



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

June 24, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C., 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I welcome your visit to India later this month. Your engagement in New Delhi is a key opportunity to reframe the U.S.-India strategic partnership with the new government and demonstrate the critical role that a strong and prosperous India plays in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

During her testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation on June 13, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Alice Wells highlighted India's "pre-eminent role in the administration's Indo-Pacific vision." During his 2016 presidential campaign, President Trump promised that India would have "a true friend" in the White House if he were elected—a statement the president reaffirmed when Prime Minister Modi visited Washington in June 2017.

However, I am deeply concerned by the inconsistencies between the Administration's rhetoric and actions toward India, which are further exacerbated by the lack of a confirmed Assistant Secretary more than two years into this Administration's term. Tensions have increased over each side's tariff policies, starting with the U.S. "Section 232" tariffs on steel and aluminum. There is a growing view that the Administration is attempting to coerce India into complying with U.S. demands on a variety of issues, rather than negotiating with them as a strategic partner. The threats to strip India of its privileges under the Generalized System of Preferences in the middle of the country's general election has furthered the notion that the Administration sees the India relationship as a transactional one. And the decision to end

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waivers related to U.S. sanctions on Iran could alienate India when we need to be working with our partners to prevent destabilizing Iranian activities.

The Administration's policies have not only failed to advance U.S. objectives, but have also introduced significant friction in our partnership with New Delhi. The trade concerns are real, and the United States must continue to work with the Indian government on market access and other important issues like international child abduction and human rights. But the Administration must also demonstrate a predictable, coherent, and consistent strategy that strengthens U.S.-India cooperation, especially in areas where our interests and values align. It's critical that American engagement support those in India who seek to further strengthen India's ties to the United States.

The measure and strength of bilateral relationships cannot be boiled down to trade deficits and tariffs. Frankly, the inconsistent U.S. approach toward India risks setting back the strategic partnership that our countries have worked for decades to cultivate. I urge you to use your visit to not only reaffirm and strengthen the U.S.-India strategic partnership, but also convey a coherent set of objectives and predictability to the new Indian government that will help this relationship reach its full potential.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman