

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 04, 2022

An Open Letter to Our Allies and Partners in Indo-Pacific:

The resounding strength with which our countries stood together at the United Nations General Assembly to defend sovereignty, peace, and stability is a powerful indictment against President Vladimir Putin's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. Together, our vote to adopt UNGA Resolution ES-11/1—including the near 30 votes from Indo-Pacific countries—not only supports the people of Ukraine; it defends the rules-based international order on which our collective security and prosperity relies.

In one week, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has killed more than 2,000 Ukrainian civilians and turned one million more into refugees. Videos and human accounts have told us that Russia is using particularly lethal weaponry against civilians to rapidly escalate the humanitarian toll of the conflict and attempt to terrify the Ukrainian people and the world into submission. The overwhelming response at this week's historic Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly was that we will not be cowed. The world is standing up and we will continue to hold Putin accountable for his unprovoked, unjustified assault on Ukraine.

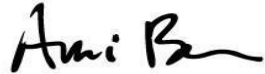
The crisis in Ukraine should also serve as a stark reminder that we must be vigilant in protecting the international order and combatting aggression from bullies before it escalates into conflict. For this type of military action does not occur overnight. It develops over years of dictators eroding sovereignty and international resolve with disinformation, cyberattacks, and other gray zone tactics, just as President Putin has done for years in Ukraine. And although the Ukraine crisis is geographically distant from the Indo-Pacific, these tactics and the risk of escalation are unfortunately familiar to the region.

That is why the UN vote this week was so significant. It was a recognition that more is at stake than the security of Ukraine, or even Europe—at stake is the sanctity of the foundations of the rules-based order—a sentiment clearly shared across Indo-Pacific countries of all sizes, demographics, and political systems. Allies and partners in Northeast Asia demonstrated strong leadership with their votes in the face of competing political and economic interests. Our friends in Oceania delivered an extraordinary rebuke to Putin's aggression unseen in years past by unanimously supporting the resolution. Leaders across Southeast Asia took meaningful, tough, positions to defend our shared principles and say that might does not make right.

In the coming days, we must continue to build unity throughout the Indo-Pacific to support the people of Ukraine in this immediate crisis, while we simultaneously strengthen our tools to better

protect peace and stability in the 21st century across the globe. We can and must do more to show autocrats everywhere that no country can impose its will on others without consequences, and that countries big and small will stand shoulder to shoulder in defense of our principles and ideals against authoritarian aggression.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ami Bera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congressman Ami Bera, M.D.

Chairman

Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation