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VZCZCXRO4659 OO RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHHM DE RUEHNE #0761/01 0340305 ZNY CCCCC ZZH O 030305Z FEB 06 FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9379 INFO RUCNCLC/CHILD LABOR COLLECTIVE RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0056 RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 3181 RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 3198 RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6086 RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 3842 RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 6498 RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2699 RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 1323 RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 1053 RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 2009 RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 2048 RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 0289 RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 2733 RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 8859 RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1009 RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI RHMFISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

 C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NEW DELHI 000761 SIPDIS SIPDIS DEPT FOR G, G/TIP, G/PRM, G/DRL, SA/INS E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/31/2016 TAGS: PREL PREF ELAB PHUM IN NP BT SUBJECT: INDO-US GLOBAL ISSUES FORUM REVIEWS PRM/TIP ISSUES REF: NEW DELHI 736 NEW DELHI 00000761 001.2 OF 004 Classified By: DCM Bob Blake for reasons 1.4 (B,D) [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761#par1) 1. (C) Summary: A US delegation led by Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky discussed Bhutanese and Tibetan refugees, trafficking in persons, and forced labor with the Indian delegation headed by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran at the Global Issues Forum in New Delhi SIPDIS on February 1. The two sides agreed on the need to maintain momentum to resolve quickly the Bhutanese refugee situation, with Saran remarking that Bhutan will have to take back some "as a matter of principle." The US delegation highlighted increased US-India collaboration to address trafficking in persons. Saran welcomed expanded US engagement on child labor and forced and bonded labor through existing programs, but cautioned that high-profile agreements would be counterproductive as they would attract domestic opposition to "foreign interference." Other GIF issues reported septels. End Summary. Bhutanese Refugees ------------------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761%22%20%5Cl%20%22par2) 2. (C) PRM Director of Admissions Terry Rusch outlined the US assessment of the status of Bhutanese refugees in camps in Nepal, and expressed our hope that India would continue to use its good offices with the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan to begin expeditiously the process of repatriation of at least the Category 1 and 4 refugees. She noted that the United States is prepared to admit substantial numbers of Bhutanese, and suggested that the USG would likely ask the GOI for permission to process refugees for admission on Indian territory given the unstable situation in Nepal. However, she warned, in meetings with the Bhutanese Ambassador in New Delhi (reftel), the RGOB appeared to be backtracking on its commitments to move ahead with the return of refugees. Rusch also noted that the US might make a similar request regarding future resettlements of Tibetans resident in Nepal. [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761#par3) 3. (C) Saran reviewed the Indian history of engagement with Nepal and Bhutan to resolve the refugee problem, noting that India is keenly interested in a settlement as the existence of the camps poses a continuing security risk to India. Noting that UNHCR's requests for "elaborate monitoring conditions" of the returnees had contributed to Bhutan's decision to scuttle an earlier plan, he added that treatment of returning refugees would not be a "state secret," as any mistreatment would be reported quickly through media and communications linkages. Rusch noted that monitoring of refugees is a standard practice, and another group, such as the ICRC, could perform this function. Saran stated that India had expended great efforts behind the scenes to set up the aborted deal, and continues those efforts to move the two countries towards an agreement. Saran's latest interactions with the Bhutanese Foreign Minister had given no indications of RGOB backtracking, Saran said, adding that while the GOI would continue to press Bhutan, both the US and India also needed to keep pressure on Nepal to fulfill its commitments. Many Bhutanese stayed in India after being expelled from Bhutan, more have moved here from the camps to find employment, and New Delhi expects that in any final settlement even more refugees will eventually settle in India, Saran said. However, the GOI believes that Bhutan will need to take back some refugees as a "matter of NEW DELHI 00000761 002.2 OF 004 principle." (NOTE: See further GOI comments on Bhutanese refugees in para 7. END NOTE) UNHCR Representation -------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761#par4) 4. (C) After Rusch raised the question of the GOI's accession to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Saran noted that India's lack of signature had never stood in the way of welcoming refugees. Saran explained that the Government is considering enacting a refugee law, after which it may reconsider the question of signing the Convention. Regarding the lack of a New Delhi UNHCR office, Joint Secretary (UN Economic and Social) Manjeev Puri asserted that India has a good working relationship with UNHCR, although the formal establishment of an office is hampered by lingering disappointment over UNHCR leaving India "high and dry" with Tibetan refugees in 1971. Saran added that the GOI would be willing to entertain a formal request from UNHCR if it wished to open a New Delhi office. Trafficking ----------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761%22%20%5Cl%20%22par5) 5. (C) G/TIP Senior Coordinator Mark Taylor commended India's increasing efforts to stamp out trafficking in persons, and welcomed proposed amendments to the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA), noting the importance of increased law enforcement to target clients. He also applauded our expanded bilateral dialogue on TIP, citing "unprecedented law enforcement cooperation" such as our recently agreed $2 million UNODC training program. Taylor suggested that with Nepal's recent ratification of the SAARC Convention on trafficking, India could play a leading role in implementing mechanisms to stop regional trafficking and repatriate victims of international trafficking. Saran agreed that regional trafficking was a high priority for the GOI, and outlined steps India has taken to combat it, including appointment of nodal officers in the Ministry of Home Affairs in New Delhi to interact with Nepal, and GOI nodal officers in Mumbai and Calcutta to coordinate efforts on trafficked persons; and stepped up surveillance and questioning of suspicious travelers at selected high volume crossing points along the open India-Nepal border. India and Bangladesh have agreed to set up a similar arrangement, he noted. Puri told the US delegation that the amendments to the ITPA, aimed at removing penalties for the victims of trafficking and beefing up enforcement against the procurers of trafficked persons, had recently cleared the Cabinet, and the GOI expected to table the amendments in Parliament soon. Forced Labor: Abroad and at Home -------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761%22%20%5Cl%20%22par6) 6. (C) Turning to forced and bonded labor, Taylor acknowledged India's interest in protecting its citizens working abroad from inhumane conditions, as well as at home, and expressed USG interest in partnering on this front, including replicating the successful USG-funded program for reintegrating victims of trafficking. U/S Dobriansky highlighted the example of Indonesia's recent efforts to work multilaterally with other countries to establish standards for working conditions for migrant labor in the Middle East and elsewhere. Saran outlined the elaborate procedures India has in place to protect its migrant workers in the Gulf NEW DELHI 00000761 003.2 OF 004 region, such as a requirement for emigration clearance from the Protectorate of Emigrants, a watch list for suspect employers and agents, and an ombudsman role for Indian Embassies in the region. He assessed that India's cooperation with the US on international and domestic labor standards was "going well," but cautioned that high-profile bilateral actions on domestic labor conditions would be "sensitive." The GOI welcomes further practical cooperation through the medium of existing programs to address forced and bonded domestic labor, without seeking an official agreement "that would invite opposition" to outsiders meddling in India's domestic affairs. Further Discussions on Bhutanese Refugees ----------------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761%22%20%5Cl%20%22par7) 7. (C) PRM Director Rusch, accompanied by PolCouns and Poloffs, discussed further India's role in resolving the question of Bhutanese refugees in a February 2 meeting with MEA Joint Secretary (North) Pankaj Saran. She outlined USG objectives of Bhutanese repatriation of a small number of refugees, UNHCR registration of the camps, and third country resettlement in large numbers, to include tens of thousands to the United States. Saran noted the increasing impatience in the international community with delays by Nepal and Bhutan, and assured Rusch that the GOI is continuously engaged with Kathmandu and Thimpu on finding a solution. However, he cautioned, the international community must take into account concerns of the mountain kingdoms' governments, including negative experiences with UNHCR in the past, in crafting a solution that both nations will find comfortable. Additionally, the governing crisis in Kathmandu makes it unclear if Nepalese interlocutors can deliver on their commitments. Saran promised to continue the GOI's efforts to push Bhutan and Nepal to find a solution. He declined to commit to allowing eventual USG processing of Bhutanese refugees on Indian territory, noting that this would be an issue in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs and MEA's division of Citizenship, Passports and Visas. [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761#par8) 8. (U) Under Secretary Dobriansky has cleared this message. [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761#par9) 9. (U) Participants in the February 1 meeting: USG: - U/S Paula Dobriansky - Claudia McMurray, Assistant Secretary (Designate) for Oceans, International Environment and Scientific Affairs - Theresa Rusch, Director for Admissions, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration - Bob Blake, Deputy Chief of Mission - Harlan Watson, Senior Climate Negotiator - Joaquin Ferrao, Senior Advisor to G - Mark Taylor, Senior Coordinator, G/TIP - Geoff Pyatt, Minister Counselor for Political Affairs - Vaughn Turekian, Special Assistant to G - Don Brown, Acting Science Counselor - Altaf Lal, Health Attache - Greg Drazek, Political Officer - Jai Nair, Political Officer (notetaker) GOI: - Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran - KC Singh, MEA Additional Secretary (International Organizations) - Prodipto Ghosh, Ministry of Environment and Forests NEW DELHI 00000761 004.2 OF 004 Secretary SIPDIS - Sujata Rao, Ministry of Health Additional Secretary/Director, National AIDS Control Organization SIPDIS - RPS Katwal, Ministry of Environment and Forests Additional Director General for Wildlife - S Jaishankar, MEA Joint Secretary (Americas) - Sanjiv Arora, MEA Joint Secretary (UN Political) - Manjiv Puri, MEA Joint Secretary (UN Economic and Social) - Vineet Choudhry, Ministry of Health Joint Secretary - Gaitri Kumar, MEA Director (Americas) - Santosh Jha, MEA Deputy Secretary (Americas) - Viraj Singh, MEA Under Secretary (Americas) [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/06newdelhi761#par10) 10. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website: (http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/) MULFORD