

Press Releases: Remarks at a Meeting With Employees and Family Members of U.S. Embassy New Delhi

Remarks

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Secretary of State

Roosevelt House

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SECRETARY TILLERSON: Well, good afternoon. And it's such a pleasure to return to India, but I'm returning under a different hat. But I have been to India before, and it's been a while since I've been back, but I'm really pleased to be here and pleased to have the opportunity to see a few of the faces here at the mission and acknowledge the work that you do here as well as the important work of our consular offices around the country as well.

I think as you no doubt have heard from a number of important policy decisions that have been undertaken in the past few months by the Trump administration, first, the South Asia policy, which India has a very important role to play in stability and security for this region – Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and beyond – and we've had a lot of discussions today in our conversations with our counterparts, and also I had conversations, obviously, with Prime Minister Modi's visit back in June to Washington, D.C. But we also then announced a new free and open Indo-Pacific policy and strategy as well recently, and again, India key to that important strategy as well.

So the importance of this relationship between the United States and India is clearly on the rise, but we've always had an important relationship. It dates back more than 70 years. But I think we have an opportunity at this time to take this relationship to a completely different character and commitment. And as we've said, it's really about securing the next 100 years for democratic processes, for other fledgling and emerging democracies in the region, to promote trade and economic development, using a rules-based order, maintaining countries' sovereignty – all of these are values that India and the United States share, and that is the strength of the relationship. So there's a lot of exciting things yet to come, and you are going to be right at the center of all of that in helping us carry out the policy of the United

States in this burgeoning relationship and growing relationship with India, both from a security standpoint, from an economic development standpoint.

We appreciate all of the work that you do here, and in particular, appreciate the work of the locally employed staff. Our diplomats and our civil servants, they come and go, and you're really the continuity of this place. And I know some of you have been here for a very long time, many years of service with us. You are so vital to our success because you do maintain that constant framework for us to have our people come and go, and we appreciate very much your long-term commitment and the commitment of others as well.

I certainly want to thank the families that are here. Thank you for supporting your spouse in the important work they do here on behalf of the American people. And I'm glad to see we've got a few of the young folks here in the front. My favorite – some of my favorite kids are in uniform down here, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and it's good to see you as well.

I know that overseas assignments are sometimes challenging, and I had a few during my prior life as well on a family-unaccompanied basis, so I really – I fully appreciate the sacrifices that people make. I know there's a lot of things that happen back home, and unfortunately, you're not there for them – some birthdays, some weddings, some graduations. Unfortunately, I missed my share of those. I know there's ways you make it up in other ways with your loved ones, but we do appreciate the fact that those are things that come with taking assignments overseas, far away from home and family. It is a terrific opportunity for yourself, though, and your families, and hopefully as the years go by and you reflect on the benefits against some of those costs, I think you'll find that it clearly comes out in the positive column for you and for your families.

I want to thank Charge d'Affaires MaryKay Carlson for her leadership here of the mission these last nine months. As you probably know, we have a new ambassador confirmed [\[1\]](#) that will be making his way over here soon. And I know this is going to be a terrific team between MaryKay and new Ambassador Juster to really begin to carry forward this important relationship for India and the United States.

I want to make just a couple of comments in closing on three important values that I talk about everywhere I go, and I talked about these the first day I joined the State Department and walked in the building. And the first is, your safety and security is the most important value that I think we have to share. And I don't call it a priority, because priorities can change. This is a value. We value you. We value your safety. We value your security. We want you to take care of yourself, but we want you to take care of your colleagues as well, and it's something that I'm committed to and I start every day in the State Department and every meeting with the question of: Are our people safe? So that's the most important thing to me, and I want it to be the most important thing to you as well.

The second value I said that I wanted to help people adopt is accountability. We need to hold ourselves accountable for the successes. We hold ourselves accountable when things don't go well. We learn from those things. We're all

going to make mistakes, but let's learn from it. If we hold ourselves accountable, then we can hold others accountable, in particular others in the countries where we're trying to advance our interests. But we have to hold ourselves accountable first and foremost.

And then third is that we treat each other with respect. No matter what your station in life is, no matter what your job is within the State Department, your job is important, doesn't matter what it is, because all of us are enabled to do what we do by others. None of us do it alone. None of us do it without the support of colleagues, the support staff. No matter who is around you, deserves to be treated with respect, and that's the way we're going to treat each other. If we do that and we practice it, we will treat others in our conduct of our policy with respect as well.

Your role is critical because you are the face of the American people, and how you conduct yourself conveys a lot about American values. So I appreciate the way you carry yourselves. I appreciate the way you conduct yourselves. I appreciate all of those folks in the back. Thank you very much for everything you do for us. And it's just a real pleasure to be in India. And we'll be back. We've got a lot work to do. You've already done a lot of work in facilitating this new administration coming into office, and we appreciate that, and I look forward to seeing all of you again. Thank you so much for everything you do. (Applause.)

The President nominated Kenneth Juster to be Ambassador to India on September 5. He has not yet been confirmed.

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