Daniel Mark: Good afternoon, everyone and thank you for calling in. I’m Daniel Mark, Chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom or USCIRF. We very much appreciate you participating in this call. We at USCIRF are passionate about the importance of the international religious freedom, what we call here at home our first freedom. Religious freedom is a foundational and fundamental right. This year’s annual report will give you a picture of where it is in peril and idea of what can be done about it.

For those of you who aren’t familiar with USCIRF, we’re an independent bipartisan U.S. government commission dedicated to promoting the universal right to freedom of religion or belief around the world. USCIRF officially comprises nine commissioners. Three appointed by the President and six appointed separately by the leaders of the two parties in both houses of Congress. While commissioners are part-time and unpaid, we also have a 15-person non-partisan professional staff working in our DC office full-time. Throughout the year, we monitor religious freedom conditions abroad. Under our mandate in the International Religious Freedom Act or IRFA, we issue a report each year with recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress on how to promote religious freedom around the globe. I note for your reference, that we are not the State Department. The Department of State releases its own annual report on international religious freedom which is different from ours.

Our annual report is based on USCIRF’s ongoing monitoring and research which includes frequent travel. USCIRF’s commissioners and staff travel to 12 countries in 2017 and early 2018 including Egypt, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the Central African Republic, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ukraine regarding Russian occupied areas, Burma, Bangladesh, Bahrain, and Iraq.

This year our report covers 28 countries that we focus on the focus on the worst countries in the world for religious freedom. We highlight improvements in those places as well where appropriate. You can see the full report on our website at [www.uscirf.gov](http://www.uscirf.gov). U-S-C-I-R-F.gov. The report groups counties into two categories or tiers. Tier one is the name that USCIRF gives to countries that we are recommending to the State Department for designation as countries of particular concern or CPCs. This is a statutory category under IRFA for governments that engage in or tolerate “systematic, ongoing and egregious” violations of religious freedom. Tier two is our name for countries that we determine have serious religious freedom abuses but fall short of the CPC standard. The violations in these countries meet one or two but not all three of the criteria systematic, ongoing and egregious.

For those who follow our report closely, I want to comment on a change. Previous USCIRF annual reports included a third section discussing other countries or regions we monitored during the year. This year we decided to focus the report only on our tier one and tier two countries. To be clear, omitting that section this year does not mean that religious freedom problems do not exist in those countries or other countries or even necessarily that conditions in the places previously covered have improved.

As always, a key component of this report is our recommendations on which countries deserve being designed as CPCs. CPCs represent the worst of the worst when it comes to religious oppression. But CPC recommendations and designations are not only based on what a government is actively doing. Governments can also be held responsible for tolerating severe violations of religious freedom by private actors. This year, UCIRF recommends that the U.S. government designate 16 countries as CPCs.

Although it was behind schedule, the State Department [audio skip 00:04:50] 10 of those countries as CPCs in December pursuant to our recommendations in last year’s report. We recommend these 10 countries for CPC status again. And we hope the State Department will redesignate them again this year. The 10 countries are Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. We also recommend that the waivers on presidential action grants to some of these countries last year not be granted again this year.

In addition, we recommend six more countries for the State Department’s CPC list. The Central African Republic, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Syria and Vietnam. These countries were also recommended as CPCs by us last year but not designated by the State Department.

The 12 countries on our tier two list, remember these are the ones that are problematic in different ways but not quite at the level of CPC are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia and Turkey. The report discusses developments in all 28 of these countries in 2017 including this very brief and incomplete sampling.

In Bahrain, non-Muslim religious communities continue to be able to freely practice their faith but religious freedom conditions did not improve for the majority Shia Muslim community.

In Burma’s Rakhine state, the military and security forces, along with non-state actors, committed with United States and United Nations labeled ethnic cleansing against Rohingya Muslims. The photos on the cover of this year’s report depict the awful plight of Rohingya Muslims.

In China, the government created police states in Xinjiang and Tibet to persecute Uighur Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists and continued its brutal treatment of \_\_\_\_\_ [00:07:20] practitioners.

In Cuba, government officials detailed religious leaders and activists who advocated for religious freedom.

In India, worsening conditions for religious freedom impacted non-Hindus and Hindu Dalits in some states but other states remained relatively open and free for religious minorities and some government entities made efforts to count increasing intolerance.

