

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 5 2021

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We are writing to express our deep concern with the ongoing coronavirus surge and human toll in India and to encourage the Administration to continue to take actions to address the crisis. We commend the recent transfer of lifesaving equipment, including N95 masks and other personal protective equipment, oxygen cylinders, rapid diagnostic tests, and raw materials for the production of vaccines. These deliveries will save lives and demonstrates our commitment to our ally India, the world's largest democracy. However, we also believe there is more we can do, both to mitigate the tragedy unfolding in India and to ensure that the explosion of cases in India does not undercut global progress to combat this virus.

As you know, India's healthcare system and infrastructure are struggling to meet the challenges posed by the current and largely unchecked surge, with the country averaging more than 300,000 new infections every day. We urge you to work with the Department of Defense and other U.S. government agencies, as well as with our international partners and private sector partners to transfer more lifesaving equipment, vaccines and other support to India as quickly as possible. The United States must work with the Indian government on their response, as well as continue to lead the international efforts to stop the spread of variants and to deliver the assistance needed to the Indian people.

The United States should also continue its robust contribution to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (COVAX)'s plan for the global acquisition and distribution of vaccines to low and medium-income countries. In addition, in the coming months, the United States will have a surplus of vaccines that can be made available for distribution around the world. A detailed public strategy on how the Department of State plans to distribute these excess vaccines would clarify the ambiguity surrounding future US policy and provide needed certainty to India.

Lastly, we urge the Global Engagement Center to combat the numerous disinformation messages from Russia, China and others regarding the coronavirus pandemic, including the US global health response. Specifically in India, disinformation has undermined the public health response, heightened already-tense religious tensions, and muddied the waters surrounding our support as they face an unprecedented surge in coronavirus infections. As entities continue to manipulate narratives at the expense of US national security, regional security, and global health security, we urge you to place a greater emphasis on combatting these disinformation and

misinformation campaigns integrating that effort into America's global health response to this pandemic.

We look forward to working with you and the Administration to continue our work to ensure that we stand with our ally and partner, India, as it battles the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



Rob Portman
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator