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U.S. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMBAT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING

WITNESS

JAMES WALSH, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANCE SECRETARY, BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LEE

Ms. LEE. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

Good morning, everyone. Nice to see everyone today.

I would like to welcome James Walsh, who is our distinguished witness, to the subcommittee. Mr. Walsh is the principal deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs at the Department of State. He is responsible for supporting State Department programs and policies to combat illicit drugs and organized crime around the world.

Thank you, Mr. Walsh. We really appreciate your time and willingness to testify.

Now, as this hearing is fully virtual, we must address just a few housekeeping matters first. For today's meeting, the chair's staff, designated by the chair, may mute participants' microphones when they are not under recognition for the purposes of eliminating inadvertent background noise.

Members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves. If I notice that you have not unmuted yourself, I will ask staff to send you a request to unmute yourself. Please then accept that request so you are no longer muted.

I remind all members and witnesses that the 5-minute clock still applies during questions and answers. If there is a technology issue, we will move to the next member until the issue is resolved and you will retain the balance of your time.

You will notice a clock on your screen that will show how much time is remaining. At 1 minute remaining, the clock will turn yellow. At 30 seconds remaining, I may gently tap the gavel to remind members that their time is almost expired. When your time has expired, the clock will turn red and I will begin to recognize the next member.

After the panel presents their testimony, we will follow the order of recognition set forth in House Rules, beginning with the chair

and ranking member, or his designee. Then, members present at the time the hearing is called to order, will be recognized in order of seniority. And following that, members not present at the time of the hearing is called to order.

Finally, House Rules remind me to remind you that we have set up an email address to which members can send anything they wish to send in writing for any of our hearings or markups. That email address has been provided to your staff.

Good morning, again. So, let me just start with my opening statement before we go to Mr. Rogers. Drug use, and I am so happy to see how many members are on this, because we know in our own country and throughout the world, drug use and illicit drug trafficking are problems which have profound impacts on all sectors of all countries worldwide.

As a former psychiatric social worker myself, I witnessed firsthand, the devastating effects that drug addiction and trafficking have on loved ones, colleagues, and community.

While each of our districts are different, the sad fact is that one common problem is the growing number of constituents, our constituents, who are overdosing on opioids. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, more than 105,000 Americans died due to a drug overdose between October 2020 and October 2021, which is an increase of nearly 30 percent from the prior year.

The most abused, illicit substances in my congressional district in California are heroin and prescription opioids. My 13th Congressional District registered an increase in opioid overdose deaths of 40 percent from 2019 to 2020, largely driven by Fentanyl. On average, emergency medical services respond to about four overdoses in Alameda County, my county, per day.

I know Ranking Member Rogers knows these statistics all too well. He has long been a leader in Congress on combatting the opioid public health emergency and has worked with both Republicans and Democrats to expand treatment options, reduce the supply, and develop alternatives for life-saving efforts for those impacted by the epidemic, and so I thank him for his work and look forward to working with him to strengthen our efforts to comprehensively address this problem.

I also commend the Biden-Harris administration for actions taken to address the addiction and overdose epidemic. The administration recently proposed $42.5 billion in fiscal year 2023 for all of our national drug control program agencies. The increased funding will support a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to drug reduction, which includes the expansion of evidence-based prevention and treatment, harm-reduction, and recovery-support services. It also includes an increase in funding for international efforts to reduce the supply of illicit drugs like Fentanyl and to combat drug trafficking.

This is where the State and Foreign Operations budget comes in. Last December, President Biden stated that international drug trafficking, including the illicit production, global sale, and widespread distribution of illegal drugs, the rise of extremely potent drugs, such as Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, as well as the growing role of internet-based drug sales constitute an unusual and

extraordinary threat to national security, our national security, our foreign policy, and the economy of the United States.

He went on to say that transnational criminal organizations and their facilitators are the primary sources of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals that fuel the current opioid epidemic, as well as drug-related violence that harms our communities.

Part of any comprehensive approach to combatting the illicit drug problem and strengthening our national security is assisting partnered governments to reduce the supply of and demand for illicit drugs. For the United States, this means working with key global partners, such as China, Colombia, and Mexico, to curb illicit drug production and trafficking in a manner that upholds the rule of law, respects human rights, protects the environment, and promotes licit and equitable economic opportunity. It means that we are using all of our tools to tackle this problem, including law enforcement, providing alternative livelihoods and economic development, and supporting vulnerable individuals that are both, caught up in, and exploited by, drug trafficking networks.

Our witness today is at the forefront of the State Department's work in this area. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Walsh, along with his colleagues at the State Department and USAID, are responsible for nearly $439 million in assistance proposed in the President's fiscal year 2023 budget for drug reduction activity.

I am hopeful that today's hearing will help us better understand the evolving drug trafficking landscape, the link between the illicit drug trade, transnational criminal organizations and corruption, how international assistance supports the administration's overall drug reduction strategy, how you coordinate with other federal agencies in implementing the President's whole-of-government, drug reduction strategy, and what methods are being used to measure the success of programs, and what steps are being taken to ensure the protection of human rights, indigenous communities, and the environment.

So, before turning to our witness for his statement, let me yield to Ranking Member Rogers for any opening remarks he may have.

Ranking member Rogers.

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER ROGERS

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for using your gavel to host this very important hearing on a very important subject. You have been a trooper in this fight against narcotics and I appreciate your service in that regard.

Welcome to the subcommittee, Mr. Secretary Walsh. It is good to see you, again. I understand the Assistant Secretary had pressing matters in Europe related to Ukraine, so I appreciate your willingness to be here in his stead.

It is unfortunate that House Rules still require us to have these hearings conducted in a virtual setting, but nonetheless, it is good to see you and we will carry on.

I started an organization about 10 years ago in my district called UNITE, which stands for Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education; a holistic approach to the problem at the same time. It has had phenomenal success and now, well, 10 years ago, we took it nationwide. So, we have an annual summit of opioid

abuse and heroin, a national get-together. We will have probably 4,000 or 5,000 people again.

And you were there, Mr. Secretary, in 2018, the last time we had an in-person summit, and we will get back to that this year, thank goodness, but you were there representing the Department of State at our national Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit. The President comes. Every President we have had since this organization started this summit, we have had the President, attorneys general, governors, senators, nurses, people of all pieces of the problem under one roof and that is for 3 or 4 days and that is phenomenal and it has had a tremendous effect, because it gives us a chance to see what somebody else is doing toward the same problem that we are, that you are, and that is wholesome and I encourage—Madam Chair, we would love to have you there, as well, to say some words of encouragement to the community.

Each year, that summit brings together the global community of opioid and addiction stakeholders through a share of best practices, strategies for prevention, treatment, recovery, and I appreciate the Department's willingness to take part each year. It is important, the Department of State be in leadership of the fight.

Today's hearing on United States International Assistance to Combat Narcotics Trafficking could not be more timely and I thank the chair for making this happen. The statistics are shocking and historic with a record-breaking 100,306 drug overdose deaths of April 2020 to April 2021, just one year. That is an increase of 28 and a half percent from the year before.

Opioids caused more than 75,000 of those deaths, up from 56,000 the prior year. The CDC noted that cocaine deaths also increased. This year's report from the CDC is expected within weeks and the numbers are likely to be even higher.

Many of us are familiar with these numbers, but as Members of Congress, we also know many of the names and faces of those people lost to drug overdoses, either through professional connections or personal connections or from the family members who have come to us as their representatives, asking for us to do more. They want us to do more to prevent other families from experiencing the agonizing pain and grief of losing a loved one to drugs. No district has gone unscathed; we are all affected and we must all be a part of the solution.

This subcommittee plays an important role by funding a good portion of our international efforts to curb the flow of drugs into our country. I look forward to hearing how the State Department, through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, is prioritizing and carrying out those efforts. However, it could not be more clear that each agency in the United States government needs to be doing more and better if we are going to start bending the curve and making real progress on the problem.

This year's budget request for the Department of State and USAID is more than $68 billion and yet $375 million is being requested for counternarcotics globally. Money, alone, is not the answer, of course, but proposing a cut from the current level is not acceptable and I would like to work with the chair on how we can

ensure this funding, this critical funding receive the support it deserves.

In 2019, the Department of State released a 5-year global plan of action to combat emerging synthetic drug threats. I don't believe this is addressed in your testimony, but now that you are more than halfway through the strategy, I would like to know and hear how things are going: what is working and what is not. We want to put our resources to good use and ensure that measures demonstrating success have the funding needed and that efforts that are failing, or having limited success, are modified or even ended.

We know the majority of synthetic opioids in the United States originate from the People's Republic of China and that Mexico is a key secondary route.

Secretary Walsh, as you discuss the administration's efforts with these two countries, I would also like to know what the Department is doing to prevent other countries from becoming part of the next wave of producers and transit countries. Many of the international organizations funded in the State, Foreign Operations bill also have a significant role to play in combatting narcotics trafficking. This hearing provides us an opportunity to hear how they are doing and what more they can be doing and should do to help them.

The majority of counternarcotics funding provided in this bill goes to countries and regional programs. I look forward to receiving an update today on many of these programs from the progress being made by the Colombians against the coca production to the implications of the Taliban-run Afghanistan on the poppy trade.

In closing, I would like to thank the men and women of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and State, as well as the many other interagency partners for their work and commitment to stopping the flow of drugs into this country. It is, quite literally, life-saving work.

I thank the chair and I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Rogers.

Now, I will yield to our witness this morning, our principal deputy assistant secretary, Mr. Walsh. Mr. Walsh, if you could summarize your oral remarks in less than 5 minutes, I want to make sure that we leave enough time to get to our questions. Your full statement, of course, will be included in the record.

After your testimony, I will be calling on members based on the seniority of the members who were present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between majority and minority members. I will then recognize any remaining members in order of their appearance.

Each member is asked to keep their questions to within 5 minutes per round. I understand a couple of members need to get to Rules, so if we need to make adjustments accordingly, we will.

Mr. Walsh, please proceed.

Mr. WALSH. Thank you.

Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding the State Department's efforts to combat narcotics trafficking.

Let me stress that the Department is committed to ensuring our diplomacy and foreign assistance to leverage for the American people. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' top priority is to address the overdose crisis that impacts American lives.

As you and too many of your constituents know, opioids, particularly the synthetic opioids, continue to ravage our communities. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention predicted a starting 105,000 drug overdose deaths in the 12-month period ending in October 2021. And to this bureau, that is more than just a number; those are human lives and families that are being devastated.

Seventy-five percent of the most recently reported fatal drug overdoses in the United States involved opioids, and the majority of which were synthetics. The drug supply is increasingly evolving and drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamines now serve as vehicles for potential fatal exposures to Fentanyl.

And with criminals modifying their business models to include more lucrative or synthetic drugs, and so, too, has the administration evolved to counter this deadly threat. It is taking a more holistic approach and the State Department supports our international and interagency partners, through our diplomacy and foreign assistance to reduce the synthetic drug supply with greater focus on disrupting the transnational criminal organizations' finances and supply chain.

And since the People's Republic of China scheduled fentanyl-related substances, U.S. law enforcement now assesses most fentanyl seized in the United States is manufactured in Mexico and trafficked across the southwest border by transnational criminal organizations. And many precursor chemicals used to create the illicit fentanyls are shipped from the PRC to Mexico, and some of these chemicals are neither scheduled under international conventions, nor regulated nationally by Mexico or the PRC, and are thus, legal to sell and ship within and between those countries.

We continue to press and are committed to working with the PRC and others to expand information sharing, strengthen customs enforcement, and implement "know your customer" laws and standards to restrict sales of precursor chemicals.

In October, the United States and Mexico established a bicentennial framework for security, public health, and safe communities. This new framework advances three shared goals: protect our people, prevent transborder crime, and pursue criminal networks. And this framework, let me be clear, elevates our joint focus on synthetic drugs.

INL still supports and will continue to support to Mexico's efforts to interdict illicit drugs and monitor precursor chemicals and pursue criminal cases. In April, Mexico's General Health Council approved adding four new fentanyl precursor chemicals to Mexico's precursor list and established a new watchlist of 14 chemicals of concern.

Now, we also must reduce drug demand and we also must focus on preventing weapons from getting into the hands of criminal organizations. We look to modernize our approach to collaborate and manage the U.S.-Mexico border and deny criminals their profits.

Now, transnational criminal organizations use the traditional financial system and other means, such as digital assets and bulk-cash smuggling to launder proceeds from drug trafficking and INL's strengthened anti-money laundering capacities of our partners to deter, detect, and disrupt these illicit financial flows.

So, beyond bilateral efforts, the Department and INL are hard at work to find global solutions with our international organization partners. We have provided support to the World Health Organization to accelerate the rate in which the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence can review new psychoactive substances and make recommendations for international control.

Just last month at the sixty-fifth U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the United States led an international effort to place three fentanyl precursors under international control. And the Commission also adopted a U.S. resolution on addressing the diversion and trafficking of uncontrolled chemicals and designer precursors.

So, there is no simple solution to reduce the number of fatal drug overdoses in the United States and we cannot do this alone; every country must do their part. INL will continue to engage our foreign partners for impactful counternarcotics and law enforcement outcomes through foreign assistance, diplomacy, and deterrence tools. Reducing illicit drug supply is just one component of ending this epidemic and saving American lives.

So, we are committed to working with Congress to develop solutions for a safer and more secure future. I thank you again and I do look forward to your questions.

[The information follows:]

Statement of James A. Walsh
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Before the
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
"U.S. International Assistance to Combat Narcotics Trafficking"
April 6, 2022

Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding the Department of State's efforts to disrupt the flow of illicit fentanyl and other synthetic drugs into the United States through our foreign assistance and other complementary measures. Illicit drugs continue to have a devastating and deadly impact on American citizens. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue, which demands our continued focus, collaborative and creative action, and dedication to leverage the lessons we have learned over the years.