In Iran, religious freedom conditions continued to deteriorate for both recognized and unrecognized religious groups with the government targeting Christian converts and \_\_\_\_\_ [00:08:01] in particular.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIS continued it genocidal campaign against Christians, \_\_\_\_\_ [00:08:09] and Shia Muslims despite losing territory. And the Assad regime and Iranian backed militias increased sectarian attacks against Sunni Muslims in Syria.

In Nigeria, the government failed to prevent or stop increasing violence along religious lines or hold perpetrators to account.

In Pakistan, the county’s strict blasphemy laws and a rise in extremist activities further threaten already marginalize minority communities including Ahmadis, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Shia Muslims.

In Russia, the government banned the Witnesses and prosecuted peaceful Muslims and “non-traditional groups” for extremism, maintaining or even increasing the repression that led USCIRF to recommend it as a CPC for the first-time last year.

In Turkey, the continued detention of American Pastor Andrew Brunson was and is a profound injustice and had a chilling effect on Christian life there.

Our policy recommendation for tier one and tier two countries vary from country to country naturally because policy recommendations must be specific to their context, but there are some common themes. These recommendations include urging the U.S. government to press for the unconditional release of religious prisoners of conscious and religious freedom advocates, use targeted tools such as U.S. Visa denials and asset freezes against specific officials, agencies and military units identified as responsible for religious freedom violations and help train governments, civic groups, religious leaders and educators to better address sectarian conflicts, religious violence and terrorism through practices that uphold international human rights standards.

It is important to bear in mind that governments are not the only severe abusers. Non-state actors such as ISIS and Boko Haram also perpetrate gross religious freedom violations in countries around the world. In 2016 a new law the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act tasked the State Department with designated non-state actors that violate religious freedom as entities of particular concern or EPCs as a parallel to the CPC category. For purposes of these new designations, Congress has defined EPCs as groups that exercise significant political power and territorial control, are outside the control of a sovereign government and often employ violence in pursuit of their objective. Following this definition, USCIRF recommends three groups that violate religious freedom for EPC designation based on their conduct and control of territory in 2017. They are ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the Taliban in Afghanistan and Al-Shabab in Somalia. Interestingly, the State Department seems to take a wider view of the EPC category in it’s first EPC designations last year. We welcome this inclusion of more groups that violate religious freedom as well as clarification on how we at USCIRF can be more in synch with the State Department’s understanding of the parameters of the EPC category.

USCIRF also makes recommendations in the report regarding the U.S. government’s overarching international religious freedom efforts. These include urging the Trump administration to appoint the Special Advisor to the President on international religious freedom within the National Security Council or NSC staff something which has not yet been done by any President, develop a whole of government international religious freedom strategy as well as action plans for specific countries and establish an interagency working group chaired by the Ambassador-at-Large for international religious freedom to oversee implementation, and engage multilaterally to advance religious freedom abroad including by participating in and supporting relevant entities and activities and continuing to lead and participate in the international contact group on freedom of religion or belief.

Finally, USCIRF recommends that Congress hold annual oversight hearings on the implementation of IRFA and the Frank Wolf Act and hearings on specific religious freedom concerns and raise religious freedom issues in country’s specific hearings and ambassadorial confirmation hearings, examine religious freedom conditions during delegation trips abroad including by meeting with targeted religious communities, religious freedom advocates and relevant prisoners and review current policy changes and support the Lautenberg Amendment which aids persecuted Iranian religious minorities and other specified groups seeking refugee status in the United States.

With that brief overview of our report and recommendations, I now welcome your questions. Thank you for covering this critical issue at this critical time.

Operator: At this time if you would like to ask a question, please press \* and 1 on your touchtone phone. You may withdraw your question at any time by pressing the # key. Once again, to ask a question, please press \*1 now.

And our first question comes from Adele Banks with Religion News Service. Please go ahead.

Adele Banks: Hello. I was wondering if you could confirm the report is asking for the same countries and the same number of countries to be designated or redesignated as countries of particular concern. And if so, if you could explain any reason for no change in that.

Daniel Mark: Absolutely and thank you for the question. We are recommending the same 16 countries for CPC designation that we did last year. As far as explaining that, obviously, we monitor each country individually and we make each decision on a case-by-case basis. Our determination this year was that the same 16 countries as last year met the legal definition of CPC which is to say countries that perpetrate or tolerate systematic, egregious and ongoing violations of religious freedom. It is worth noting within that context of course that six of the 10 we recommended did not get designated last year and this has been a pattern in the past as well. So to designate the same 16 isn’t so much a status quo move as to say we agree with the State Department on the first 10 that they did designate last year but we also think that not only should those 10 be redesignated but that six more should. Of course, last year it was new that we recommended Russia for the first time and sad to say, all the developments since the time of our decision about that for last year’s report, all the news has only confirmed that move and suggested that the State Department should take a very serious look, for example, at Russia and the others as well.

Adele Banks: Thank you.

Daniel Mark: Sure.

Operator: And once again, to ask a question, please press \* and 1 on your touchtone phone. We will pause a moment to allow questions to queue.

And we have a followup question from Adele Banks with Religion New Service. Please go ahead.

Adele Banks: Thank you. I also wondered if you could talk a little bit about the concern about resettlement of U.S. refugees fleeing or refugees in general, excuse me, fleeing religious persecution. You cited a decade long monitoring of the Department of Homeland Security. How are refugees fleeing religious persecution faring under the recent changes in the administration that relate to refugees?

Daniel Mark: Excellent question. So USCIRF does have under its statute as a matter of fact, this was a job Congress gave us, a long history of monitoring especially those who come to the United States seeking asylum. And what we found consistently, including a report that we issued just a few years ago, is that those who are in charge of vetting those asylum seekers need better training and more resources. We find that those in charge are not sufficiently sensitive to concerns of religious persecution at home. And this doesn’t necessarily in every case or any case mean ill will, but to say that religious persecution is very wide spread of course, around the world and it’s important that when people come with credible fear of persecution if they return home, that that be acknowledged and treated appropriately under the law.

In the bigger picture, of course, there is kind of a two-prong focus. It is important that you know we are as it was said very frequently last year, we are at a high-water mark for refugees in the post war world and so it’s very important that safe places be found for people all over the world who have been displaced. At the same time, it is the hope of many that ancient communities are not decimated in the places where they exist and so resettlement of people to safe places and making sure that all the basic human services are being provided is critically important. At the same time, it’s important to focus on protecting people where they are so that they continue to live their lives and lead their lives at home as they wish in the places where they and their families and religious communities have lived for centuries or more.

I also, just because you give me the opportunity, will go back to what I said about the Lautenberg Amendment. There was a case in the news recently of some number of minorities from Iran who had made it as far as Vienna in the vetting process under the Lautenberg Amendment but it seems that there are some changes afoot in how that policy is being applied. So we’re keeping a careful eye on that to make sure that this special rule that Congress put in to protect very vulnerable religious minorities continues to be honored and implemented.

I also thank you for the followup question and would encourage anyone who wants to ask a followup question to just come right back at me as I give my answer.

Adele Banks: Thank you.

Operator: And once again, to ask a question, please press \* and 1 on your touchtone phone. We will pause a moment to allow questions to queue.

And our next question comes from Sam Smith with Christian Post. Please go ahead. Sam, your line is open.

Can you please check your mute function?

Sam Smith: Sorry about that. Can you hear me now?

Daniel Mark: Sure can. No problem.

Sam Smith: Okay, excellent. So we can just expand a little bit on the situation with Russia. I know that you said last year’s report was the first time you recommended Russia. But what have you seen since last year’s report that has really, I guess reaffirmed that recommendation?

Daniel Mark: Yeah, well that’s a really good question. It was interesting. We actually in our internal, confidential deliberations had actually made that original decision about the CPC designation for Russia even before the ruling came down that officially effectively banned the Witnesses from official existence in the country which was notable itself because the first time that like an entire group was just banned outright, not targeting individuals for certain activity but basically saying that the whole sect is just outlawed in the country and that’s cataclysmic. Banning their, you know treating subsequent cases that came out, treating their Bible as an extremist text, so on and so forth.

We’ve also followed the increasing persecution of Scientologists in that country. There have been arrests and charges of illegal business operations and extremism against the Scientologists as well.

And what we see here is a pattern, and unfortunately an increasing pattern, of persecuting these small, vulnerable minorities. We see ever increasing association of Russian nationalism with membership and identity with the Russian Orthodox Church and specifically the Moscow Patriarch aid as opposed to the Kiev Patriarch aid in Ukraine which Russia has moved against. And so, unfortunately, we sounded the alarm at that time about a trend that was going in the wrong direction and a very worrying direction and unfortunately, it was all to prescient.

A final point that I’ll make about Russia is the persecution of Muslims because this is a pattern we see as I said in my opening remarks in Russia but also in some of the central Asian post-Soviet states, the -stans so to speak. What happens there is there are legitimate concerns about terrorism, about Islamic extremism around the world and countries are certainly justified in taking measures to protect their own national security. But we cannot have and what we have far too often in this preceded apace in Russia in 2017 was the persecution of innocent Muslims in so far as anything that is seen as an excessive sign of Muslim piety is then taken to be a threat to the state. This is not totally unlike what we see with the Uighur Muslims in China as well who are accused of terrorism and separatism even when they’re not guilty of those things. So it is quite painful that not only does Russia continue and increase this persecution, but also sets the standard for a bunch of countries in its region who follow that model and are doing much of the same.

Operator: And once again to ask a question, please press \* and 1 on your touchtone phone. We will pause a moment to allow questions to queue.

It looks like we have a followup from Sam Smith with Christian Post. Please go ahead.

Sam Smith: It seems like over the last year or so or last couple of years, it seems like there’s been increased persecution against Christians in certain states in India. I mean for you guys, would you see India as kind of almost knocking on the door of the tier one recommendation?

Daniel Mark: Terrific question. Part of the challenge of India is that it is so diverse in its federal system. Federal system that is partly familiar to us in the United States because we have something somewhat related although of course different in many ways as well. So what we find in India is that there is great, great variation between different states. We identified 10 states in India that we think have bad or deteriorating conditions which means that at the same time there are 19 that are relatively free and relatively tolerant. Now, unfortunately, there have been reports of increasing violence and persecution in the 10 states that we’ve identified as bad. It’s almost if you could separate it out into two countries. Again, this is not an official position of USCIRF but your premise is plausible if we were talking about the 10 states that we find problematic. But because we have to take into account India as a whole, we find ourselves with much more of a mixed bag. Obviously, one of the big stories was Compassion International having to get out of the country. But there are many other stories as well and so we continue to follow India very closely. It is critically important to us with India, as with every country, to be fair and to recognize the good along with the bad. India has an incredible record as a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-religious country. At the same time, there are problems that cannot be ignored and cannot be overlooked. And some of them have to do with private actors at the local level and kind of the vigilante violence that we shudder at. At the same time, some of the problems do go up to the level of government and it is imperative for government officials at every level, both state and nation, to condemn this violence and to use the tools in the law to protect every person in the country.

Operator: And our next question comes from Courtney Grogan with EWTN. Please go ahead.

Courtney Grogan: Hello. Thank you for taking the time to hear out our questions. I’m curious Daniel, which one of the six countries unrecognized by the State Department would you most like to see added to the CPC State Department designation list?

Daniel Mark: Excellent question. It’s a typical question, which of my children do I love the most. Each of these countries has problems and each of them is recommended by us because we believe that each one truly should be designated. I mean you just heard me speak a lot about Russia and it’s such a big player on the world stage. It’s really important that the message be sent clearly. At the same time what we’ve said for many years is that Pakistan is the worst country in the world that’s not designated to CPC. Pakistan is a world leader in imprisonments and convictions and prosecutions for blasphemy and apostasy and those sorts of things. And conditions in Pakistan are not just bad at the level of law where for example Ahmadis are singled out in the constitution for second-class citizenship but also at the level of civil society where culture of impunity has grown in the context of these blasphemy laws and in the context of vigilante mobs attacking people on the basis of blasphemy acquisitions and not being properly arrested, persecuted, convicted and so on.

What’s notable about last year is that pursuant to the Frank Wolf Act, which became law in December 2016 the State Department had a new category to use called the Special Watch List. And the State Department though it declined to name Pakistan a CPC for the umpteenth year, it did put Pakistan on the Special Watch List as the first and only country on that list. Which was a step in the right direction. I don’t think that should get Pakistan off the hook, of course, but I think it’s really important to think about that. It’s obvious that the matters concerning Pakistan are very sensitive on account of the fact that they are a partner of ours in combating terrorism around the world and the war in Afghanistan and so on. But given the direction, the rise of extremism in Pakistan, I was there myself not very long ago and saw along with some positive signs, many ways in which things have worsened, and so we really do think that the pressure should be kept up. Not withstanding the important cooperation that our two countries need.

Operator: And once again to ask a question, please press \* and 1 on your touchtone phone.

And our next question comes from Julia Seymour with World Magazine Online. Please go ahead.

Julia Seymour: Hi, thank you for taking my question. I was just wondering if you could tell me more about the chilling effect going on for Christians in Turkey as obviously Pastor Brunson remains in prison and the upcoming hearings. What are you hearing from religious communities in Turkey?

Daniel Mark: Well, we know things are really bad. I mean I’m so glad you give me the opportunity to talk about Turkey and the case of Pastor Brunson here to focus on it a little more than my brief mention in my opening remarks because this is just a travesty of justice. He operated, I mean think, what do Christians feel? Well, think about this man who operated peacefully in the country for over 20 years. He had a small congregation. They didn’t cause trouble. There were no problems and now he has suddenly been swept up in this hostage diplomacy or whatever the facts are, it’s clear to anyone that’s looking at it honestly that he has no connection to this so-called attempted coup and so on. And so one can only imagine that every Christian in the country would think that now they are a potential target. I mean it obviously hurts the Pastor’s case that he’s an American citizen and therefore, perhaps in the minds of Turkey’s President Erdogan, he’s a better bargaining chip. But if being somewhere outside of the party lines means that you can swept up and just used as a bargaining chip in the government’s attempts to get whatever it is, that’s got to be a terrible thing. This wasn’t even, it’s not even a case of, you know we have these cases where people are persecuted for falling afoul of different regulations about registering their church or importing published material or financing and so on. And we’re against all of those rules. None of them should be in place. And when they are, they should be enforced clearly and so on and without any of the malice that usually goes along with them. But this isn’t even the case of a man who said well, alright, you know they want me to register my church but I don’t want to and consequences be damned or something like that. Right? This is a man who had just gone about his business peacefully for more than two decades and with no warning whatsoever was swept up in this horrible thing, accused of aiding terrorist and extremism and so on and facing a life sentence. So the chilling effect is incalculable.

We’re very blessed that two of our commissioners on their trip to Turkey, not very long ago, in late 2017, our two vice chairwomen were actually able to visit him in prison. They were the first Americans that got to see him outside his family and the U.S. consulate’s staff during the entire time of his detention.

A year-and-a-half later, as you said, he’s now facing trial. As you probably know Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Brownback showed up at the court for that April court date. Where we’ve very proud that our vice chairwoman Sandra Jolley will be there, we hope in May, when he returns to court. And it’s very important for us that government officials from the U.S. are represented there to make it clear that this is an injustice that will not stand.

Operator: And our next question is a followup from Adele Banks with Religion News Service. Please go ahead.

Adele Banks: Thank you. I just wanted to try to clarify one more time on the refugee question because it has so many pieces to it. I wanted to be sure I was clear. I was particularly wondering about how much concern the commission had about people in the United States who don’t want to be deported for these fear concerns related to religious persecution. I think you’ve then discussed people who were like in their homelands trying to resettle after some displacement in their homelands. But I’m asking about specifically people in the U.S. where there was some concerns about the Homeland Security.

Daniel Mark: Sure. So the first thing to say is that again, in so far as these are people who come to the United States seeking asylum, our legislation does task us with reviewing and reporting on the mechanisms that govern that and we have reported on it quite extensively and we’ve said what I was saying before about the fact that it’s very important to USCIRF that the U.S. government do a better job being sensitive to those concerns. I think that probably covers a lot of the people you’re asking about. People who are outside of that process for whatever reason, just under the general title refugees, so because we are, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, we really just do try to focus on foreign policy as opposed to domestic immigration policy. But we have said repeatedly that we do favor a policy that protects the most vulnerable. So in so far as the U.S. is going to have refugees, is going to admit people on the basis of them facing persecution, we do think that the U.S. government should prioritize people who are most vulnerable. People facing genocide and other threats like that. Of course, as many people as can reasonably be welcomed in so far as they need that protection is, of course, great in that area as you know, there are many factors that need to be balanced.

Adele Banks: Thank you.

Operator: And our next question is a followup from Sam Smith with Christian Post. Please go ahead.

Sam Smith: I guess this is kind of continuing along the line of the refugee discussion but back to the Lautenberg Amendment. I mean as far as you know, I’m not sure how much you know about the case with the Iranians in Vienna, but if you do, I mean does this, does Lautenberg Amendment apply to that group in particularly?

Daniel Mark: Well, yes, historically it has. The people who got caught up in this situation in Vienna are the, I mean in terms of category, obviously not the same individuals, but the very same, as far as we know, the very same types of people who have been coming to the United States through the Lautenberg Amendment. So same kind of people, same kind of process. What seemed different this time was that the Lautenberg Amendment was perhaps being applied and there seemed to be other factors that we don’t have full information about that made their case different. Because in the normal case, these people are approved relatively quickly and a relatively high rate. The fact that that didn’t happen with this group, suggests that there is something going on but not because they weren’t the same kind of people who had ordinarily been coming through.

Operator: And our next question comes from Kenneth Camp with Baptist Standard. Please go ahead.

Kenneth Camp: Thank you. This is at least the second year in a row that your commission has named a half dozen additional countries that the State Department has not named as countries of particular concern. Has the State Department offered your commission any rationale for its continued resistance to give those countries that designation?

Daniel Mark: Excellent question and thank you for that. This is, so you know, this is a pattern that certainly goes back more than two years. In any given year we might, you know there are years we probably recommended close to 20 and also got about 10 and often it is the same countries. There is no official explanation. State Department doesn’t owe us and often doesn’t give us an official explanation. They just make the designations they do. They account for why they made those and then maybe don’t say a lot about the others. That leaves it to us to speculate on our own and of course, have back channel conversations with our many interlocutors at the State Department about what’s going on there. Not all of that, of course, is for public consumption but there are a lot of factors that are readily apparent I’ll say. So when I talking about Pakistan before, I did mention that you know we do have a very sensitive partnership with Pakistan I’ll say. Anyone following Pakistan knows that relations between the U.S. and Pakistan have not been at an all-time high we’ll say euphemistically in the last few years. And yet, Pakistan, as I said, is a very important partner with some of our, or at least for the time being under current arrangements, is an important partner with some of our efforts in that region and you could imagine that when somebody in the State Department is responsible, this decision, is taking everything into account. They’re thinking on one hand I can’t deny that the violations are terrible in Pakistan, the violation of religious freedom. At the same time, I have to take into account all of the consideration, political, economic, military and so on. And in the interest of those things, better not to pick a fight with Pakistan over yet one more thing.

Now we at USCIRF don’t think that that’s the right judgement call. We continue to make the recommendation because we think they should be designated and we will continue to speak truth to power so to speak. Because we do feel very strongly about this and we also feel that religious freedom is very closely tied to the peace and prosperity and stability that we want to see in Pakistan and that Pakistan wants for itself.

And so those kinds of considerations are important and reasonable, but in the end, we think not just positive. In fact, I’ll add that USCIRF exists precisely because Congress felt in 1998, when they got started with the International Religious Freedom Act, that religious freedom was not being given enough priority in U.S. foreign policy. And so it’s our job to ensure that it is a priority. That Act also created the Office of International Religious Freedom in the State Department, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and that’s meant to ensure that there is a real constituency advocating for this issue, for religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy.

Now that just covers one, Pakistan. We could go down the list one by one but in each case, it would probably be something along the lines, in other words to say, speaking for myself if I could here, I suspect that in most of the cases it’s not because they actually disagree with us on our observations about the conditions on our judgement about the violations of religious freedom in that country. We can dispute about those sometimes. The facts and trends can be disputed. But at the same time, my guess would be that more likely there are political considerations that serve as a counterweight to our, I believe, correct judgement about the severity of the religious freedom violations in that country.

Kenneth Camp: Thank you.

Operator: And it appears there are no further questions at this time.

Daniel Mark: Well if that’s the case, thank you. We can hang on one more minute if anybody is trying to get in. But otherwise, we are just really grateful to everyone on the line for tuning in. Very grateful for your excellent questions and of course, you have our ongoing gratitude for your interest in and coverage of this issue. We really do believe that awareness is the first step to moving things in the right direction. So all of you out there who are covering this issue are our partners in improving religious freedom around the world and we thank you for that. Thank you very much everyone. Have a wonderful day.