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**From:** Litke, Sara L [LitkeSL@state.gov]  
**Sent:** 2/1/2018 10:22:09 AM  
**To:** Li, Jia [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=79ef28f9b3ac427c897481fdc7933a22-Li, Jia]; Dickerson, Phil [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=4ec41518de7c4e46b998b46a15d3f432-PDICKERS]; White, John [White, John]; Nishida, Jane [Nishida, Jane]; Gunning, Paul [Gunning, Paul]; Fawcett, Allen [Fawcett, Allen]; Wehrum, Bill [Wehrum, Bill]  
**Subject:** FW: Embassy Kathmandu Science Fellow Builds Capacity to Tackle Air Pollution

Thanks, again, to Jia!  
Regards,  
Sara

**Official - SBU**  
UNCLASSIFIED

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**From:** SMART Core  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 01, 2018 3:50 PM  
**To:** Litke, Sara L  
**Subject:** Embassy Kathmandu Science Fellow Builds Capacity to Tackle Air Pollution

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**Action Office:** POL, DAO, ECON, PAS  
**Info Office:** POL\_INFO, ECON\_INFO

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**MRN:** 18 KATHMANDU 106  
**Date/DTG:** Feb 01, 2018 / 011003Z FEB 18  
**From:** AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
**Action:** WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*  
**E.O.:** 13526  
**TAGS:** ECON, PGOV, SENV, KGHG, SHLH, TPHY, 2S, NP  
**Captions:** SENSITIVE  
**Reference:** 18 KATHMANDU 48  
**Subject:** Embassy Kathmandu Science Fellow Builds Capacity to Tackle Air Pollution

1. (SBU) Summary and Comment: During her two months as a science fellow at Embassy Kathmandu, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Economist Dr. Jia Li provided training and technical assistance to the Nepal Department of Environment (DOE). Her work raised DOE staff capacity to develop and implement air-quality management policies and best practices and helped prepare Nepal to become a pilot country in the AirNow-International program administered by EPA. At the regional level, Li helped shape the strategy recommendations proposed at the South Asia Air Pollution, Climate and Health Science-Policy Dialogue. In all regards, Li was an exemplar science fellow. With her expertise and strong scientific credentials, Li provided DOE and regional officials advice and guidance beyond the scope of what Embassy staff can offer. Also, due to her expertise and credentials, that guidance was welcomed without question and will be used to help improve the region's air quality. Li's service strengthened our relationships with government and nongovernment interlocutors and advanced the Embassy's goals of building Nepal's capacity as a partner in South Asia and promoting the health and productivity of Nepal's population. It also demonstrated the continued leadership of the United States in scientific research and environmental protection. End summary and comment.

2. (U) As a science fellow at Embassy Kathmandu from October 17 to December 8, 2017, Dr. Jia Li, an environmental economist in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Climate Change Division, provided much-needed technical assistance for Nepali environmental officials and strengthened the U.S. government relationship with government and nongovernmental partners. Li's work focused on supporting the Nepal Department of Environment (DOE)'s Environmental Pollution Control and Monitoring Section (EPCMS). She provided training and technical assistance on a range of topics requested by EPCMS, including the U.S. air quality index and EPA's air quality management policy, air quality program development, ambient air quality monitoring, air quality modeling, data validation, benefit-cost analysis, and integrated modeling of urban heat, air quality, and health vulnerabilities. The trainings were well received and particularly valuable given that DOE is a newly established department with limited technical capacity and human resources and a mandate to implement and enforce environmental laws at national and subnational levels. Further, many of the staff in EPCMS are young: they have relevant university degrees and much enthusiasm for their work but lack practical experience. The staff also asked for Li's help with grant proposal writing. Although the topic was outside the intended scope of her program with DOE, Li tapped experts at the Embassy and the World Bank to understand Nepal's government funding processes and then guided EPCMS staff on the strategic thinking needed to begin a grant proposal writing process. That thinking, along with the technical expertise Li shared, will also improve DOE's effectiveness more broadly as they work to improve the country's air quality and thus the wellbeing and productivity of the population.

3. (U) In addition to the practical support Li provided, through her demonstrated commitment to EPCMS staff capacity development she strengthened our relationship with DOE, which in turn will improve the impact of future U.S. support for the department. This impact is already evident in Nepal's progress toward becoming a pilot country in the AirNow-International (AirNow-I) community. Built on EPA's AirNow program, AirNow-I helps countries inform the public about the quality of the air they breathe. As part of the AirNow Nepal pilot effort, EPA will provide and install the AirNow software application within DOE and train and support EPCMS staff to use the AirNow system to manage, analyze and report air quality data from DOE's network of air quality monitors. EPA will help customize the system to meet Nepal's needs and will consult with DOE on methods for setting air-quality standards and developing an air-quality index to inform the public on air quality levels. Li provided critical initial components of this training and guidance to prepare EPCMS for the visit of the EPA AirNow director and program manager in December 2017 and the planned installation of the AirNow software in spring 2018.

4. (SBU) Li also contributed to the success of the regional "Air Pollution, Climate and Health Workshop and Science-Policy Dialogue" co-hosted by DOE and the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). Ahead of the event, ICIMOD staff told REO that some officials from other countries wanted to avoid a strong U.S. influence on the event, or appearance thereof. (Note: State Department provided funding for the participation of scientists from the region, and REO consulted with ICIMOD in planning the event (reftel).) No such concern was evident during the event, however, and the participation of Embassy and EPA staff and American scientists was welcomed.

With her expertise and scientific credentials, Li's participation was not only welcomed but sought, even in sessions closed to other non-South Asian "observer" participants. She led the scientists' session to draft a consensus statement on air pollution sources and mitigation, which was discussed with policy makers during a subsequent session. Further, the knowledge she shared of U.S. policy and approaches throughout the event helped shape the recommendations and strategies proposed in the concluding session for improving South Asia's air quality.

5. (U) In addition to her work with Nepali and regional interlocutors, Li briefed Embassy staff from various agencies on EPA's latest work and global developments on air quality and climate issues—valuable information to help shape our programs in Nepal and the wider region. She also advanced Embassy public diplomacy objectives on youth participation in government by developing and presenting a seminar, "Get Inspired! Solving global environmental challenges," for university students and recent graduates at an International Education Week event organized the U.S. Education Foundation, Nepal.

6. (U) Dr. Li reviewed this cable.

<b>Signature:</b>	GONZALES
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<b>Info:</b>	DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC <i>ROUTINE</i> ; DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC <i>ROUTINE</i> ; ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE <i>ROUTINE</i>
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<b>Action Post:</b>	NONE
<b>Dissemination Rule:</b>	POL, DAO_FromUSDA, ECON, PAS, POL_INFO, ECON_INFO

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