

May 2, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20522

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I write with grave concern regarding the April 4, 2023 remarks of the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, Sung Kim, in celebration of the Ford Motor Company's ("Ford") participation in a joint venture with the Peoples' Republic of China's (PRC) Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Company and PT Vale Indonesia. I urge you to conduct and apply a thorough review of policy with regard to Ambassador Kim's remarks.

On March 30, 2023, Ford entered into a joint venture with the PRC's Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Company and PT Vale Indonesia to develop a \$4.5 billion nickel processing facility in Indonesia for the production of EV batteries. Huayou is a PRC-based corporation that participates in the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to advance its geopolitical strategy, peddle Chinese Communist Party (CCP) influence, and gain control of critical minerals and natural resources around the world in support of the PRC's strategic interests. Vale, a Brazil-based company, has a long history of supporting the BRI and cooperating with the PRC and CCP-controlled companies. In a statement published on the Ford website, Huayou's Senior Vice President, George Fang, characterized the joint venture as "one of the flagship projects under the Belt and Road Initiative."¹ As you know, the BRI is one of the primary mechanisms the CCP uses to spread its influence around the world and gain control of critical infrastructure and natural resources. It should be of the utmost importance to hold American citizens accountable for explicitly acting in the strategic interest of our country's primary geopolitical adversary.

This is why it is particularly concerning that Ambassador Kim celebrated this joint venture, which has been explicitly characterized as a "flagship" project under the BRI. In remarks published on April 4, 2023, four days after a Ford press release characterized the joint venture as a project under PRC's BRI, Ambassador Kim celebrated the agreement stating: "I am deeply impressed by all the work that has gone into making this partnership a reality ... This development is a positive step toward standard-setting operations that will not only improve the processes of clean and sustainable nickel extraction here in Indonesia, but also strengthens the trade and investment relationship between the United States and Indonesia."² In reality, this

¹ <https://media.ford.com/content/fordmedia/fna/us/en/news/2023/03/30/pt-vale-indonesia-and-huayou-sign-nickel-agreement-with-ford-mot.html>

² <https://id.usembassy.gov/remarks-by-ambassador-kim-celebrating-an-ev-future-as-ford-and-its-partners-sign-nickel-agreement/>

project makes America more dependent on the PRC. American officials should be condemning efforts to undermine the strategic interests of the United States, not endorsing them. I urge you to conduct a review of Ambassador Kim's remarks, and provide answers to the following questions:

1. Was Ambassador Kim aware this joint venture is a component of the PRC's BRI when he made his remarks celebrating the project?
2. What policies, protocols, or best practices are in place to ensure American diplomats are not advancing the strategic interests of America's adversaries, either intentionally or unintentionally?
3. Does Ambassador Kim regret celebrating the PRC's BRI?
4. What disciplinary actions are you willing to take to address this situation?
5. Did the Mineral Security Partnership assist this project in any way?
6. Are there policies in place to prevent the Mineral Security Partnership from assisting the development of BRI projects?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', is centered below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator