venue for partnering in some areas that have not historically been areas of partnership between the United States and India—broaden expanded defense partnerships, intel sharing, logistical cooperation.

I think about our joint efforts to police the waters and prevent illegal fishing, and if time permits, I would like to get into some of that.

Much of today has, understandably and rightly, been focused on this here and now situation—the Indian Government, its response, or lack thereof, to Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, and I am still trying to disentangle a number of different factors that might be responsible for India's seemingly weak reaction—I think, by most accounts, a fairly weak reaction.

I am trying to be empathetic. Is it institutional stasis? Do we have either a structure or a culture of government challenge in getting the government to be responsive? Are there particular bureaucrats or government officials who, personally, are resisting any sort of change?

Is there an ideological resistance to change? Maybe the years of being a nonaligned power can be cited and, perhaps, after a period of time that has become a tradition not critically reviewed during moments of crisis.

Is it an issue of self-interest? I have given you three potential factors that—you can weight them as you choose. Maybe there are other factors.

Is it an institutional stasis? Is it an ideological resistance? Are there, perhaps, some factors of self-interest that we have not yet accounted for? Because I cannot see self-interest driving India to resist speaking with a louder voice, acting more boldly in concert with others in the West against this aggressive action.

It seems to be—it runs afoul of their self-interest. You have said it yourself. In the future, this country, which is highly dependent on Russia for weapon systems, will not be able to procure weapons. This is, seemingly—it is antithetical to the self-interest of India. What am I missing?

Mr. LU. Senator, I completely agree with everything you just said. I agree that in India's position today is one that looks like a decision that India would have taken decades ago.

Having said that, when I sit here in Washington, it looks like a pro-Russian position that they have taken. They are quick to try to paint this as a decision that is neither pro-Russian nor pro-Ukrainian or pro-NATO.

I do not personally believe this is the ideological difference. I had the honor of being part of the meeting that Prime Minister Modi had with President Biden in September. You could not have seen two leaders that saw closer—a closer vision of the world, not only our bilateral relations, but how we view China and the rest of the planet.

We have really common interests today with India. What I do see is what you just said, which is there are some narrow self-interests that, I believe, are motivating the short-term thinking of our Indian colleagues. We have talked about many of them.

You just mentioned a reliance on spare parts and defense equipment, ammunition—very simple things to put in their legacy defense hardware that they still have that protects their border with China and other key infrastructure.

Eighteen thousand students—I just spent almost 2 hours with the Indian ambassador yesterday. We spent almost the entire time talking about Ukraine. I know a lot about the Indian students there and what they are facing, not only the dangers from falling Russian bombs, but the sense that they are having a hard time getting out because of perceived lack of welcomeness now in Ukraine.

Then India has maintained that it wants not to take either side because it wants to be a partner that is trying to work towards a diplomatic solution. We have seen them make the right phone calls that suggests they are serious about that. Unfortunately, they have not yet been effective in doing so.

Senator YOUNG. I am just going to pick up on some of those narrow areas of self-interest that you have helpfully enumerated for me—ammunition for weapon systems.

It would not surprise me if we were to inventory, system by system, their need for ammo to continue to supply those weapon systems if, indeed, that is the narrow category we are talking about, the United States could either, through our defense enterprise or working with partners and allies, be able to at least in fairly short order come up with alternative sourcing mechanisms for the Indian Government.

Indian students and the ability to get them out of the country—we could partner with the Indian Government, conceivably. I mean,

historically, we have been pretty good at this and each of these other areas it seems like we could work together with their government.

Maybe you have just, inadvertently or intentionally, publicly articulated some of the areas that they perceive to be in their short-term self-interest that we could mitigate any risks they might be feeling.

The last one you mentioned was—and I will say it less delicately than you have, sir—I think they are trying to pick the winning side.

That may be a bit of the concern of some of them in their government, and we need to demonstrate a firm resolve and unity so that they understand that we are not going away. We are going to stand with the Ukrainian people and make Vladimir Putin's life hell in coming years.

It appears I am well over my time. How quickly it goes. I am going to yield back to the chairman.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you. It is interesting how many potential interlocutors there are today between Ukraine and Russia. Lots of nations that are remaining neutral appear to be very interested in justifying that position based on their interest to try to play a mediating role.

I have one last question. I do not think we can do this hearing without an update on Kashmir.

Mr. LU. Great.

Senator MURPHY. I mentioned in my opening remarks Prime Minister Modi had suggested that there would be progress, that the people of Kashmir would have an opportunity to have a say in their future, that there would be elections. It continues to be one of the most heavily militarized places in the world. You still have lethal clashes.

Tell us a little bit about the way forward in 2022 for Kashmir and what the United States is doing to try to bring that voice to the people of Kashmir.

Mr. LU. Senator, I spent my wasted youth as a reporting officer in New Delhi covering Kashmir in the late nineties and had the opportunity to travel there eight times, including during the Kargil War when the Indians and Pakistanis were facing off on a glacier at 15,000 feet.

It is an important issue for all of us. Yes, I think a lot of promises have been made. Some have been kept both by Pakistan and India. I can summarize those that are kept and those that are remaining to be fulfilled.

We do see the Indian Government taking some steps to restore normalcy. The Prime Minister had outreach to a range of Kashmiri Indian politicians in June.

We saw visits by cabinet ministers to Kashmir in September, and during that same time we saw the restoration of 4G connections for cell phones, which is the way most people get their information in the Kashmir Valley.

We are keeping a close eye on the security situation, including terrorist threats. What I can tell you is cross-border insurgency has really gone down over 2 years, and I have been in meetings with

General Bajwa in Pakistan in which they have taken credit for closing off that border for militant groups.

Those militant groups themselves, as you suggest, have not gone away entirely, but they have sealed the border in a way we have not seen before and I think that is a positive thing, and I think that is partly a reflection of encouragement by FATF, encouragement by Washington and other partners of Pakistan.

Just to go back to the human rights situation, we see troubling remaining work. As you suggested, we have not seen the holding of Legislative Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

We have not seen free movement of journalists. We have seen the detention, in fact, of some prominent journalists in the Kashmir Valley. We believe all Kashmiris deserve the right to live in dignity and enjoy the protections afforded to them by the Indian constitution.

We look forward to continuing to encourage India to fulfill those commitments.

Senator MURPHY. Anything?

Senator YOUNG. Assistant Secretary, I mentioned the Quad earlier. How might it be expanded as we look to the future to include some of the missions that I mentioned—defense, intel, logistical cooperation?

How might we expand our cooperation on those fronts so that the Quad does not lose its ability to remain nimble—that is one of the advantages of the Quad as opposed to a formal defense alliance—but it will still meet the many needs of members and nonmembers, moving forward?

Mr. LU. I would argue that we are working in each of those areas right now, but we may not be publicly working in those areas. Certainly, in logistics, we are very explicitly working on supply chain issues in all of our countries and throughout Asia with partners.

In terms of defense, we are working to coordinate the actions of our navies on the high seas, both in the Quad and parallel to the Quad, meaning the four countries, not with the Quad hats on, but working together. That is happening, whatever you call it. We are doing that today.

On the intelligence—the sharing of information side, every day we are finding new ways to share critical security information with each other, but I think one of the things to look for in the years ahead is how will the Quad grow? Not maybe grow into five or six or seven members, but how will we then rope in Taiwan? That was discussed earlier today by Senator Hagerty. How will we rope in Singapore? How will we rope in North Korea?

Senator YOUNG. Yes. How?

Mr. LU. The idea currently on the table from the United States is we have a series of working groups. You have the ministerial level and you have the presidential/prime ministerial level, but then each of them have working groups.

It is a blinding amount of work for all of us. I think we are up to 20 different groups that are meeting constantly. The idea is to work in those partners at the working group level, and maybe one day, there will be an appetite to increase the number of actual Quad members, but we can already see that it makes sense. If we

are talking about supply lines, it is not just the 4 of us, but it should be 6 or 8 or 12 of us in Asia working on supply lines.

We are working on cyberspace. There are key cyber actors in Asia that are not in the Quad. We should get those folks knitted up with the working group, and we have seen real interest by South Korea, by Taiwan, by Singapore, to be part of those groups.

Senator YOUNG. This is fantastic. Is it the intention of the working groups to be always updating their work within the working groups? Always updating their plans, assessing the common objectives and goals and figuring out what efforts the participants might engage in to support one another?

Mr. LU. Correct. The ministerial level meets twice a year. The leaders level meets once a year, but the groups are meeting constantly. They should be meeting three or four times between ministerial level activities. They should define an agenda. They need to report out at the ministers meetings what they accomplished. All of that is happening.

Senator YOUNG. Who are the U.S.' representatives in those meetings?

Mr. LU. It depends on the topic. For example, if it has something to do with supply lines, it is the Commerce Department. It is USTR. It is the State Department. It is NSC. These are all inter-agency representatives.

Senator YOUNG. Related to that initiative, is the Biden administration, perhaps through the working groups, working to empower and encourage India and other Quad members to serve as a more active enforcer of maritime security in the Indian Ocean? Is that also occurring through the working group mechanism?

Mr. LU. I would say the opposite. I think India is asserting its leadership in the Indian Ocean on the high seas. It wants more technology to be able to do this job better, to find and track Chinese submarines, to look for Chinese illegal fishing vessels.

Senator YOUNG. Understood.

Mr. LU. It is very much not us convincing India. India wants that role.

Senator YOUNG. So they have every incentive to do so. Have they either needed to or found benefit from working with our INL bureau on this mission, perhaps, in coordination with other relevant agencies like our Coast Guard?

Mr. LU. Absolutely. We are seeing new transit routes of narcotics in the Indian Ocean as a result of the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban, and the Indian Navy—I was just at Western Naval Command in October.

They are tracking these vessels, but they figure they are missing some, too, and they are looking at how can they cooperate more closely with us to make sure that heroin and those methamphetamines are not being missed by the Indian navy and are being picked up. We are actively coordinating with our Indian partners on the high seas.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Lu. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY. I guess if the Big 10 can have 14 members, then the Quad can have 5 or 6.

Senator YOUNG. That is right.

[Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY. Assistant Secretary Lu, thank you very much for your testimony today. By the fairly robust attendance at the subcommittee from members on both sides of the aisle you can see how interested this committee is in the growing relationship between the United States and India, and we thank you for your great work.

Members are going to be allowed to submit questions for the record until the close of business on Friday.

With thanks to the subcommittee, this hearing is now adjourned. [Whereupon, at 3:54 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MR. DONALD LU TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The AR6 Working Group II IPCC report stressed the impact of climate change on health and well-being and underscored the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable populations, like those in India. As a result of harm caused, vulnerable populations, many of whom already suffer discrimination at the hands of the Indian Government, will be displaced both internally and externally. Demand for humanitarian assistance for these peoples will increase. How will State work within the inter-agency to help build resilience and adaptation capacities in India to ensure the safety of those most vulnerable and severely impacted by climate change?

Answer. The State Department is working closely with the interagency to build resilience and adaptation capacity in India in both bilateral and multilateral forums. For example, the State-led Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue includes a pillar working group, chaired by USAID, which focuses on adaptation and resilience together with Indian counterparts. Multilaterally, the Quad climate working group also includes a pillar on adaptation, resilience, and preparedness work which State, along with interagency and Australian, Japanese, and Indian partners, participates in. Additionally, USAID has supported, and Administrator Samantha Power will co-chair, the Indian-launched Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), which seeks to implement climate resilient infrastructure world-wide. Our work on disaster resilient infrastructure and adaption supplements the carbon mitigation work undertaken by the Department of Energy, the Development Finance Corporation (DFC), State, Treasury, and others to avoid the worst outcomes of climate change.

Question. How are you coordinating with agencies like the Department of Energy and the Development Finance Corporation to promote U.S. private investment in the Indian clean energy market and R&D cooperation? Is State taking the lead on these efforts? If not, what agency is, and is State being properly consulted?

Answer. Deepening climate and clean energy cooperation with India is a top priority for the Administration. The State Department is coordinating closely with the interagency—including the Department of Energy, USAID, and the DFC—to accelerate India’s clean energy transition through the Department of Energy-led Strategic Clean Energy Partnership and the State-led Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue (CAFMD), the two main pillars under the Agenda 2030 partnership. The U.S. Department of Treasury convenes the Finance Mobilization pillar of the CAFMD in consultation with State. DFC participates in the CAFMD’s Finance Mobilization pillar. In November 2021, DFC’s board, which State chairs, approved a \$500 million loan to an Indian subsidiary of U.S. solar module manufacturer First Solar, which will construct a 3.3 GW solar module manufacturing facility in southern India. In February, USAID launched the South Asia Regional Energy Partnership project, which is a \$50 million initiative to drive energy transformation in India and the region.

Question. How is India responding to Western efforts to divert U.S. LNG exports under contract to Asian countries like India to Europe? Are they being cooperative?

Answer. India—a large energy consumer—has been cooperative in coordinating with the U.S. Government to stabilize energy markets with their support of our collective Strategic Petroleum Reserves release in November. Although India has not been requested to divert LNG exports, the Indian Government released a statement

on February 26 that aligns with our common focus and willingness to take appropriate actions to address significant market volatility or supply shortages.

Question. How is the Administration deepening counterterrorism cooperation with India amid the more permissive environment for extremist groups, like Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Answer. The United States and India share several fundamental goals in Afghanistan including a determination to ensure that the country never again becomes a haven for terrorists. India shares our long-standing concerns about terrorism and instability in South Asia. Bilaterally and through the Quad mechanism, the United States and India continue to engage substantively on security and counterterrorism issues, including through the annual Counterterrorism Joint Working Group and the working groups of the Homeland Security Dialogue.

Question. I remain deeply concerned about India's S-400 purchase and Russia-India defense ties, especially in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The presence of the S-400 systems, and the Russian personnel who will presumably have to be present to monitor, train and service them, could compromise U.S. technology should India seek to purchase advanced fighter aircraft from the United States or otherwise deepen our military and security partnership. How has the Department's approach to a potential CAATSA waiver for India's purchase of the S-400 shifted since the Russian invasion of Ukraine?

Answer. I cannot pre-judge sanctions determinations or a potential waiver with respect to Indian arms transactions with Russia or speculate on whether Russia's further invasion of Ukraine will impact the decision. The Department, however, continues to urge Indian counterparts to diversify from Russian military equipment purchases, especially given CAATSA.

Question. How is the Administration ensuring any U.S. defense technology shared with India is adequately safeguarded?

Answer. The United States and India have several binding legal foundational agreements that cover the protection of U.S. sensitive content across the broad spectrum of cooperation. The Biden administration, led by the Department of Defense, continues its work to ensure U.S. technology is safeguarded in India and globally including through detailed technical discussions with the Indian Government and Indian compliance with end-use monitoring requirements and checks. The Indian Government has a strong track record of protecting U.S. technology.

Question. If the Administration proceeds with a waiver, will it at least secure a commitment from India to cease defense purchases from Russia with a deadline, such as 5 years?

Answer. The Biden administration has not yet made a determination regarding potential sanctions or a waiver and cannot speak to what conditions may be placed on India if such a waiver were granted. The Department continues to urge Indian counterparts not to purchase major defense equipment from Russia to avoid triggering sanctions under CAATSA.

Question. For years, India has proven unwilling to resolve U.S. concerns with certain market access barriers, ultimately leading to termination of India's GSP benefits in 2019. Can you discuss the Administration's approach to India's participation in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework? If India were to express interest in the trade module, what assurances would you seek as to its intentions for negotiations?

Answer. As President Biden announced at the East Asia Summit, the United States is eager to work with India and other Indo-Pacific partners on the development of an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) to deepen economic relations in the region and coordinate approaches to addressing global economic challenges, while advancing broadly shared economic growth. We will encourage India's participation in IPEF, including a pillar that will focus on fair and resilient trade. All countries that choose to participate in this pillar, including India, will be expected to support all elements of the pillar, including advancing labor rights, protecting the environment, and promoting transparency.

Question. In recent months, the Indian Government denied the renewal of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Acts (FCRA) licenses of several prominent civil society organizations, including Oxfam India and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. Without a foreign funding license, civil society organizations will be severely impacted in their ability to mobilize funds and carry out critical programs, including humanitarian service delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. How is the Biden administration engaging the Modi Government on the importance

of a robust civil society sector for areas of mutual priority, including as it relates to sustainable development and COVID-19 recovery?

Answer. I respect the essential work of civil society to advance respect for democratic principles and human rights. While governments have the legitimate right to regulate the inflow of foreign funding, I do have concerns about how the enforcement of FCRA has negatively affected the work of both local and international NGOs, including some affiliated with U.S.-based organizations. Senior Department officials, including myself, have raised our concerns about the enforcement of FCRA with our senior Indian Government counterparts and will continue to do so. The Department will also continue to communicate closely with Indian and international NGOs on the impact of FCRA as well as continue to message to the Indian Government the vital role that civil society organizations play in democratic governance and press for equitable, transparent, and timely review and adjudication of FCRA license requests.

RESPONSES OF MR. DONALD LU TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. What opportunities and challenges exist for bilateral engagement on Indo-Pacific trade issues with India? To what extent is India influenced by protectionism or restrictive policies?

Answer. Protectionist policies remain a serious challenge in India. Reducing regulatory and market access barriers in India is an important priority to enable our trade and investment relationship to reach its full potential. I am working closely with USTR, the Department of Commerce, and private sector groups to engage with India on expanding market access and improving its regulatory environment for American businesses. USTR Tai traveled to India last November to reactivate the U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum. She made progress resolving several trade policy concerns and established an agenda for increasing the pace and depth of engagement on a full range of U.S. trade and investment priorities.

Question. How would you characterize the importance having bilateral talks with India on IP theft, forced data transfer, and localization requirements as it relates to national security? Are these issues major impediments to strengthening trade with India?

Answer. The Department works closely with our colleagues at USTR to address issues such as intellectual property theft and cross-border data flows with our Indian Government partners. The re-launching of the Trade Policy Forum will enhance our engagement on intellectual property, specifically through the Intellectual Property Working Group. The Department regularly raises concerns about data transfers and localization requirements with Indian Government counterparts, including through the Information and Communications Technology Working Group in January, and closely consults with the private sector to understand their concerns. The Department believes the protection and enforcement of IP and free and secure cross-border data flows contribute to the promotion of innovation as well as bilateral trade and investment with India.

Question. How do you and the State Department coordinate with U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Tai to promote digital trade priorities with respect to India?

Answer. The Department consults regularly with USTR, the Department of Commerce, and the private sector to determine U.S. digital trade priorities with India. The Department and interagency, including USTR, coordinate closely on discussions of digital trade priorities with the Government of India through the U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum, the Information and Communications Technology Working Group, and other bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. Through this engagement, the Department, USTR, and others advocate for India to ensure sound regulatory policies for digital trade and a level playing field for U.S. firms to compete in this growing sector.

Question. What are the risks to a transparent and open digital economy that China poses in the region?

Answer. The Government of India is aware of the risks that PRC companies pose to a transparent and open digital economy in the Indo-Pacific region and has taken steps to limit the ability of those companies to operate within the country. Since June 2020, around 300 PRC-linked apps, including TikTok, WeChat, and Helo, have been banned in India. In addition, the Government of India did not select any PRC firms when it approved 13 applications to conduct 5G field trials last year. The gov-

ernment and Indian industry are eager to pursue an open architecture approach to 5G networks using open Radio Access Network (Open RAN) technology which enables interoperability among equipment from different vendors and greater software vendor diversity, thus limiting the risks of PRC equipment in the region.

Question. Press reports indicated on February 25 that India was exploring a rupee-ruble payment system to facilitate trade with Russia and soften the impact of global sanctions. What is the current status of this project?

Answer. The Department has not received information to suggest the Indian Government is proceeding with a new rupee-ruble payment system to facilitate trade with Russia and soften the impact of global sanctions.

Question. India reportedly depends on Russia and Belarus for fertilizer inputs critical to its agricultural sector. What options is the Administration exploring to reduce Indian dependence on Russian and Belarusian-sourced potash and other agricultural inputs?

Answer. The Administration will work with the Government of India and other allies and partners to explore options for trade diversification to ensure alternative supplies of agricultural inputs and mitigate the potentially negative impact from U.S. sanctions.

RESPONSE OF MR. DONALD LU TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. India has a long history of family planning programing, but it has struggled to make modern contraceptive methods widely available. Like most countries around the world, COVID-19 has forced India to redirect limited public health efforts towards combating the virus at the expense of family planning programs. Around the world, this pandemic threatens to roll back years of progress in universal access to family planning.

Assistant Secretary Lu, how are you working with USAID and others to prioritize the rights of women in India and improve access to family planning? What specifically are we doing to improve family planning access in India?

Answer. The United States has a long history of providing support for family planning and women's health as an integral part of our public health cooperation with India. USAID provides technical assistance to the Government of India and works with the private sector, other development partners, and civil society to ensure the adoption of high impact approaches and solutions for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health programs in areas with the highest burden. These efforts have been especially significant during the COVID-19 pandemic as many Indian states were forced to constrain other public health resources to focus on COVID-19 diagnostics and treatment. Specific areas of focus include expanding access and awareness of family planning methods, improving quality of family planning care throughout India, and strengthening an enabling environment for family planning.

RESPONSES OF DONALD LU TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. Human rights organizations have continued to highlight the increasing pressure placed on non-governmental organizations, journalists, activists, and religious minorities under the BJP-led Hindu nationalist government. India is a key strategic partner for the United States and the world's largest democracy, which makes its democratic backsliding particularly concerning. In your role, how are you engaging with and putting pressure on the Indian Government to respect the freedoms and human rights enshrined in its constitution?

Answer. Our support for human rights is a fundamental principle of U.S. foreign policy. The United States and India share many of the same institutional pillars of true democracies—a vibrant civil society, a free media, free and fair elections, and an independent judiciary.

As democracies, it is important for the United States and India to speak frankly about the democratic challenges we each face. Senior Department leaders, including me, regularly share our human rights concerns, such as protections for the freedom of expression and freedom of religion, and India's application of its Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, directly with our Indian counterparts and will continue to do so.

The Department of State continues to demonstrate our support for Indian and diaspora civil society and media organizations seeking to advance human rights and the promotion of democratic principles through sustained engagement. During his visit to India in July, Secretary Blinken met with a diverse group of interfaith leaders to discuss their perspectives on inclusive and sustainable development. Deputy Secretary Sherman met with a panel of LGBTQI+ activists from Mumbai during her October visit to India to underscore our support for inclusivity.

Question. How has the BJP's crackdown on human rights in India impacted American companies that have a presence in the country and what steps is the Department of State taking to raise these concerns with the Indian Government?

Answer. The Department has engaged Indian and international companies, including those that are U.S.-based, and civil society representatives to better understand the impact of the Indian Government's enforcement of digital content regulations. Using these conversations to inform our advocacy, the Department has raised concerns about how these new regulations negatively impact U.S. economic interests and the exercise of freedom of expression in the digital space in line with the shared values outlined in the G-7 Open Societies Statement that both of our countries signed last year.

Question. The Quad is an important initiative to sustain and expand cooperation between the United States, Australia, Japan, and India to tackle the climate crisis, as well as authoritarianism and the COVID-19 pandemic. What concrete steps can the United States, Japan, and Australia, as members of the Quad, take to help India meet its ambitious climate-related targets?

Answer. The Quad Climate Working Group is one of many important mechanisms for the United States to engage with India and other Quad partners to support ambitious climate targets, including India's goal of installing 500 GW of non-fossil fuel power generation capacity by 2030. The Quad countries have various initiatives centered around climate, but two of special interest are centered around green shipping networks and green hydrogen technologies. More broadly, climate efforts through the Quad complement our extensive climate change and clean energy engagement with India through tracks led by the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate's Office and the Department of Energy under the Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership and include activities such as Development Finance Corporation (DFC) lending, collaboration with DoE labs, the Department's Bureau of Energy Resources funded power sector decarbonization roadmap, and USAID programming for disaster resilient infrastructure, energy transformation, and biodiversity preservation.

Question. The United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021, passed by the Senate and the America COMPETES Act passed by the House, both include a provision to create a Quad Intra-Parliamentary Working Group. In what ways can this group support the work being done through the Quad to build sustainable infrastructure, ensure the Quad COVID-19 vaccine effort prioritizes vaccine equity, while also calling for the elevation of the Quad Climate Change Working Group within the overall structure of the Quad?

Answer. Quad cooperation supports the United States' goal of realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific, and our vision for this partnership is ambitious and far-reaching. I look forward to engaging with members of Congress on how best to support that goal and advance the work of the Quad, including through an intra-parliamentary working group.

At the Quad Leaders' Summit last September, Quad partners committed to deepen cooperation on COVID-19 vaccines and climate and announced a new Quad Working Group on Infrastructure. The Intra-Parliamentary Working Group would provide another opportunity to advance the Quad's ongoing efforts by mobilizing support from the legislative branch.

RESPONSE OF MR. DONALD LU TO QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. What actions is the State Department taking to engage Pakistan on religious freedom issues, particularly the protection of minority populations and reform of the country's blasphemy laws? Pakistani courts continue to convict individuals of blasphemy charges and impose sentences of life imprisonment or death, including in at least three cases over January-February 2022. What is the Department doing to address this worrying trend?

Answer. By delegation from the President, the Secretary of State has designated Pakistan as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) under the International Reli-

gious Freedom Act of 1998, as amended since 2018 for engaging in or tolerating particularly severe violations of religious freedom, including the government's continued enforcement of blasphemy laws and persecution and denial of rights of minority faiths. Consequentially, unless a waiver has been granted or an exception applies, the President is required to impose one of several actions listed in the IRF Act. With respect to Pakistan, it has been determined that a waiver is required in the important national interest of the United States. The U.S. Government strongly opposes blasphemy laws. State Department officials, including Undersecretary Zeya and Ambassador Hussain, consistently urge Pakistani counterparts to curb the abuse of blasphemy laws. Arrests of those wrongfully accused have led to years of unjust imprisonment and targeted assassinations of the accused and their legal representatives. Blasphemy and apostasy laws are too often used by individuals either as a pretext to justify violence in the name of religion or as a false pretense to settle personal grievances. Pakistan continues to detain, prosecute, and abuse individuals for blasphemy and has the harshest and most frequently enforced blasphemy laws of any country in the world.

