

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2017

The Honorable James Mattis  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Rex Tillerson  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Mattis and Secretary Tillerson:

We are writing to request your attention to India's request for the General Atomics – Aeronautical Systems (GA-ASI) Guardian Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA). We understand that the Department of Defense recently provided an interim reply to a December 2016 letter from Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar to then Secretary of Defense Ash Carter. We are very encouraged by the Department's commitment to prioritize this potential defense sale.

The security and stability of the Indo-Pacific is a key national security objective of the United States and is bolstered by a strong bilateral defense relationship with India. In fact, the strong partnership was institutionalized in December by designating India a Major Defense Partner. The ability to provide India the advanced technology it needs to enhance its military capabilities is fundamental to this bilateral relationship.

India initially requested information about Guardian in June 2016, followed by additional requests from Minister of Defense Parrikar in August 2016 and December 2016. While we understand the previous Administration's careful and deliberative consideration of these requests based on U.S. commitments to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and its own Unmanned Aerial Systems Export Policy, we believe that providing this technology to India is vital to advancing the national security interests of the United States and bilateral security cooperation goals.

Guardian, a non-lethal, maritime surveillance platform provides a critical enabling technology and will further our mutual security objectives, which includes the priority area of maritime security. As a U.S.-interoperable platform, Guardian also enables joint U.S.-India operations and intelligence sharing in the region.

Additionally, another pillar of U.S. national security is the health of the defense industrial base. The Guardian is exclusively manufactured in the United States, and a potential sale to India is estimated to be valued at over \$2 billion across the life of the program. Lack of support for this

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sale will not only have implications for regional security in the Asia-Pacific, but could also significantly impact the MQ-9 production line and put thousands of U.S. manufacturing jobs at risk.

India will be an important and enduring partner for many years to come and the U.S. commitment to this relationship is key to advancing U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Further, protecting the U.S. defense industrial base in this critical sector should be a top priority for the Trump Administration. As such, we appreciate your quick attention to this matter and look forward to the Administration's favorable support for the transfer of Guardian to the Government of India.

Sincerely,

  
JOHN CORNYN  
United States Senator

  
MARK WARNER  
United States Senator