The consequences of the ongoing drug crisis are sobering. You have certainly seen the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention prediction of a staggering 105,000 drug overdose deaths in the twelve-month period ending in October 2021, according to its provisional data. As a general matter, and in this instance in particular, the Department is committed to ensuring our diplomacy and foreign assistance delivers for the American people. Working alongside our interagency colleagues and international partners, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' (INL) top priority is to address the ongoing overdose crisis that impacts so many American lives.

As you and too many of your constituents know, opioids, particularly synthetic opioids, continue to ravage our communities. Seventy-five percent of the most recently reported fatal drug overdoses in the United States involved opioids, the majority of which were synthetic opioids. Worryingly, we have seen an increase in the intrusion of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids into the supply of

other drugs, including methamphetamine and cocaine. The drug supply is increasingly evolving, and drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine now serve as vehicles for unwitting and, given its potency, potentially fatal exposure to fentanyl. With criminals modifying their business model to include more lucrative synthetic drugs, so too has the Administration evolved to counter this deadly threat. Taking a more holistic approach, the State Department supports our international and interagency partners through our diplomacy and foreign assistance to reduce the synthetic drug supply with greater focus on disrupting the transnational criminal organizations' finances and supply chain.

Most of the fentanyl seized and analyzed in the United States is manufactured in Mexico. Since the People's Republic of China (PRC) scheduled fentanyl-related substances as a class in 2019, U.S. law enforcement assesses most fentanyl in the United States is produced in Mexico and trafficked across the southwest border. Many of the precursor chemicals used to create fentanyl are shipped from the PRC to Mexico for synthetic drug production. Some of these chemicals are neither scheduled under international conventions nor regulated nationally by Mexico or the PRC, and are thus legal to sell and ship within and between those countries. Others may be controlled in one country but not the other, complicating the work of law enforcement to disrupt the flow of these chemicals.

The PRC has an important role to play here. We continue to press the PRC to take meaningful, concrete actions to curb the criminal diversion of precursor chemicals to the production of illicit synthetic drugs. The rise in precursor diversion and the growth in synthetic drug production is a global problem, and we are committed to working with the PRC and other international partners to expand information sharing, strengthen enforcement of customs labeling agreements, and implement "know your customer" standards to restrict sales of precursor chemicals to only those customers with legitimate needs. The PRC can do more to act meaningfully in this regard beyond its class-wide control of fentanyl-

related substances. As the United States recognizes that criminal elements within China are engaged in this activity, we seek the government of China's partnership in helping us, and our international partners, solve this global issue. It is in our mutual interest to do so.

Addressing the overdose crisis and evolving synthetic drug threat also requires the cooperation and sustained commitment of countries in the Western Hemisphere, particularly Mexico. In October, the Department, along with its interagency partners, engaged in a High-Level Security Dialogue with Mexico to establish a new security cooperation agreement: the U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities. Through the new framework, the United States and Mexico are advancing three shared goals: 1) Protect our People, 2) Prevent Transborder Crime, and 3) Pursue Criminal Networks. The new framework elevates our joint focus on addressing criminal networks producing and trafficking synthetics, as well as the chemical precursors they use in their illegal trade.

Through INL's foreign assistance programming and diplomatic engagement, we continue to support Mexico's efforts to strengthen targeting and interdiction capacity and postal security and to minimize the exploitation of maritime containers for illicit trafficking. We support Mexico's efforts to improve monitoring of suspicious precursor chemical movements and engage strategically with the private sector. We help strengthen Mexico's data collection and analysis capacity to support criminal cases related to illicit drug production and trafficking. And we support the sharing of chemical forensic expertise and analysis, with U.S. experts as well as through the North American Drug Dialogue and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) to better understand trends and emerging threats in illicit drug production. Building on this partnership to disrupt synthetic drug production, in April, Mexico's General Health Council approved adding four new fentanyl precursor chemicals to Mexico's Precursor List (equivalent to U.S. List I) and established a new watchlist of 14 chemicals of concern.

Notably, foreign assistance alone cannot solve these complex security and public health challenges. We need whole-of-government commitments to reduce drug demand, prevent weapons from the United States getting into the hands of criminal organizations, modernize our approach to collaboratively manage the U.S.-Mexico border, and disrupt the financial networks that enable the illicit drug trade. Mexico recognizes the threats that synthetic drugs pose to North America. Our shared success requires that Mexico appropriately resource and professionalize its law enforcement and justice agencies. We are committed to partnering with Mexico to reduce impunity, corruption, and crime so criminals cannot undermine our concerted efforts at reversing the overdose and addiction epidemic.

To make better progress against transnational criminal organizations that exploit vulnerabilities, we also must deny criminals their profits. Criminal organizations use the regulated and unregulated financial systems, including bulk cash smuggling, misuse of banks and money service businesses, trade based money laundering and there is a detected increase in the use of digital assets to pay for online drugs or to launder the proceeds of drug trafficking. To strengthen international capacities to deter, detect, and disrupt these illicit financial flows, INL provides resources to strengthen anti-money laundering capacities of our partners in line with international standards. Our assistance strengthens the capacity of financial intelligence units, law enforcement authorities, and other relevant authorities to collect and share financial information, to pursue confiscation, as well as to provide case-based mentoring on financial crime investigations and support asset recovery.

To complement and reinforce our diplomacy and assistance, INL also employs targeted deterrence tools to discourage high-level corruption and support the work of law enforcement. Specific to illicit drug trafficking, INL manages two rewards programs targeting high-level drug traffickers and other transnational criminal leaders, which have helped our law enforcement partners bring over 75 international drug kingpins and crime bosses to justice.

Beyond bilateral efforts, the Department and INL are hard at work to find global solutions with our international organization partners. Over several years, we have provided support to the World Health Organization to accelerate the rate at which the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence can review new psychoactive substances and make recommendations for international control. While new psychoactive substances continue to rapidly emerge, scheduling under the UN drug control conventions remains the most thorough and effective means to globally apply universal standards of control to emerging substances and to secure international cooperation against their diversion and trafficking.

Additionally, INL works with the INCB to fund the Databank on Precursor Chemicals program, which supports real-time intelligence sharing and international law enforcement cooperation to prevent the diversion and illicit manufacturing of precursor chemicals and support transnational investigations. INL also funds the INCB's Global Rapid Interdiction of Dangerous Substances Program, or GRIDS, which supports the real-time exchange of intelligence on shipments or trafficking of new psychoactive substances, including fentanyl-related substances. With information provided through GRIDS, the INCB facilitated a number of multilateral investigations that resulted in the disruption of several international trafficking cells and high-profile arrests including, for example, (1) a fentanyl importer in North America, (2) India's first darknet narcotics vendor, and (3) a Singapore-based freight forwarder.

We work closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to strengthen the technical, investigative, and forensic capacities of law enforcement agencies around the world; to effectively detect and control synthetic drugs and new substances; and, to conduct operations involving the safe handling and disposal of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals. INL funding led to the launch of the UN Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs, an online platform that offers a suite of training

modules that has helped equip governments to better address synthetic drugs challenges. Topics developed thus far include legislative responses to the opioid crisis, access to controlled substances for scientific and medical purposes while preventing their diversion, air cargo and aviation security, establishing monitoring and early warning systems for new psychoactive substances, and creating drug prevention and treatment programs. Over 14,000 users from 185 countries and territories have utilized the Toolkit. Users are able to access manuals, guidelines, and publications as well as e-learning and instructional videos. It is an excellent tool for follow-on education after in-person capacity building trainings.

Multilateral engagements have proved effective in mobilizing global action to address these challenges. Last month at the 65th UN Commission on Narcotics Drugs, the United States led an international effort to place three emerging fentanyl precursor chemicals under international control; and the Commission adopted by consensus a U.S.-sponsored resolution on addressing the diversion and trafficking of unscheduled chemicals and designer precursors. International control will make it more difficult for drug traffickers to obtain and use these chemicals to manufacture fentanyl. We will push States Parties to take swift action to apply these controls within their national frameworks. The U.S. resolution will advance efforts to outpace criminals using unscheduled and designer precursors to produce illicit fentanyl.

The tools of 21st century trade offer criminals numerous avenues to facilitate their illicit transactions. As a result, it is imperative that we continue to create strong global partnerships with the private sector. INL continues to ensure our private sector colleagues are aware of the synthetic drug and precursor issue and how their industry may be at risk. For the past three years, INL has hosted an annual Webinar Week on Public-Private Partnerships to Counter Drug Challenges. Our webinar week brings together public sector and private sector partners from across the U.S. government and around the globe to discuss the most important drug issues. Likewise, the GRIDS program at the INCB,

mentioned above, integrates private sector cooperation as a key component of program activities.

While there is no simple solution to achieving lower numbers of fatal drug overdoses in the United States, every person and country must do their part. Within the purview of the Department of State, we continue to engage our foreign partners to attain more impactful counternarcotics and law enforcement outcomes through foreign assistance but also through complementary diplomacy and deployment of deterrence tools. Reducing illicit drug supply is just one component of a multifaceted approach to end this epidemic and save American lives. We are committed to working with our international and interagency partners and Congress to develop sustainable solutions for a safer and more secure future.



James A. Walsh

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

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James A. Walsh is the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. He is responsible for supporting State Department programs and policies to combat illicit drugs and organized crime around the world. INL currently manages a portfolio of more than $4 billion in more than 90 countries.

Mr. Walsh has served in various senior leadership roles in the INL Front Office since January 2015. In that time, he directed State Department law enforcement and rule of law assistance activities in Europe and Asia (excluding Pakistan and Afghanistan) while overseeing the Department's Air Wing and INL's resources. He was also the Senior Bureau Official from December 2017 to May 2018, Acting Principal Deputy Secretary from May to August 2018, and Acting Assistant Secretary from January to September 2021.

Mr. Walsh previously served as the Executive Director/Controller for the bureau where he led several efforts to strengthen criminal justice assistance programs including the development of an inter-agency Criminal Justice Sector Rating Tool. Prior to joining the Department, Mr. Walsh worked in the private sector for five years supporting Fortune 500 companies. He also served nearly eight years in the U.S. Army where he had several overseas deployments leading aviation units.

A career member of the Senior Executive Service, Mr. Walsh holds a bachelor's degree from West Point, and a master's degree in business administration from Bowie State University. He was born and raised in Northern Indiana. Mr. Walsh received the Presidential Meritorious Rank Award in 2017.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Walsh.

Now, we will start our questions and I will start with my first question. In the final report of the Western Hemisphere's Drug Policy Commission last December, they stated, with respect to the illicit drug trade that throughout our hemisphere, the poor suffer most. Those who are socially and economically marginalized are more likely to develop drug use disorders and are more likely to be recruited or victimized by criminal gangs. We see this, in fact, borne out in communities in Colombia and Mexico, where the high level of violence disproportionately impacts poor, vulnerable, and indigenous populations.

Now, I remember a time in this country when readily available and cheap crack cocaine poured into many poor, Black and Brown communities, devastating lives and driving up crime and violence. And at that time, the answer of many members of Congress, mind you, was: lock them up. And less than a quarter of the federal drug control budget was spent on prevention and treatment.

Sadly, it has taken far too long to wake up to the importance of treatment and prevention and not just lock them up. We see now the prisons and the jails are filled with victims of the drug war of primarily African-American, Black, and Brown, young men and women. And so, we need to look at the history also of what has happened in our own country to understand that that has got to change.

How does the Department ensure that its programs appropriately address this fact and do not make matters worse for the most vulnerable to become a victim of the drug trade and what steps are taken to involve leaders from affected communities in the design and execution of counternarcotics programming, and finally, how do you evaluate the second and third order of effects, such as increased gang violence and environmental degradation associated with both, drug trafficking and law enforcement efforts at each point of the drug supply chain and are ecological and social harms factored in when considering the cost benefit of such programs?

Mr. WALSH. Thank you, Congresswoman Lee.

A very good question. I will try to do this within 5 minutes, but you addressed a lot of issues in that question. I also have the benefit of being involved in this issue and being an expert for the last 25, 30 years, so I have seen, Congresswoman Lee, the evolution of our policy since we have had that, those, I would argue, "not very good" policies in the 1970s and 1980s, where it was: lock them up.

And I think, in particular, now, and especially the lessons we have learned as a result of the fentanyl and synthetic opioid crisis, we have modernized and updated our policies to the point where it is, the policies, the drug policies are focused on the individual now. Before, it was focused on the criminal's intent. And that is why if you start with the focus of the individual, and I will defer you to our own CND policy and strategy, which will be coming out pretty soon, the number one priorities are the prevention and treatment. And we are taking those policies overseas, as well.

Second, I would say that as we look into implement that policy overseas, we want to follow the same policy overseas, which we follow here in the United States and those same lessons learned. And that is why if you look at the Bicentennial Framework in Mexico,

you know, one of the aspects is looking at focusing on safer communities, working with the USAID on the violence prevention. We also are incorporating best practices in our criminal justice reform overseas to ensure that, you know, our corrections programs are not all about incarcerations, but also about rehabilitation.

So, the State Department is playing an important role of taking those hard lessons learned of what doesn't work to what we think is more effective, which is focusing on an individual and applying those best practices to overseas, as well.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

I will yield now to Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, you are about 3 years into the Department's 5-year global plan to combat synthetic drug threats. The plan was released in 2019 and noted that synthetic drugs represent the most significant drug threat of the next decade; unfortunately, that has proven correct.

The strategy describes the complexity of attacking the problem and recommends the following goals: one, reducing diversion and illicit production of synthetic drugs; two, strengthening capacity to detect, interdict, and share information on synthetic drug threats; three, building capacity to target online synthetic drug sales; four, shrinking the drug market by reducing global drug demand; and, five, developing and enhancing partnerships with governments, industry, and international organizations.

What has been achieved so far and what recommendations are you considering going forward? Please talk about that, plus these five goals.

Mr. WALSH. Yeah, thank you very much, Ranking Member Rogers and also, thank you for your leadership on this issue, as you mentioned in your statement.

Yes, we launched this plan 3 years ago and that plan, as you mentioned, focuses on very many things, which are very new to this bureau, quite frankly. It was, and it still is, a good plan. So, we think the plan is right, but the plan, which focuses on that manufacturing aspect, focuses on the movement, also focuses on the money, it forced this bureau, and actually, the rest of the U.S. Government, to look at areas and change and adapt its strategy, which is based on plant-based developed drugs.

And because we had to adapt and adjust this strategy, we had—we didn't recognize how much work needed to be done, and I will start in the multilateral arena. There is, the fact that because this new synthetic drug trade can be basically produced anywhere, it is trafficked with a very small amount. We also have the evolution of the internet and digital currencies, encrypted applications. It has made it much more difficult for law enforcement and governments to monitor and control.

And so, our strategy had to adapt and focus on supply and going after that supply and disrupt and attacking the money. And that is, I think, was one good thing was we had that strategy right.

One of the challenges I think we are facing now, Ranking Member Rogers, is the data and the legislation and the regulations control that other countries have. I mentioned in my opening statement that we successfully got Mexico to schedule precursor chemi-

cals on fentanyl. They just did that last year. So, these things take time.

We haven't been successful in scheduling many of these precursor chemicals in fentanyl in the international community, but we can't schedule that as a class, which is, as you well know, is a challenge, even in this country. How do we regulate and control these chemicals that are now being developed in various analogs by the criminals and can't be controlled? So, that is the other challenge. And so, data, the challenge of getting these governments to better regulate and then getting them the capacity is also some of the other challenges there, as well.

We have been very successful, I think, diplomatically, of raising the alarm bell with other countries about the threat of synthetic drugs. To this day, the United States and Canada, quite frankly, are still the two primary countries that are facing the threat with fentanyl.

Our European allies are facing much broader threats with cocaine, but not seeing this scourge. We need our European allies to work on this issue. We obviously need China to work on this issue and the PRC has made progress in the past, but the challenge is to get them to continue to evolve, especially as we focus on these precursor chemicals.

So, there is a lot of work left to be done. We have made some progress. We know what is still left, but we think we still have the right strategy.

Mr. ROGERS. The fifth goal focuses on the partnerships. We know the private sector needs to be an integral part of the solution on fentanyl. What can you tell us quickly about your efforts to work with the private sector and, specifically, the industries connected with precursors?

Mr. WALSH. Yes. And I know I am short on time, but I will very quickly say that we have established a resolution, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to highlight this issue. So, now all nations are focusing on the private sector involvement with this issue.

And, second, we have also launched a very successful webinar where we have had close to 300 participants talk and work with the United States Government, DEA, HHS, on the importance of being very much aware of the diversion of their legitimate products going towards these criminal organizations.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

I will yield now to Ms. Meng.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And thank you for being here today. I wanted to ask a question about online trafficking. I am glad to see in the Department of State's 5-year global plan of action to combat emerging synthetic drug threats, State recognizes that the broader U.S. Government is not currently equipped to effectively address the illicit financing and cybercrime that facilitates these illegal, online activities.

It is encouraging to see that State is targeting the use of virtual currencies, as well as supporting ongoing U.S. interagency efforts to synchronize global anti-money laundering responses with those targeting the illicit financing methodologies fueling online drug and wildlife trafficking.

A key tool to address global crime networks is the U.S. Transnational and High Tech Crime Global Law Enforcement Network, which deploys experienced U.S. law enforcement experts abroad to deliver sustained training to foreign counterparts.

Which countries have received training as a result of the GLEN program and how is INL working to ensure GLEN training addresses all forms of cybercrime, including wildlife trafficking?

Mr. WALSH. Thank you, Congresswoman Meng.

Cybercrime, as you identified, and elevating this issue within the Department, is not only a priority for INL, but obviously, a priority for the Secretary of State, who just made a big effort to launch a new cyber bureau on this issue.

INL will certainly retain many of its responsibilities in tackling the cybercrime. One, in particular, we are in the process of negotiating a new cybercrime treaty and the State Department is taking this very seriously to the point where I am currently a vice chair on the U.N. committee to conduct these negotiations.

But getting back to your question about the Global Law Enforcement Network, that is a prime example of where we think expanding this network of our law enforcement, our Department of Justice prosecutors and sitting them side-by-side with other countries to work on this issue has been a very successful model. We have law enforcement networks in South America. We have one in Brazil and also in the Caribbean, also in Europe, Bucharest, as well as Belgium, and then we also have them in Asia. We can certainly provide you a list of where those law enforcement professionals are.

In addition, thanks to this committee's generosity, we are doubling our efforts. So, the current account—account is now increased to $20 million. So, we saw such success with this effort that we plan on expanding it and we will be happy to work with you and your staff on discussing how and where we will expand that effort.

Ms. MENG. Great. And if I could quickly switch gears to Afghanistan, on Sunday, the Taliban announced a ban on harvesting poppies. The order also bans the manufacturing of narcotics and the transportation, trade, export and import of heroin, hashish, and alcohol.

Washington spent more than $8 billion trying to eradicate poppy production in Afghanistan during its nearly 20-year war. It is clear to me that our efforts there did not stop the growing of this lucrative crop and now, I am more concerned that this crackdown on poppy production will only lead to a worsening humanitarian crisis for the people of Afghanistan.

What steps can the U.S. take to both, support our goal of reducing poppy cultivation, while also ensuring Afghanistan's economy does not enter economic freefall and are there any efforts underway to support alternative farming practices in Afghanistan?

Mr. WALSH. Yes. We were delighted, actually, pleased to see the announcement from the Taliban on their plan to schedule control of poppy production. With that said, Congresswoman Meng, you have correctly highlighted that it is intricately linked to the economy. And so, we are going to be watching carefully and cautiously on the effects and whether they can actually successfully do this and what are the unintended consequences.

For now, we do not work with the Taliban on narcotics issues. We are exploring ways we can support them, particularly with continuing maybe alternative livelihood or with demand reduction. But right now, our strategy will also focus primarily on addressing some of the trafficking routes, particularly, coming up through Central Asia and Europe and, as well, into Africa, because our concerns are not only with the destabilization and the impacts of this to Afghanistan, but this opium trade, which is 80 percent of the world's opium, also, it is a destabilizing effect for within the trafficking routes and we are watching closely how that impacts some of these trafficking routes, these countries and provides illicit funding for some terrorist groups, as well.

Ms. MENG. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. All right. Thank you.

Now, I will yield to Mr. Diaz-Balart.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman.

And, Mr. Secretary, good to see you, sir. I appreciate that in your testimony, you acknowledge that we must, in essence, do better at the southern border. You also state that most fentanyl in the United States is produced in Mexico and trafficked across the southern border. In addition, the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission report of December 2020 repeatedly discussed and describes that illicit drugs originate and are processed at various locations outside the U.S. and that often malign states and organizations, such as China, Syria, Hezbollah, the FARC, and other bad actors throughout the world are funded by this illicit drug trade. And, obviously, I mention again that most of it is entering through the southern board. As Mr. Rogers mentioned, fentanyl now is the number one killer of Americans between the ages of 18 and 45.

Here's my dilemna or my confusion. On one hand, we are spending billions of taxpayers' money fighting the production, trafficking of these lethal drugs, which are, produced entirely overseas or mostly overseas, and on the other hand, we have ceded the board to the drug cartels. We have a wide-open border, and, frankly, we are just flushing the taxpayers' money down the toilet, Mr. Secretary.

Here are some questions. Is not that a crucial, but missing component to reducing drug overdoses in this country. In addition to harming Americans directly be overdoses, doesn't this directly contradict U.S. policy by failing to prevent revenue streams to some of the world's most dangerous actors? And number three, have you and your colleagues advocated to the President and others in the administration, the importance of securing the border, not ceding the border to the cartels, in order to protect Americans' lives and to stop this illicit inflow at record levels coming in from the southern border?

Mr. WALSH. Congressman Diaz-Balart, I actually would argue that we are paying attention to the border; in fact, my bureau, in particular, because of the Bicentennial Framework is taking a leading role working with the government of Mexico, how do we strengthen our border management?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And Mr. Secretary, I apologize for the interruption, but you are aware, right, that, again, we have, what is it, a 25 percent increase in deaths of Americans, again, fentanyl com-

ing from the southern border. Record levels of fentanyl coming from the southern border. The cartels controlling the southern border. So, with all due respect, sir, the one thing that nobody can claim is success in the southern border.

And so, here is the question, are you saying that you are satisfied with the situation in the southern border, and, again, my question, you know, let's not sugarcoat the situation. We have a crisis of historic proportions. A hundred thousand Americans are dead, most of the stuff coming from the southern border and it is the policy of the administration to open up the borders and to cede it to the cartels. So, again, with all due respect, sir, we are adults here, let's not try to sugarcoat this.

Mr. WALSH. Well, to answer your question, I am not saying that we are successful at the border; in fact, you correctly highlighted that we have a lot of drugs and we have a migration problem, as well.

That is why, the point I am trying to make is that this is why we made this one of the important pillars within the Bicentennial Framework of Mexico is strengthening that border management. And what my bureau is doing is looking at how we can do this better and there are a couple of things that come to mind. One, corruption is a problem and we have to acknowledge that and, two, we have to be smarter with our border. We have a lot more advanced technology, and so we have actually, are undergoing a study to how do we better integrate the cooperation between our U.S. Customs and Border Protection enforcement officials and the Mexican officials.

And so, our focus there is to not only leverage the technology, but integrate the knowledge so that we can both, better control the illicit drugs, the irregular migrants coming into the United States, but on the Mexico side, very interested in the weapons that are coming from our border into Mexico. So, it is a combined effort.

And so our approach is, we just need to be smarter about it and, second, we need to ensure that there is a plan to root out the corruption. I would also add that the border is not just the land border. We have to look at the ports. We have to look at the sea and air, as well as other maritime trafficking arrests that are going in the Pacific.

So, it is a comprehensive approach. We are committed to working on this issue and we recognize the importance of having a controlled border.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. My time is up.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Ms. LEE. Okay. Thank you.

I now would like to yield to Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Walsh, you have shared with us compelling testimony on the terrible price Americans pay due to the opioid epidemic and drug trade in this country. In my community, LA County and in San Bernardino County, we are devastated as a result of this addiction and our law enforcement partners are overwhelmed with calls for service to deal with violent individuals and overdoses.

I know that your bureau has an important role to play in addressing this issue. As you are well aware, international criminal

organizations and other corrupt actors, former Presidents, for example, an American former President, in this town are profiting off the pain that too many American families are facing and we need to do more to stop these fatal drugs from entering our country.

It is not just the drugs themselves that harm American communities. Transnational gangs also increase violence and deaths in our communities.

Mr. Walsh, how is the bureau coordinating and communicating with federal and, most importantly, local law enforcement agencies when transnational crime spills over into the U.S. and how is the Bureau ensuring that all of the important work that it does internationally is put to use protecting local communities?

My concern is our law enforcement agencies don't have the opportunities that foreign police departments have to train with you and to have knowledge of some of the trends that you are seeing.

Mr. WALSH. Yes, Congresswoman Torres, I would argue that one of my most important jobs in this Bureau is to strengthen the collaboration of our host nation partners and within that, to expand and strengthen our networks of our law enforcement, our U.S. law enforcement so that they can work collaboratively with them on these cases.

As you correctly highlighted, this is a transnational issue and it crosses borders, especially with the online threats. I will add that, especially the local, with working with the local law enforcement, and you made a very important point, because this is such a multidisciplinary issue, this opioid threat, we have to have law enforcement being knowledgeable of the trends and they have to be working closely with the public health officials in the local communities.

So, one of the initiatives we started a few years ago was working with our state and local partners and this is a successful initiative. Actually, I would argue that Miami-Dade is one of our more successful state and local partnerships where we work with, where we bring our international law enforcement and work with them hand-in-hand with state and local, so they build those relationships.

As you well know, law enforcement is effective when there is good networks and so I would——

Mrs. TORRES. I represent an inland port, not in Florida, but in California, so I am about 2 hours north of San Diego and, you know, 30 to 40 miles from, you know, our California shore. So, for me, what my law enforcement officers are seeing and facing with, you know, Mexican Mafia is really important for me to hear from you that my law enforcement agencies have an opportunity, you know, to work with you, to gather and share information and to have the tools readily available to punish the people that are trafficking in drugs and humans in our community.

I don't have very much time. I am going to leave you with this thought. Prior to the pandemic, I spent a lot of time, more than I wish, in the jungle of both, Peru, Colombia visiting with very, very small farmers who had really no access to law enforcement that, you know, we are working with to try to get them to grow something other than coca. You know, some of those efforts were very, very successful during the time, but in the last 4 years with the Trump administration, we have had, you know, a lot of these pro-

grams cut. So, the impacts, you know, on these small farmers that were getting the help in the past is no longer there.

I hope that we can follow-up. My time is up, but I hope that we can follow-up with this conversation, because we do need to continue to fund those programs and reach out to those people.

Mr. WALSH. And I agree, we need to have a holistic approach that is working on all aspects of this problem.

Mrs. TORRES. I yield back, Madam Chair.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Now, I will yield to Ms. Wexton.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you to the ranking member, as well.

And thank you, Mr. Walsh, for joining us today and for talking about this very important topic, which really does affect every single congressional district in the country, and all of us differently.

I am just curious, you know, how do the U.S. deaths, which were about 93,000 over those deaths in 2020, how do we compare with the rest of the world in terms of our numbers of overdose deaths?

Mr. WALSH. Unfortunately, we are setting the bar very high which is very disappointing and I think this is a product of, as many of us know on this call, we made availability of prescription opioids accessible to many of our citizens early in the 1990s and it just grew into now a place where the cartels have taken over the market and making the availability of fentanyl, which is causing a lot of deaths.

Ms. WEXTON. So, we have way more overdoses, opioid overdoses overall, but also more per capita, way more per capita than any other country in the world; is that correct?

Mr. WALSH. I believe that is correct, yes.

Ms. WEXTON. Okay.

Mr. WALSH. Canada is also having a phenomenal issue.

Ms. WEXTON. But this is mainly a U.S.-only problem, right?

Mr. WALSH. U.S. and Canada.

Ms. WEXTON. Okay. So, that makes it extra-challenging, does it not, to get our international partners to cooperate with us on this issue?

Mr. WALSH. It does, and this is why we have been making the argument that they don't want to have this problem. And I think we also made the argument that the business model has changed for the criminals. They see the value of how cost-effective it is to produce synthetic drugs, and synthetic drugs is a broader issue that is impacting other countries.

Ms. WEXTON. And then—okay. So, given that fentanyl is not trafficked in the same way as traditional trafficking, right, like with marijuana or cocaine, I mean, people don't put it in their car tires or in the panels of their doors, right, generally?

Mr. WALSH. They still are using those trafficking routes, but because it can be produced in such small amounts, it can be, it has been shipped via mail, it has been shipped by just individuals in their pocket, or it has been shipped by large truckloads.

Ms. WEXTON. And so, that makes it extra-challenging to stop that trafficking from taking place, right?

Mr. WALSH. That is correct.

Ms. WEXTON. Okay. So, you know, according to a recent unclassified DEA intelligence report, the Sinaloa Cartel is working with Chinese nationals to shift production from China to India.

You are aware of that, obviously?

Mr. WALSH. I am, correct; yes, I am aware of that.

Ms. WEXTON. Reportedly, in response to China's regulation of certain precursor chemicals, what do you know about this China-India-Mexico link and are you working with the government in India to stop that from taking place?

Mr. WALSH. We are working with the government in India. We have identified the fact that criminals will look anywhere for their precursor chemicals. India has a large market of chemical industry and we started working with them on establishing a counter-narcotics working group and that has been a very effective opening to elevate this issue with the government in India so they can better regulate their chemical industry.

Ms. WEXTON. Given how dangerous fentanyl is, do you think it should be labeled as a weapon of mass destruction as some national security experts have called for? Do you think it should be labeled as a weapon of mass destruction?

Mr. WALSH. I don't work in that area and I will defer to the experts on calling it a weapon of mass destruction. What I do know is it is killing 105,000, well, 75 percent of the 105,000 that are dead are a result of the synthetic opioids and so it is a national security threat, which has been mentioned by the President.

Ms. WEXTON. Do you know what kind of leverage that we actually have to stop the PRC from letting this trafficking take place and the production and to implement "know your customer" requirements and precursors, what leverage do we have to make that happen?

Mr. WALSH. So, our leverage is that the PRC does not want to be known as a state that cannot control their chemicals or their drug traffickers. And so, we work within the global community to reinforce that it is important that China upholds their standards to the conventions.

Second, we are asking other countries to do that, so that is also our leverage. They have, and the third, they have a problem in Burma with methamphetamines and being produced there. It is the chemical industry that is producing the precursor chemicals for those methamphetamines.

So, better regulation control within that industry is important for China's interests, as well. So, we find that there is mutual ground, a win-win opportunity for them to strengthen their controls on the chemical industries, the precursor chemicals coming out, and also working on their money laundering issues.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you.

I see my time has expired, so I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Ms. Frankel, do you have a question? I will yield to you next.

[No response.]

Ms. LEE. Ms. Frankel, do you have a question? I would yield to you.

[No response.]

Ms. LEE. Mr. Espaillat.

We will come back to Ms. Frankel. There may be some technical problems that she is having right now.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Walsh, for being with us today. My first question is regarding the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. As you know, this has been funded by Congress since 2010 and it is a vital tool to combat illicit drug trade, promote good governance, and improve civil society in the Caribbean.

For fiscal year 2022, Congress provided $80 million for CBSI. Can you describe how CBSI advances our national security interest, while also helping our allies in the Caribbean to counter illicit drug trade and what impact does it have for our nation and Caribbean nations, what is your assessment of the program and how it is doing?

Mr. WALSH. Yeah, thank you, Congressman Espaillat, for highlighting the Caribbean issue and our partnership with them. I wasn't able to put it in my opening statement, but it is an important issue, nonetheless.

And we also appreciate this committee's assistance for this program. My Bureau's account includes about $135 million focusing on that security effort and we have had a lot of success and I think the approach that we have made, taken is to take more of a regional approach and how do we integrate these various countries and islands into more of a regional law enforcement operation, a group that can share that knowledge and then counter the criminal intent.

And we have been pretty successful in that. A case in point is there is this group called the IMPACS within the Caribbean CARICOM and that is an element that works on the crime security aspect and this is a place where they come together and share that information.

I want to also add that we have had a growing threat within the Caribbean because of what is taking place in Venezuela, a significant narco-trafficking state at this point, and then that trafficking routes have been increased in that Caribbean region and also through the financial flows.

And so, we have taken a much greater focus on the financial flows and one of the things that we have been working on is getting their laws and regulations in better standings. We actually recently had six countries establish new asset recovery laws.

So, it is an important region. They are important partners. They are our neighbors and we work closely with them to address this drug trafficking trade, but also the destabilizing factors from that.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. So, would you say that with the increase drug trade going towards the Caribbean, that CBSI needs to be, the funding for CBSI needs to be increased?

Mr. WALSH. I think the budget that the President submitted satisfies and addresses a lot of the requirements within the account. If more funds are made available for that region, we could certainly put them to good use and I would also suggest that because of what is going on in the drug trade, and especially the cocaine, we are seeing mostly about a third of the cocaine going through that, the rest is still going through the Pacific, that it is an important

region, and as I mentioned, the Venezuela issue is something we are watching, as well.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. My second question, real quick, is in 2019, the Government Accountability Office recommended the Department of State improve its ability to monitor initiatives on the CBSI. They specifically recommended that INL develop and implement the data management system for centrally collecting reliable CBSI data.

What is INL doing to implement the GAO's recommendations on CBSI?

Mr. WALSH. Congressman, I am aware that we are working on a project to strengthen the data. I would have to get back to you on the specifics of where we are at on that project, but we are in process of implementing it.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I would love to work with you on that, because I know that to really measure the effectiveness of CBSI, you have to be able to look at the full metrics of the data, as opposed to looking at each program in a silo, right, and not really evaluate the full gamut of its impact. So, my office looks forward to working with you to see how we can accomplish that.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Now, Ms. Frankel, I will yield to Ms. Frankel. Does she have a question?

[No response.]

Ms. LEE. Ms. Frankel.

[No response.]

Ms. LEE. Okay. I will go, then, to a second round of questions, with a 3–minute time frame, if that is acceptable to the members.

Let's see. We have a little bit of time. Mr. Reschenthaler had to go to Rules, so he may be back. If he does, I will go right to him.

My second question builds upon what Congressman Espaillat was asking with the CBSI, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, but also, I would like to add the Merida Initiative and the Central American Regional Security program. We continue to assist these countries, yet the drug problem persists throughout our hemisphere. The cartels have more of a hold in Mexico and Colombia with coca cultivation and, of course, the violence accompanying illicit drug production remains high, and, sadly, in the United States, deaths from overdoses are at a record level once again.

And so, I guess I want to know, since it doesn't make sense to do the same thing over and over and over again, what kind of new efforts has the administration embarked upon to reverse these trends? Because additional resource is fine, but what goes along with additional resources, because when you look at the deaths in our own country and our own districts, it is terrible. It is sad. Lives are being shattered and we are funding a heck of a lot in terms of interdiction efforts, in terms of trying to address the illicit drug production, but yet nothing seems to change.

And so, what do you see now as new directions for U.S. tax dollars to begin to really make an impact in this?

Mr. WALSH. Chairwoman Lee, you made a good point and I would second that point, that foreign assistance alone cannot solve this problem. And so, at the State Department, we recognize that

diplomacy is an important tool and part of that is trying to get these countries to collaborate more and have the political will and commitment to address this problem.

And so, as noted in my testimony and somewhat in my statements, the State Department and this administration has really been focused at ensuring that we have that commitment and political will and this is why we have the Bicentennial Framework. We put a lot of effort into getting an agreement where the government of Mexico and the United States agree that this is a shared problem that we can work together on.

I would also look at and talk about Central America. I think Central America is unique because we actually have some challenges, as you well know. We have some democracy backsliding in Central America.

So, we look at those opportunities where we can work, but also, I think the important strategy, which is part of this administration, is going after the root causes. And these are just some of the things I mentioned about tackling corruption and fighting the impunity of some of these government officials that enables these criminals to thrive.

Ms. LEE. Well, let me just say, I hope you have the flexibility to halt the programs that are not working and redirect those resources to those that are successful, especially at addressing the underlying and root causes of this war, which is really what it is.

Let me now yield to Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

For years, China has been the principal source of the fentanyl flooding the U.S. coming up through Mexico. In 2019, Beijing finally cracked down on the supply of fentanyl from China to the U.S. with China enacting new laws prohibiting the production and sales and export of most fentanyl-classed drugs.

So what extent is China actually enforcing that law? For example, has China, in recent years, acted on U.S. and U.S. provided intelligence on traffickers from the PRC and, secondly, is it true that Beijing rarely acts against Chinese criminal syndicates unless they specifically cross a narrow set of government interests? To what extent are Chinese criminal groups in Latin America actually helping to advance Beijing's interests in the region? And, finally, what do we know about Chinese cooperation with Mexican authorities? As with the U.S., does China reject responsibility, even as the presence of Chinese criminal actors in Mexico are expanding rapidly?

Mr. WALSH. Yeah, Ranking Member Rogers, let me answer that latter part of that question first. To date, we do not have any evidence that shows that the PRC is actually involved or leveraging criminal elements within China to their gain.

And to the first part of your question, I would argue that we actually saw, in effect, immediate effect of PRC enforcing some of these laws when they asked them to schedule fentanyl class-wide. We saw within a year, within a year's time frame, an immediate shift of the trafficking routes going direct from China into the United States to a diverted route, which goes through Mexico or Canada. And now, we have actually, as you know, precursor chemicals.

So, there is evidence that China can, if we ask them to do something, they will and they can enforce it. The challenge we have now, as I have mentioned, is that we need them do more and we need them to do particularly more on controlling their chemical industry.

And we ask asked them to do that. They have not given us a satisfactory answer, so our efforts are to continue to press them to do so.

Mr. ROGERS. If they want to act after we ask them to do something, for God's sake, ask now.

Mr. WALSH. And this is one thing that we discovered. This is one thing where you all can help. We found that congressional engagement on this issue actually influences their decision-making.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, I thank you for that and we hope that you will continue this effort.

I yield.

Ms. LEE. A final question now comes from my yielding to Congressman Diaz-Balart.

Mr. Diaz-Balart.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Chairwoman. Thank you very much.

Mr. Secretary, you mentioned Venezuela in your answer to another question about it being, basically, a narco state. Let me first go to its neighbor. Colombia, as you know, has made enormous strides since it continues to fight narco trafficking and narco terrorism, but that struggle has been made much more difficult because of transnational criminal organizations, at times, assisted by malign actors and states, such as Russia and, Maduro that you mentioned.

Can you explain the roles of the FARC, Hezbollah, Russia, Communist China, Iran, and the Maduro regime in engaging in drug trafficking in the region, what is their role, how active are they?

Mr. WALSH. Congressman, the FARC dissidents are still very active. Venezuelan groups are working hand-in-hand with the FARC dissident to work with the coca producers and farmers and is continuing to produce significant amounts of cocaine. And so, Colombia has had a lot of external factors that has made it very difficult for them to do their job.

We have seen some signs of Hezbollah involved in the region. I cannot comment or have any knowledge of Iranian engagement, but there is a lot of bad actors involved. And I would say that because of this reason, we find our partnership and work with Colombia in that more important.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Let me ask you, are you familiar with Project Cassandra is still operational?

Mr. WALSH. I am not familiar with that project. I don't think I can comment on it.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. If you could—maybe I will put that in the question if that is still operational or not.

What, in your opinion, are the biggest threats to the progress made over the past 2 decades in Colombia, and not only Colombia, but the surrounding region? Is it these transnational organizations? What is the largest threat?

Mr. WALSH. I think that transnational organizations still remain the largest threat. Taking a broader scope, let's not forget about the impact of COVID. This whole region has had, like the rest of the world, a devastating impact from COVID and we saw that in Colombia with some of the protests just a year ago.

And so, I think if we watch this region, watch the economic concerns as we are witnessing what is taking place with some of the protests in Peru, destabilizing factors are going to have an impact on other groups that wanted contact so, that is a space we have to watch.

And, unfortunately, because of the drug trade, there is a lot of illicit money in the region that can fuel these ill-gotten gains or these bad groups that want to take advantage of this environment.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And you did mention Venezuela. Do you want to elaborate a little bit more on that, as to how, I forget the term that you used, I don't know if you called it, a potentially narco state, is it? Just give me a little bit more information on Venezuela.

Mr. WALSH. Well, we certainly, within our controls and our International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, INCSR, we have highlighted the concerns of Venezuela. We have labeled them, in 2021, they were labeled as failed demonstrably to their efforts.

We have used our top rewards and narcotics awards programs and our sanctions, visa sanction programs to highlight the bad actors within the Maduro regime that are involved in the drug trade. So, our plan is to continue to keep the pressure on the Maduro regime and highlighting their involvement in the drug trade, which involves much of the cocaine going into the Venezuelan border and Venezuelan groups trafficking it, either through back into Central America through the Caribbean or also into West Africa and into Europe.

And now we have Europe involved because they have a cocaine problem. And so, part of our diplomatic efforts is to highlight the involvement of Venezuela in this as well.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And Madam Chairwoman, thank you. I know that I have exceeded my time a bit, so I thank you for your indulgence. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

I will yield now. I see Mr. Reschenthaler is back.

Mr. Reschenthaler.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Chairwoman Lee.

And I just want to say thank you for your flexibility. As you know, we had a Rules Committee meeting, so I appreciate your willingness to let me jump on and off. So, thank you.

So, as folks know, I am from Pennsylvania and we are the fifth-largest state. It is not a coincidence that we have the fifth-largest death count of fentanyl poisoning. It is a huge issue. It cannot be overstated.

So, to prevent Americans from losing their lives due to fentanyl overdoses, I offered an amendment in fiscal year 2022's National Defense Authorization Act which required countries that are significant sources of illicit fentanyl to be included on the majors list.

So, the U.S. can withhold certain foreign aid to countries on that list if they don't work to stem the tide of illicit fentanyl exports.

Deputy Secretary Walsh, what is your status of implementing my provision to adding countries that are significant sources of fentanyl to the majors list?

Mr. WALSH. Thank you, Congressman.

Yes, we are in the process of implementing that law. And, you know, unfortunately, because of the time we had to do the report this year, we didn't have the time to go through the full scope of looking at all the countries that are fentanyl producers or traffickers.

With that said, we highlighted, we identified this issue and so we actually have a section in our INCSR, if you have had a chance to read it that highlights the countries and the fentanyl-trafficking routes. So, our intent is to fully implement this in the next year's report and use this as a diplomatic tool, as well.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Do you feel like you have sufficient resources to do this or do you need new requirements at all?

Mr. WALSH. We believe we have the sufficient resources do this, yes.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Okay. I know in your opening statement or one of your earlier questions, you had mentioned Mexico as producing illicit fentanyl, but I would submit that China is still a major issue with this. I know that China was absent from the list.

What is the justification for not including China here?

Mr. WALSH. I'm sorry, Congressman, can you clarify your question? Including them in what?

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. In the majors list. So, I know China is not included on the majors list.

Mr. WALSH. That was a legal argument. The legal requirements for who we could look at. It was not updated in time for us to look at them, so we will take a look at that over the next year, with the new law.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. So, you plan to include China on this year's?

Mr. WALSH. The majors list is a decision of the President, so I would have to defer to the process before I can make any recommendations.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. All right. Thank you, I appreciate it.

Chairwoman Lee, thanks, again, for your flexibility, and I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you again.

Okay. I don't see Ms. Frankel, so having no additional questions from any members, I will now just thank you, again, Mr. Walsh, very much for your time and for your very important testimony today. You gave us, really, a much better understanding of the work being done around the world to address the illicit drug trade, the accompanying corruption and the State Department's work with key partners to reduce the supply of illicit drugs, to combat corruption, also, to improve the security and economic opportunities for communities affected by transnational criminal organizations, which, of course, is what we talked about today. When you look at its impact, it impacts all of our communities in a very deadly way, especially when you look at the deaths as a result of opioid overdoses.

I also want to tell you how much I appreciate the work of the people at the State Department, your employees, and those at USAID to address these issues. And I urge that as you work with partner governments to reduce the supply of illicit drugs that you consider how we are going to achieve long-term sustainable gains which appropriately factor in the human and ecological effects of our programs.

And once again, if it is not working, we need to look at new ways to address the root causes of this real drug war that is taking place. So, hopefully, we will see some new ideas, new strategies, and our resources invested in strategies that will work.

You know you have a willing partner in this committee. We work on this issue in a bipartisan way, and I want to thank Mr. Rogers again and hope that you keep us apprised of your progress and your needs and maybe, you know, we will see a new day if, in fact, we do this differently. So, thank you again.

If members have questions that they would like to submit for the record, please submit them to the subcommittee within the next 7 days.

This concludes today's hearing. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands adjourned.

[Questions and answers submitted for the record follow:]

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#1)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 1:

How does the Department monitor and evaluate these programs?

Answer 1:

The Department is committed to rigorous monitoring and evaluation to ensure taxpayer resources are used appropriately and are achieving meaningful results. The Department uses strategic and contextual indicators at the country level as well as indicators at the individual project level. Measuring at both levels allows the Department to see holistic trends across the hemisphere to then tailor specific implementation projects. Monitoring and evaluating at the implementation level measures impact on the ground of specific activities and uses and implements tools including logical frameworks that lay out goals and objectives that are clear, change-oriented, and have valid outcome indicators. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) also evaluates programming via third-party organizations to provide impartial lessons learned and specific recommendations for future interventions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#2)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 2:

Are benchmarks established in coordination with partner governments to measure a program's outcomes and success?

Answer 2:

INL works in close partnership with partner governments and implementers to develop benchmarks and indicators that incorporate strategic objectives, local contexts, and political will. Negotiating and developing indicators with our partners enables us to collect and analyze available and relevant data.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#3)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 3:

Does the Department have the necessary flexibility to halt programs that are not working and redirect resources to those that are successful?

Answer 3:

Certain earmarks and funding directives can restrict our ability to move funds freely and ensure alignment to our strategic objectives. The Department continues to seek flexibility on earmarks and funding directives included in the annual appropriations. INL and the Department are working to build a robust learning culture that incorporates lessons learned and data to more easily course correct when expected results or successes are not being met. Through the development of new tools, resources, work streams, and roll-out of an INL-wide indicator database, we are becoming a more strategic and data-driven organization that can more easily and flexibly stop or adapt programs based on analysis of that data.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#4)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 4:

What is your assessment of the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission's recommendation that the State Department develop country-led, compact based, assistance programs, similar to those of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, designed to strengthen the rule of law by reducing both the supply of, and the demand for, dangerous illicit substances and that would involve a multi-year funding commitment and include rigorous benchmarks and indicators to assess progress toward joint strategic goals and objectives?

Answer 4:

INL welcomes approaches that incentivize our partners in the region to make needed reforms and allocate sufficient resources toward achieving security and rule of law objectives. Utilizing an inclusive and locally driven process allows our partners to help develop the best possible solutions for their countries. Developing rigorous metrics helps us achieve targeted and tangible results that are tied to specific INL and country priorities. We welcome future conversations with the Committee on this topic.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Barbara Lee (#5)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 5:

In 2007 the U.S. and Mexico launched the Merida Initiative. The Initiative's aim was to "break the power and impunity of drug and criminal organizations that threaten health and public safety of their citizens and the stability and security of the region." Fourteen years and over $3 billion later, Mexican transnational criminal organizations dominate drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere and Mexican criminal groups are also involved in the sale and production of fentanyl, which is linked to an estimated two thirds of all opioid overdoses. Citing these facts, many have concluded that the Merida Initiative is in urgent need of reassessment.

What analysis have you done on the Merida Initiative and what are lessons learned?

Answer 5:

The Department is committed to ensuring our foreign assistance delivers for the American people. The Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities, launched in October 2021, applies the lessons learned from 14 years of experience under the Merida Initiative. Over the course of Merida, INL moved away from large equipment purchases toward training and accreditation programs that build the long-term capacity of institutions. INL support helped Mexico to achieve international accreditation of 96 prisons and 50 law enforcement agencies. Accreditation efforts correlate to reduced crime rates, improved criminal justice processes, and respect for human rights. INL enabled certain Mexican jurisdictions to reduce the time to resolve homicide cases, coerced confessions, and the number of people held in pretrial detention. INL built the capacity of security and justice sector institutions which will be essential under the new Framework to address the rapidly changing threats from synthetic drugs. A priority under the Bicentennial Framework will be to

continuously work with Mexico to evaluate the results of our collaborative efforts in meeting our shared goals and communicate our progress regularly.



Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Barbara Lee (#6)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 6:

In 2007 the U.S. and Mexico launched the Merida Initiative. The Initiative's aim was to "break the power and impunity of drug and criminal organizations that threaten health and public safety of their citizens and the stability and security of the region." Fourteen years and over $3 billion later, Mexican transnational criminal organizations dominate drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere and Mexican criminal groups are also involved in the sale and production of fentanyl, which is linked to an estimated two thirds of all opioid overdoses. Citing these facts, many have concluded that the Merida Initiative is in urgent need of reassessment.

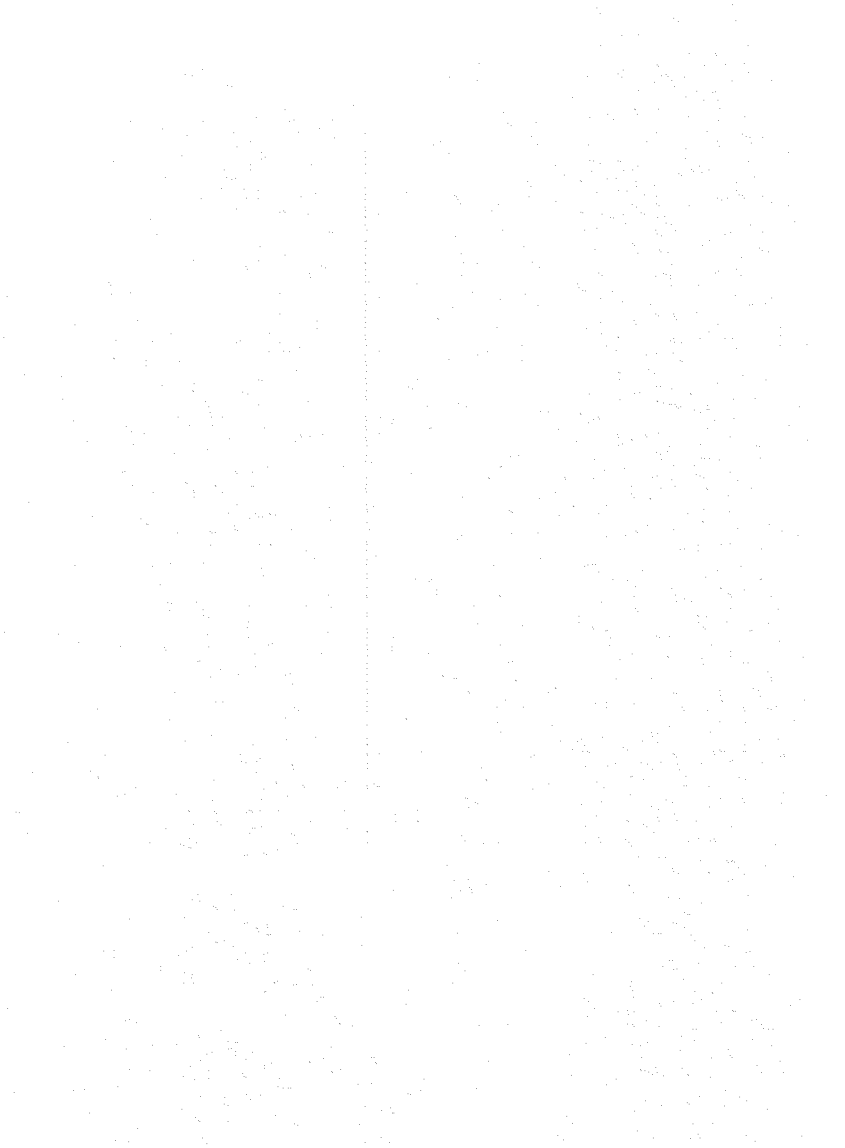
Last fall the U.S. and Mexico announced "a new era in security cooperation" as part of a high-level security dialogue between the two countries. What has been the outcomes of that dialogue? How is the new strategy different from that pursued under the Merida Initiative?

Answer 6:

The U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities, agreed to at the High-Level Security Dialogue in October 2021, expands our partnership into new areas of cooperation against arms trafficking, synthetic drugs and precursors, and illicit finance. The Framework is informed by the Administration's drug policy priorities and commits us to regularly evaluate and communicate publicly the impact of our joint efforts. The two governments adopted bilateral objectives and joint actions in January, and our teams are working to finalize metrics to evaluate our progress over time.

The Merida Initiative strengthened Mexico's rule of law and counternarcotics capacity and facilitated Mexican law enforcement agencies' international accreditation at the federal and state levels, resulting in increased transparency, professionalization of institutions, and respect for human rights. The Bicentennial Framework builds on these successes and modernizes our security

partnership to confront new challenges, including the rise of synthetic opioids, and enhances our collaboration with Mexico on shared security priorities.



Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Barbara Lee (#7)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 7:

In 2007 the U.S. and Mexico launched the Merida Initiative. The Initiative's aim was to "break the power and impunity of drug and criminal organizations that threaten health and public safety of their citizens and the stability and security of the region." Fourteen years and over $3 billion later, Mexican transnational criminal organizations dominate drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere and Mexican criminal groups are also involved in the sale and production of fentanyl, which is linked to an estimated two thirds of all opioid overdoses. Citing these facts, many have concluded that the Merida Initiative is in urgent need of reassessment.

The new strategy has a stated focus on ensuring racial equity, community-based crime prevention, and the promotion of harm-reduction efforts. How will these goals be incorporated into the Department and USAID's drug reduction programming?

Answer 7:

The U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework is a comprehensive approach to lower violence and address addiction as a public health concern, prevent transborder crime, and pursue criminal networks.

INL supports evidence-based public health cooperation between the United States and Mexico to address substance abuse, expand therapeutic justice and alternatives to incarceration for drug-related crimes, and professionalize mental health and addiction treatment professionals. INL trains federal, state, and municipal law enforcement emphasizing human rights, community engagement, and improved collaboration with investigative and prosecutorial authorities to reduce crime and impunity. INL trains police and emergency call operators in collaboration with Mexican Women's Justice Centers to increase awareness and more effectively respond to victims of gender-based violence.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#8)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 8:

What other changes are posing challenges to the U.S. and its partners working to reduce the illicit drug supply?

Answer 8:

Many of today's illicit synthetic opioids are more potent, allowing smaller, harder to detect quantities to be trafficked into the United States, often using international mail systems. Attempts to limit precursor chemicals are also challenging as many have legitimate uses or are not controlled under international conventions and are thus legal to sell and ship.

The State Department continues to raise the synthetic drug threat with our foreign partners, and many are taking positive steps to address fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. Mexico, for instance, added four new fentanyl precursor chemicals to its Precursor List in 2021 and established a watchlist of 14 chemicals of concern with many more expected to be added this year. In addition, the Department is proactively engaging with countries to increase knowledge and capacity to address synthetic drugs to ensure all are ready to address the newest trends.

At the last meeting of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March, we placed three precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of fentanyl under international control. These controls protect against diversion and make it harder for criminals to manufacture fentanyl with these precursors. We will continue to promote such actions through diplomatic engagement and support to organizations that can aid in the review of new psychoactive substances.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#9)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 9:

How do you ensure that Department funding and programming is flexible enough to respond to the dynamic nature of drug trafficking organizations?

Answer 9:

The Department's INCLE counternarcotics request supports comprehensive approaches to counter drug trafficking and concentrates resources where they offer the most value and impact to U.S. national security priorities. We adjust funding when necessary and permitted to meet priorities. Our budget requests reflect a shift toward more holistic approaches, such as a focus on rural security and justice in Colombia as a component of our counternarcotics efforts. We apply rigorous monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure resources are being spent appropriately and responsibly. Reduced earmarks and funding directives on our assistance would provide additional flexibility to appropriately respond to the dynamic nature of drug trafficking organizations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#10)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 10:

How do you adjust programming when the will of partner governments or ministries wane due to the corruptive influence of transnational criminal groups?

Answer 10:

We maintain contact with multiple levels of government within our partner countries, including national, state (department), and municipal. Where the will of a partner government at the national level may wane, we explore potential programming at the state and municipal level. Additionally, we seek out international organizations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Organization of American States, and civil society organizations with whom to partner. In Haiti, for example, INL is using a joint USAID-INL place-based strategy to support community-based solutions to reduce gang violence and influence across neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince. In Nicaragua, we're working through U.S.-based and local NGOs to strengthen citizen security by building awareness of the criminal threats in Nicaragua and increasing the capacity of ordinary citizens to resist the incursion of criminal networks into their communities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Barbara Lee (#11)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 11:

The final report of the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission noted that "drug trafficking is dynamic: in response to enforcement, traffickers can quickly move production, adjust trafficking routs, develop new smuggling vehicles or methods, and create new, more dangerous products." For example, for years the focus on combatting illicit drugs has been on plant-based products. Today, synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, have led to record level drug overdoses and abuse and transnational criminal organizations, many of which are based in Mexico, control much of the illicit drug market.

To what extent does the new Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities include a focus on improving efforts against synthetic opioids, methamphetamine, and other drugs?

Answer 11:

The Bicentennial Framework modernizes our security partnership to confront new challenges, including the rise of synthetic opioids. Goal 2 of the Framework focuses on preventing transborder crime to secure modes of travel and commerce, reduce arms trafficking, target illicit supply chains including drugs, and reduce human trafficking and smuggling. We established a bilateral interagency working group dedicated to identifying areas of cooperation to more effectively disrupt the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals in Mexico, including targeting import companies suspected of diverting precursor chemicals and dismantling drug laboratories. A key commitment under the Framework is working to strengthen control and management of incoming precursor chemical shipments at seaports.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#12)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

New U.S.-Colombia Counternarcotics Strategy

Last October the White House released details of the "new, holistic U.S.-Colombia Counternarcotics strategy." The United States has provided $10 billion since fiscal year 2000 for support of Plan Colombia and its successor programs. Plan Colombia had two core objectives. First, to curb cocaine production and second, to help the Colombian state regain authority in marginalized regions. While the signing of the historic Peace Accord with the FARC marked significant progress towards the second objective, Colombia is still the largest cocaine producer, despite years of U.S. support.

Question 12:

What differentiates the new counternarcotics strategy from prior strategies? How will the new strategy enable greater progress on curbing cocaine production?

Answer 12:

The new strategy focuses on three lines of effort: integrated cocaine supply reduction; comprehensive rural security, justice, and development; and environmental protection. The strategy brings together U.S. and Colombian security and development institutions in a more integrated, sequenced fashion to guide interventions by our respective governments and agencies. Implementation of a holistic approach to counternarcotics provides the best opportunity to improve resilience against armed groups, reduction of coca, and lack of state presence.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#13)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 13:

How does the new strategy address the absence of security and development in vast regions of Colombia?

Answer 13:

Under the rural security, development, and justice pillar, the United States is supporting Colombia's efforts in rural areas to increase resilience against armed groups, increase security, build relationships between communities and the police, improve access to justice and other social services, protect community leaders, make licit crops more profitable and competitive, and increase land titling. Our combined security and development work recognizes that successful development first requires re-established security, and that security alone is insufficient to address the development challenges that push rural populations toward illicit crops.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#14)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 14:

How does the new policy equip Colombia to better protect human rights defenders, indigenous people, and Afro-Colombians that are under assault by drug traffickers and armed groups?

Answer 14:

The protection of vulnerable communities and the strengthening of human rights are critical elements of the new strategy. We support Colombian security and justice sector institutions to investigate and prosecute crimes against vulnerable communities, erode the illicit economies that fuel illegal armed groups, and create opportunities for licit economies to take hold. U.S. government assistance has supported the creation and work of a special unit and strategy within the Colombian Attorney General's office to prosecute crimes against human rights defenders. The strategy is bearing fruit, with 90 convictions for related crimes from 2017-2021. The U.S. government will continue to support its implementation.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#15)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Colombia and Demobilized rebels

One of the recommendations of the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission was that the U.S. needs to "facilitate assistance to demobilized rebels in post-conflict zones." However, the final report noted that current OFAC restrictions undermine the work of INL and USAID in areas where demobilized rebels have returned to civilian life.

Question 15:

Does the Administration concur with the recommendation?

Answer 15:

Last year's delisting of the FARC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization allows the U.S. and Colombian governments to partner on Peace Accord implementation in areas of the country in which demobilized members of the former FARC are located. We continue to assess such possibilities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#16)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 16:

What steps has INL taken to support Colombian government efforts to provide alternative livelihoods to former rebels and their families who have laid down their arms and renounced violence?

Answer 16:

While INL does not implement alternative livelihood programming directly, we are working closely with USAID under the holistic counternarcotics strategy to support its efforts with the Colombian government to build and invest in a diverse, inclusive, and competitive rural economy that can provide legal and dignified employment and licit income opportunities to marginalized rural communities. The United States will continue to support sustainable and competitive value chains, increase access to financial services, increase women's economic participation, increase land titling, and promote tangible assets – all intended to boost rural economies and create trust in the state and other institutions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#17)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Ariel (sic) Fumigation

The U.S. partnered with Colombia on an aerial fumigation program from the early 1990's to 2015 when, then President Santos suspended the program after a World Health Organization review found that the herbicide used is "probably carcinogenic to humans." Subsequently, the Colombian Constitutional Court placed restrictions on any future use of the herbicide from aircraft but did not ban the practice. While such spraying may have short-term benefit, in the medium and long-term, even large amounts of aerial spraying does not reduce coca cultivation. The UN Office of Drug Control (UNODC) found that 82 percent of coca cultivation in 2018 occurred in territories that had been "historically affected" by the program. Rather than expanding to new communities, the plant recovered in the same communities, where growers were clearly not disincentivized by past spraying, because coca cultivation remained by far their most viable economic survival strategy. President Duque's administration has announced support for restarting aerial spraying and proposed changes to the program to address the restrictions set in place by the Constitutional Court.

Question 17:

What is the Biden Administration's view on restarting such program?

Answer 17:

The resumption of aerial eradication remains Colombia's sovereign decision. A Colombian Constitutional Court decision in January 2022 rendered further unlikely the Duque administration's chances at restarting aerial eradication during the remainder of its term. The complex problems that drug trafficking poses require a similarly broad set of interventions; legally available eradication remains a core element of the holistic counternarcotics strategy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#18)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 18:

The pursuit of drug control objectives should not be done at the expense of the government's fundamental obligations to protect and promote the human rights of those affected. How would restarting aerial spraying impact Colombia's obligations under international human rights law?

Answer 18:

The resumption of aerial eradication remains Colombia's sovereign decision. Should it choose to resume the effort, Colombia would have responsibility to ensure compliance with its legal obligations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#19)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 19:

A study of opinion polls by Miguel Garcia that was reported in Colombia's Razon Publica in 2019 found that trust in the police fell significantly in municipalities where aerial spraying was carried out. How do you assess and weigh the risk of social discord as a result of the resumption of aerial spraying?

Answer 19:

Consideration of which programs to carry out and the relevant national/local factors to consider is something that we do in partnership with the Colombian government. The resumption of aerial eradication remains Colombia's sovereign decision.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#20)
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Question 20:

Afghanistan

In early April, the Taliban announced a ban on harvesting poppies and warned farmers that their crops will be burned and they could be jailed if they proceed with the harvest. It is my understanding that in the 1990s the Taliban also outlawed and basically eradicated poppy production in the country. What is your assessment of how this new announcement may impact the global illicit opiate supply and the small farmers who depend on this production for their livelihoods and their survival?

Answer 20:

If the Taliban enforces its ban on poppy cultivation, it would make inroads into Afghanistan's role as the source of 80 percent of poppy cultivation in the world. However, it remains to be seen whether the Taliban will enforce the ban, given that they have profited significantly from the illicit narcotics trade since they were last in power. The international community is watching closely to see if the Taliban follows through with its counternarcotics statements. We will judge them on their actions, not their words.

Eliminating the poppy economy in an environment with no viable alternatives and no foreign assistance will further cripple the Afghan economy. The Taliban have not announced what alternative livelihoods and means of income will be provided to poppy farmers, laborers, and traders. The United States successfully provides high-value alternatives to poppy cultivation in targeted districts in four provinces but is not providing widespread alternatives in all poppy cultivating provinces.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#21)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

People's Republic of China: The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration assesses that China remains the primary country of origin for illicit fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances trafficked in the United States.

Question 21:

Can you provide an assessment of the obstacles to greater cooperation with the People's Republic of China and the U.S.?

Answer 21:

Bilateral counternarcotics cooperation following the PRC's 2019 scheduling of fentanyl-related substances remains mixed. The PRC claims that U.S.-PRC tensions, U.S. sanctions actions on PRC entities, and visa restrictions on PRC law enforcement personnel prevent cooperation. The PRC has yet to meaningfully strengthen oversight of its chemical industry, asserting that implementation would require new legislation and disrupt international shipping. At the 65th UN Commission on Narcotics Drugs, the PRC supported a U.S. request to control certain fentanyl precursor chemicals. We see multilateral engagement as an opportunity for wider cooperation with the PRC on the global threat posed by synthetic drugs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#22)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

People's Republic of China: The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration assesses that China remains the primary country of origin for illicit fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances trafficked in the United States.

Question 22:

What progress has been made in convincing the PRC government to strengthen its regulatory oversight of its large pharmaceutical industry and better detect and disrupt the diversion of precursor chemicals?

Answer 22:

President Biden and President Xi jointly identified counternarcotics as an area for collaboration. The Administration has shared specific proposals for cooperation – including expanding information sharing, stronger enforcement of customs labeling agreements, and "know your customer" standards – crafted around international best practices. The PRC has yet to accede to these requests, asserting that implementation would require new legislation and disrupt international shipping. However, the PRC supported a U.S. request to internationally control three fentanyl precursor chemicals at the 65th UN Commission on Narcotics Drugs. We see multilateral engagement as an opportunity for wider cooperation with the PRC on the global threat posed by synthetic drugs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#23)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

People's Republic of China: The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration assesses that China remains the primary country of origin for illicit fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances trafficked in the United States.

Question 23:

What are the limits of a unilateral approach, and what steps are being taken by the State Department to work with other countries and through international bodies to convince the PRC to impose stronger restrictions on fentanyl?

Answer 23:

The Administration continues to actively engage the PRC at senior levels to urge enhanced oversight of the PRC's chemical industry. The Department of State also continues to work with a range of partners to combat the shared global threat posed by synthetic drugs and fentanyl-related precursors, including those originating in the PRC. At the 65th UN Commission on Narcotics Drugs in March, the United States led an international effort to place three fentanyl precursor chemicals under international control. We will continue to push State Parties to take swift action to apply these controls within their national frameworks. We also continue to work with our international organization partners, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and International Narcotics Control Board, to assist in building the capacity of partner countries to advance their ability to stop the trafficking of unscheduled chemicals and designer precursors.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#24)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 24:

What are the State Department's FY 2023 budget priorities for U.S. counternarcotics assistance?

Answer 24:

The State Department's FY 2023 budget priorities for U.S. counternarcotics assistance are to strengthen international partner capacity and cooperation in order to disrupt and reduce illicit drug markets that account for the greatest number of American overdose deaths, such as opioids (including synthetic opioids like fentanyl), methamphetamine, and cocaine. The FY 2023 budget request concentrates resources where they offer the most value and impact to these priorities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#25)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 25:

What activities or programs, and in which countries, did you deprioritize and why?

Answer 25:

Relative to the FY 2022 budget request, the decrease in the State Department's counternarcotics budget for FY 2023 is driven primarily by reductions to the Afghanistan and Colombia programs. The reduction in total counternarcotics assistance is proportional to the reduction in INL's overall topline.

The reduction in counternarcotics assistance to Afghanistan is the result of the 2021 collapse of the democratic government in Afghanistan and the resulting U.S. drawdown from the country. In Colombia, the Department's request shifts funding from counternarcotics to rural security – mutually reinforcing efforts – to support implementation of the new, holistic counternarcotics strategy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#26)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 26:

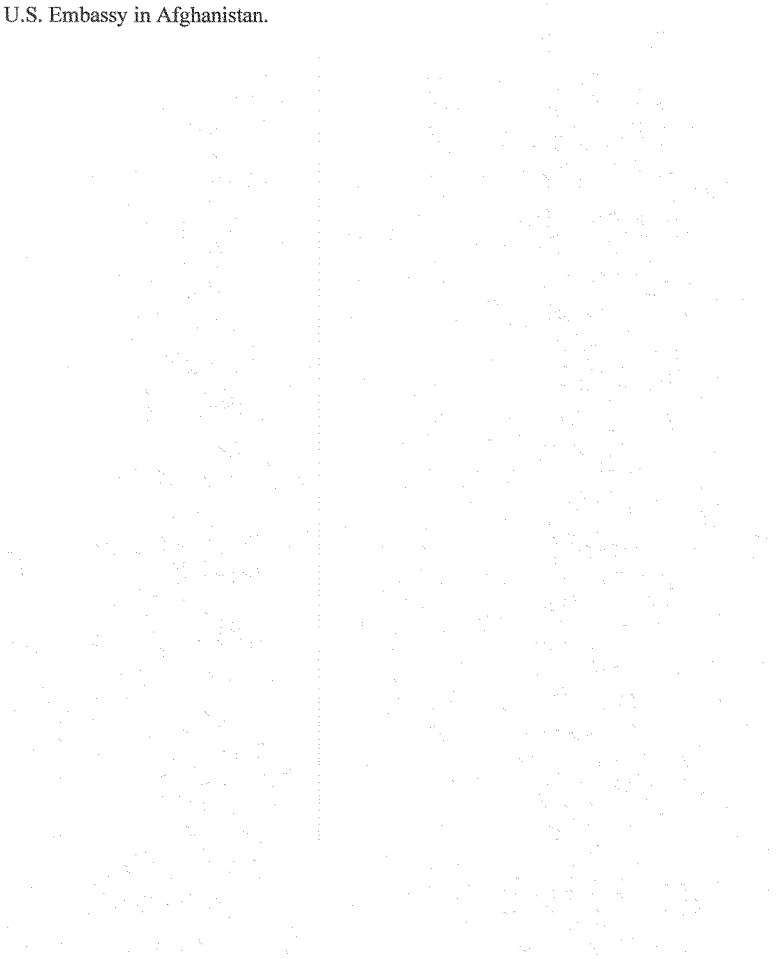
Which activities or programs, and in which countries, did you prioritize for additional funding?

Answer 26:

The State Department prioritized counternarcotics funding for programs in Nigeria, as well as within the Central Asia Regional, Central America Regional Security Initiative, the Drug Supply Reduction (DSR), and INL Inter-Regional Aviation Support accounts.

Counternarcotics funding to Nigeria – the largest country and economy in Africa – will strengthen the Nigerian Government's capacity to interdict and stem the large shipments of drugs and precursor chemicals flowing through Nigeria's ports and airports. Additional counternarcotics assistance to Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan through the Central Asia Regional Account will counter criminal organizations that traffic illicit narcotics throughout the region, especially in light of the collapse of the democratic government in Afghanistan. Increased counternarcotics assistance within the Central America Regional Security Initiative will counter drug flows to the countries of Central America and support the U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America. The increased request for the DSR line will focus on expanding public-private partnerships; accelerating scheduling of new substances; and strengthening national capacities to investigate, detect, and interdict synthetic opioids and their precursors. Additional funding to the INL Inter-Regional Aviation Support account will cover increased costs that INL will assume

responsibility for as a result of the termination of the aviation program that previously supported the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan.



Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#27)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 27:

There is growing concern about new synthetic opioids such as nitazene, which I understand is significantly more potent than fentanyl. What is the Department's strategy for addressing these emerging compounds? What diplomatic and program plans are contemplated for fiscal year 2023?

Answer 27:

This broad class of structurally similar synthetic opioids, which are not related to fentanyl, includes compounds with low, moderate, and high potency. Several of the high-potency compounds such as etonitazene and isotonitazene have been identified in overdose deaths in the United States. With support from INL, the World Health Organization's Expert Committee on Drug Dependence has prioritized these high-potency synthetic opioids for international control under the three drug control conventions. The United States worked with international partners in the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs to place isotonitazene and metonitazene under international control in 2021 and 2022, respectively, requiring countries to place strict domestic controls on these substances to protect against their diversion. In FY 2023, we anticipate INL programs will continue to address nitazenes and other synthetic opioids through a focus on expanding public-private cooperation; accelerating scheduling of new psychoactive substances and precursors; and strengthening national capacities to investigate, detect, and interdict synthetic opioids and their precursors.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#28)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 28:

When do you expect to provide additional data to meet those requirements to supplement the INCSR published in March 2022?

Answer 28:

The Department is actively working to develop two supplemental reports as required by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 sections 5102 and 6610. The Department will deliver these supplemental reports to Congress as soon as possible as well as include this information in future INCSRs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#29)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 29:

Do you have sufficient resources to satisfy these new reporting requirements?

Answer 29:

The Department is actively working to develop supplemental reports to satisfy these new reporting requirements. The Department looks forward to our continued engagement with Congress on appropriations.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#30)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 30:

How have anti-corruption objectives been integrated into U.S. and international drug control strategies?

Answer 30:

Anti-corruption efforts remain a constant consideration when dealing with all aspects of international drug control. Countering corruption and its deleterious impact, including its role in facilitating transnational crime, is a core national security interest of the U.S. government. In addition to directly confronting the illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking activities of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), the United States must pursue the enabling factors and activities of this illicit conduct. INL does so by strengthening the ability of the justice system to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate corruption cases, including in connection to narcotics production and trafficking; by supporting efforts to ensure integrity in the justice system itself; and by building partner capacity to deny TCOs their ill-gotten proceeds and to disrupt their ability to transfer working capital to fund their range of illicit activities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#31)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 31:

Please discuss the effectiveness of U.S. efforts to address international drug-related corruption.

Answer 31:

By advancing anti-corruption policies, practices, and institutions globally through accountability tools, multilateral fora, and technical assistance, the United States makes it harder for drug traffickers to act with impunity. We see indicia of progress in the adoption of new laws, the formation of new units and institutions, and the enforcement efforts of criminal justice practitioners operating in challenging and life-threatening environments – but corruption, particularly in relation to the huge sums generated by drug trafficking, is not phenomenon successfully addressed overnight. The Department will continue to work to strengthen even further our international cooperation and technical assistance related to drug trafficking and to anticorruption, because it is only with the help of other capable, committed governments and active participation from civil society that we will find an enduring solution to this challenge.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#32)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 32:

What factors contribute to success stories?

Answer 32:

The Department continues to strengthen the capacity of foreign partners to help us combat the supply of illicit drugs. The key to the Department's success in combating drug trade overseas for over a decade is knowing that we cannot go it alone. Strong international partners act as force multipliers for our domestic law enforcement agencies. The Department will continue its emphasis on building capacity to target the unique characteristics of drug trafficking in the 21st century: drug sales on the internet and the dark web, synthetic drug production, and trafficking by mail, for example. This is the only way we will keep pace with the traffickers, and help our partners do the same.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee (#33)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 33:

Are there any interventions that have had success in one country or region and could be replicated in another?

Answer 33:

As the Department continues to address the overdose crisis, which is a top priority of the Administration, it is actively working to ensure best practices from the interagency, private sector, state and local partners, and civil society are continuously exported around the globe. The Department continues to support the UN Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs which brings together over 230 cross-cutting resources and tools from across the UN system. This dedicated platform shares best-practices and provides practical guidance towards identifying comprehensive solutions to the threats posed by synthetics drugs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Hal Rogers (#1)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 1:

How will the new framework seek to support a viable bilateral counternarcotics strategy, including by incentivizing Mexico to take on the drug trafficking and criminal groups that are corrupting the law enforcement apparatus and political system there?

Answer 1:

The Department is committed to rigorous vetting, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure taxpayer dollars spent on foreign assistance in Mexico are spent judiciously. Under the Bicentennial Framework, the United States and Mexico committed to work together to diminish the capacity of transnational criminal organizations and prevent the trafficking of drugs, including through the disruption of illicit supply chains and financial networks. This effort will be executed in tandem with bilateral collaboration on investigations and prosecutions of organized crime across all areas, building capacity within Mexico's justice system and growing cooperation between police, investigators, analysts, and prosecutors.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Hal Rogers (#2)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 2:

What elements of the Mérida Initiative will be preserved, what will be new, and what are the joint responsibilities of our two countries under the agreement?

Answer 2:

The U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities, agreed to at the High-Level Security Dialogue in October 2021, expands our partnership into new areas of cooperation against arms trafficking, synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals, and illicit finance. The Merida Initiative strengthened Mexico's rule of law and counternarcotics capacity and facilitated Mexican law enforcement and justice agencies' international accreditation at the federal and state levels, resulting in increased transparency, professionalization of institutions, and respect for human rights. The Bicentennial Framework builds on these efforts, modernizes our security partnership to confront new shared challenges, and commits both countries to evaluate and communicate the impact of security cooperation to protect the citizens of both nations, prevent transborder crime, and pursue criminal networks.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Hal Rogers (#3)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 3:

What is the current state of counternarcotics cooperation with Mexico, and how will it be improved with the implementation of the new framework agreement?

Answer 3:

Strengthening the security of our shared border with Mexico remains a key priority in reducing the trafficking of narcotics and other contraband. The Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities enhances our cooperation. Goal 2 of the Framework focuses on preventing transborder crime through efforts to secure modes of travel and commerce, reduce arms trafficking, target illicit supply chains including drugs, and reduce human trafficking and smuggling. A bilateral interagency working group is dedicated to identifying areas of cooperation to more effectively disrupt the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals in Mexico, including targeting import companies suspected of diverting precursor chemicals and dismantling drug laboratories. A key commitment under the Framework is working to strengthen control and management of precursor chemical shipments at seaports.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Hal Rogers (#4)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 4:

In particular, what are the prospects that the new agreement will help reduce the flows of deadly fentanyl from Mexico to the United States and strengthen rule of law in Mexico?

Answer 4:

Disrupting the production and trafficking of synthetic opioids contributing to the U.S. overdose epidemic continues to be the Department of State's top drug control priority. The United States and Mexico, under the Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities committed to a comprehensive security approach that fosters the collaborative, efficient, and secure management of all aspects of the border – including improved container control efforts at ports and increased detection of chemical precursors used in illicit drug production. The Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs builds capabilities of Mexican law enforcement and justice institutions to investigate and prosecute crimes associated with the transnational criminal organizations that traffic illicit drugs across the border.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Hal Rogers (#5)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Question 5:

In early April, the Taliban officially banned opium poppy and other illicit narcotics in Afghanistan. However, their track record is abysmal with respect to meeting their public commitments meant to placate the international community. Should we take this promise seriously when, according to the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, the production of opiates is one of Afghanistan's largest drivers of economic activity and a critical source of revenue for the Taliban?

Answer 5:

As with all statements from the Taliban, the international community will be watching closely to see whether they match actions to words. The State Department lacks reliable visibility into drug production or trafficking in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover. To date, open-source reports show that the Taliban has made little effort at enforcing its ban and poppy farmers are moving forward with their harvests. The opium trade is a significant source of income for many Afghan farmers. Eliminating poppy cultivation will require the Taliban to provide economic alternatives – an effort that we have yet to see. Otherwise, the ban will further cripple the Afghan economy. The United States continues to provide high-value alternatives to illicit cultivation in targeted districts in four Afghan provinces.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Rogers (#6)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 6:

In recent years, there has been clear growth in the global online drug trafficking market. How is the Department working to enhance capacity in Asia and Latin America to disrupt online trafficking and the use of cryptocurrencies in trafficking of synthetic drugs and their precursors?

Answer 6:

The Department shares the Committee's concern about the growth of the global online drug trafficking market in recent years and has taken several actions in response. For example, INL supports the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to expand the capacity of law enforcement, financial regulators, and prosecutors in Latin America and Asia to identify, investigate, and disrupt, the criminal misuse of cyber assets and online platforms to facilitate online trafficking of synthetic drugs and their precursors. Furthermore, INL supports UNODC to monitor and report online drug trafficking trends to UN Member States. Additionally, INL funds the U.S. Transnational and High-Tech Crime Global Law Enforcement Network (GLEN), a partnership with DOJ that consists of 12 regional International Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Advisors (ICHIPs) placed around the world, Global Cyber Forensics Advisors (GCFAs), and long-term agent postings to mentor foreign cybercrime investigative units. One of the ICHIPs specializes in Dark Web and Cryptocurrencies and the GLEN also manages three new regional cryptocurrency working groups.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Rogers (#7)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 7:

Several Federal agencies are tasked with investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases that involve online marketplaces and virtual currency. How does the State Department coordinate with the Federal actors involved with preventing and responding to cybercrime, including illicit narcotics trafficking? Does the coordination occur through the National Security Council or have the relevant agencies developed their own procedures and understandings for minimizing duplication and overlap?

Answer 7:

The Department coordinates across the spectrum of relevant federal actors on cybercrime, which includes criminal misuse of technology related to illicit narcotics trafficking. The Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) is the Department's lead on law enforcement related policy and program issues, working collaboratively with other bureaus depending on specific issues, including with the new Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy (CDP). On policy coordination, INL works closely with the Departments of Justice (DOJ), Homeland Security (DHS), and Treasury among others on cybercrime matters that arise in diplomatic engagements, including in multilateral venues like the United Nations, but also bilaterally. On delivery of training and technical assistance to foreign law enforcement partners to combat cybercrime and related intellectual property rights (IPR) theft, INL works primarily with the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS) of the DOJ Criminal Division, the DOJ Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Assistance and Training (OPDAT), and the DHS National IPR Coordination Center. The agencies utilize robust existing channels of communication to minimize duplication and overlap.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Hal Rogers (#8)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 8:

Where does supporting counternarcotics efforts in Colombia fit in the Administration's priorities? With presidential elections approaching in May, what have the principal candidates said about the issue?

Answer 8:

Colombia remains one of the United States' strongest partners. As President Biden and President Duque affirmed in March 2022, the United States and Colombia have prioritized the joint implementation of a three-pillar counternarcotics strategy that focuses on integrated cocaine supply reduction; comprehensive rural security, justice, and development; and environmental protection. The principal candidates' positions on counternarcotics issues vary significantly. We believe our new counternarcotics strategy provides the flexibility to incorporate the next Colombian administration's priorities regardless of the election results.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Hal Rogers (#9)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 9:

Please describe the joint efforts with Colombia to dismantle organized crime and significantly reduce drug production and coca cultivation.

Answer 9:

The joint U.S.-Colombia strategy focuses on three lines of effort: integrated cocaine supply reduction; comprehensive rural security, justice, and development; and environmental protection. The strategy brings together U.S. and Colombian security and development institutions in a more integrated, sequenced fashion to guide interventions by our respective governments and agencies. Implementation of a holistic approach to counternarcotics provides the best opportunity to improve resilience against armed groups, reduction of coca, and lack of state presence.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Ranking Member Hal Rogers (#10)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 10:

How does the State Department seek to achieve rural security objectives, and how do those programs advance our shared interests with Colombia?

Answer 10:

Under the rural security, development, and justice pillar, the United States is supporting Colombia's efforts in rural areas to increase resilience against armed groups, increase security though greater state presence, strengthen relationships between communities and the police, improve access to justice and other social services, protect community leaders, make licit crops more profitable and competitive, and increase land titling. Our combined security and development work recognizes that successful development first requires re-established security, and that security alone is insufficient to address the development challenges that push rural populations toward illicit crops.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#1)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 1:

I appreciate that, in your testimony, you acknowledge that we must do better at the southern border by saying we must "modernize our approach to collaboratively manage the U.S.-Mexico border." You also state that, "U.S. law enforcement assesses most fentanyl in the United States is produced in Mexico and trafficked across the southwest border." The Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission report of Dec 2020 repeatedly describes that illicit drugs originate and are processed at varied and numerous locations outside the United States. Often, malign states and organizations such as Communist China, Russia, Syria, Hezbollah, the FARC, and other bad actors throughout the world are funded by this illicit drug trade, which is also accompanied by rising homicide and other violent crime rates. Most reportedly enters the U.S. through the southern border (although some comes through the mail).

Why are we spending billions of dollars on combatting production and trafficking of these lethal drugs, which is produced almost entirely overseas, when the border is wide open?

Answer 1:

The Department of State will continue to work with Mexico to strengthen our shared border security. Under the U.S.-Mexico Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities, both countries committed to strengthen security at the border and disrupt the illicit trafficking of drugs, arms, cash, and other contraband that crosses the border. The Department of State, along with the Department of Homeland Security, also coordinates improvements to border security, including steps to improve technology and screening at our land ports of entry, with the Government of Mexico through the 21st Century Border Management Process.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#2)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 2:

I appreciate that, in your testimony, you acknowledge that we must do better at the southern border by saying we must "modernize our approach to collaboratively manage the U.S.-Mexico border." You also state that, "U.S. law enforcement assesses most fentanyl in the United States is produced in Mexico and trafficked across the southwest border." The Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission report of Dec 2020 repeatedly describes that illicit drugs originate and are processed at varied and numerous locations outside the United States. Often, malign states and organizations such as Communist China, Russia, Syria, Hezbollah, the FARC, and other bad actors throughout the world are funded by this illicit drug trade, which is also accompanied by rising homicide and other violent crime rates. Most reportedly enters the U.S. through the southern border (although some comes through the mail).

Isn't that a crucial but missing component to reducing drug overdoses in this country?

Answer 2:

The Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs is committed to working with the U.S. interagency and foreign partners to comprehensively address the U.S. overdose epidemic. The Department's comprehensive approach to disrupt the production and trafficking of drugs includes working with partners abroad to reduce opportunities for crime, violence, and instability. Strengthening the security of our shared border with Mexico remains a key priority for reducing the trafficking of narcotics and other contraband. We cooperate with Mexico to improve border security in a variety of fora, including the Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#3)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 3:

I appreciate that, in your testimony, you acknowledge that we must do better at the southern border by saying we must "modernize our approach to collaboratively manage the U.S.-Mexico border." You also state that, "U.S. law enforcement assesses most fentanyl in the United States is produced in Mexico and trafficked across the southwest border." The Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission report of Dec 2020 repeatedly describes that illicit drugs originate and are processed at varied and numerous locations outside the United States. Often, malign states and organizations such as Communist China, Russia, Syria, Hezbollah, the FARC, and other bad actors throughout the world are funded by this illicit drug trade, which is also accompanied by rising homicide and other violent crime rates. Most reportedly enters the U.S. through the southern border (although some comes through the mail).

In addition to harming Americans directly with overdoses, this doesn't directly contradict U.S. policy by failing to prevent revenue streams to some of the world's most dangerous actors.

Answer 3:

Disrupting the production and trafficking of drugs contributing to the U.S. overdose epidemic continues to be a priority of the Department of State. Among the work of the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs is helping foreign governments build effective law enforcement and justice institutions to investigate and prosecute crimes associated with transnational criminal organizations, including drug trafficking, human trafficking, and illicit finance.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#4)
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
April 6, 2022

Question 4:

Can you explain the roles of the FARC, Hezbollah (*sic*), Russia, Communist China, Iran, and the Maduro regime in engaging in drug trafficking in the region?

Answer 4:

Following the 2016 Peace Accord with the Colombian government, the FARC formally dissolved and disarmed, yet new terrorist groups have emerged including some factions that abandoned the demobilization and retained their drug trafficking operations. Second, Marquetalia and FARC-EP participate in many stages of cocaine production and trafficking ranging from producing their own cocaine to controlling trafficking corridors out of South America.

Individuals in the Maduro regime and the Venezuelan armed forces develop ad hoc, mutually beneficial relationships with criminal groups operating in Venezuela to profit from drug trafficking for their own personal enrichment.

Hizballah, Russia, the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), and Iran have no known significant role in drug trafficking in South America at this time.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#5)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Colombia:

Since the enormous strides of Plan Colombia, Colombia continues to combat narcotrafficking and narcoterrorism. The struggle has been exacerbated by transnational criminal organizations, at times assisted by malign states such as Russia and the Maduro regime.

Questions 5:

Is Project Cassandra still operational?

Answer 5:

We refer you to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as this is a campaign initiated and led by the DEA.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#6)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Questions 6:

Has the decision to delist the FARC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization affected drug interdiction efforts in the region?

Answer 6:

The Department has not seen and does not anticipate a demonstrable effect on drug interdiction efforts in the region as a result of the FARC's delisting.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#7)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Questions 7:

What do you see as the biggest threats to the progress made over the past two decades in Colombia and the surrounding region?

Answer 7:

A major challenge continues to be illegal armed groups whose production and trafficking of drugs and other illegal activities inhibits security, rule of law, and economic development, particularly in rural areas. The revised U.S-Colombia holistic counternarcotics strategy, focused on coordinated efforts across the three pillars of integrated cocaine supply reduction, comprehensive rural security and development, and environmental protection is designed with precisely this challenge in mind. Instability and impunity in neighboring Venezuela also are of concern. The Department is working to address both through its diplomatic and foreign assistance tools.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#8)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

PRC: Biden declared a national emergency on fentanyl in Dec 2021. The Department of State report, "Five-Year Global Plan of Action to Combat Emerging Synthetic Drug Threats for 2019-2024" states that "INL will seek greater engagement with China to increase the effectiveness of its precursor chemical control efforts" and that "DOS will promote expanded information-sharing efforts between U.S. law enforcement partners and key international counterparts, including those in Mexico, Canada, and China, to counter the production of synthetic drugs." You also state in your testimony that, "As the United States recognizes that criminal elements within China are engaged in this activity, we seek the government of China's partnership in helping us, and our international partners, solve this global issue. It is in our mutual interest to do so."

Question 8:

Do you believe that Communist China is a reliable partner in combatting fentanyl production and sales to the United States?

Answer 8:

The Administration continues to press the PRC at all levels to enhance oversight of its large chemical industry. The PRC scheduled fentanyl-related substances as a class in 2019 in response to a direct request by President Trump to President Xi, and direct shipments of fentanyl from the PRC to the United States then effectively fell to zero. The PRC has rebuffed bilateral requests to strengthen oversight of their chemical industry to curtail precursor chemical diversion but has supported proposals in multilateral fora from the United States and other countries to control certain precursor chemicals. We see multilateral engagement as an opportunity for wider cooperation with the PRC and other countries on the global threat posed by synthetic drugs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#9)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 9:

Do you support greater collaboration with Communist China and intelligence-sharing? How could the U.S. possibly trust them to act in a trustworthy and noble way on a global health threat?

Answer 9:

Cooperation with the PRC is essential in addressing the diversion of uncontrolled precursor chemicals by transnational criminal organizations for the manufacture of illicit synthetic drugs trafficked into the United States. U.S. engagement successfully led to the 2019 PRC decision to schedule all fentanyl-related substances as a class, after which direct shipments of fentanyl from the PRC to the United States effectively fell to zero. The PRC has supported proposals by the United States and other countries in multilateral fora to internationally control precursor chemicals, and we see multilateral engagement as an opportunity for wider cooperation with the PRC and other countries on the global threat posed by synthetic drugs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#10)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
April 06, 2022

Question 10:

What are you doing to combat Captagon in the Middle East, and do you see it as an emerging threat to our allies in the region by providing a funding source to Assad or other extremist/terrorist groups?

Answer 10:

Elements affiliated with the Assad regime and other terrorist groups have increasingly turned to the illicit production and trafficking of Captagon to finance their activities, with destabilizing impacts in the Middle East, Europe, North Africa, and Asia. Along with our interagency partners, we are committed to tracking and interrupting the Captagon trade and supporting law enforcement efforts to target and dismantle trafficking networks. We coordinate with partner governments to promote bilateral and multilateral actions to disrupt, interdict, and dismantle the illicit Captagon trade, and to encourage increased information sharing in the region. To better track Captagon and other substances implicated in the illicit drug trade, we support public-private partnerships to analyze Captagon-related data from forensic laboratories. We will continue to leverage diplomatic tools to raise the profile of this issue and encourage multilateral and bilateral collaboration to address this illicit trade.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#11)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
April 6, 2022

Question 11:

What is the state of INL's rotary-wing aviation assets?

Answer 11:

INL currently owns 118 rotary-wing aircraft as depicted in the chart below. 67 are active, eight are in programmed depot maintenance, and 43 are in storage. Of the 43 in storage, 28 are UH-60A helicopters that were recently acquired as excess defense articles from DOD, through GSA, and are pending assembly and activation. Of the 118 total, 36 are pending title transfer to host governments.

INL-Owned Rotary Wing Aircraft						
	Huey-II	UH-1ST	UH-60L	UH-60A	B-206	Total
Active Aircraft						
Colombia	31		7		1	39
Costa Rica		4				4
Iraq (on loan)		7				7
Patrick SFB	2	2				4
Peru	13					13
Sub Total	46	13	7	0	1	67
Aircraft in Programmed Depot Maintenance						
Peru	6					6
TBD		2				2
Sub Total	6	0	0	0	0	8
Aircraft in Storage/Loan						
Peru	1					1
Colombia	1					1
Sanford , FL	12	1				13
UHPO				28		28
Sub Total	14	1	0	28	0	43
Total	66	14	7	28	1	118

Note: The chart excludes four CH-46 helicopters pending disposal, and nine HH-60 helicopters operated by INL's Air Wing in Iraq and Patrick Space Force Base but owned by the Working Capital Fund and used for embassy support, not foreign assistance.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#12)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
Hearing Date: April 6, 2022

Question 12:

Can you outline the current capacity and capability of these helicopters?

Answer 12:

INL owns and supports four types of rotary-wing aircraft: Huey-IIs, UH-1STs, UH-60s, and one B-206. The chart below depicts typical capacity, but actuals vary depending upon mission set and environmental factors (temperature, density altitude, etc.).

	Min Crew	Max Passenger Seats	Max Cargo Load
UH-60	4	11	5,200 lbs
Huey-II	3	10	2,500 lbs
UH-1ST	3	10	2,800 lbs
B-206 Pilot Training Aircraft	2	N/A	N/A

These aircraft capabilities allow for the conduct of counternarcotics and law enforcement aviation operations to include transportation of personnel and cargo, insertion of eradication forces, interdiction support, border security, reconnaissance, medical evacuation, and training. Additionally, the aircraft may support humanitarian efforts during natural disasters, with prior concurrence from the respective embassy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary James A. Walsh by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (#13)
House Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
Hearing Date: April 6, 2022

Question 13:

Do these helicopters meet your current and future needs as global threats and challenges evolve?

Answer 13:

INL has enough rotary-wing aircraft to meet current mission requirements. However, INL's fleet contains numerous Vietnam era UH-1 series aircraft that are increasingly difficult to maintain due to age, structural stress, and the challenge of obtaining parts. Many of these aircraft are single engine, which is not ideal for maritime operations or for conducting operations over dense jungle. INL recently acquired 28 used UH-60A medium-lift utility helicopters, in varying states of repair, as Department of the Army excess defense articles which will help with phasing out old UH-1 series light utility helicopters in our larger aviation capacity building programs. However, a shortfall will remain with regard to the need to replace the UH-1 series light utility helicopters in our smaller aviation capacity building programs. That shortfall could be addressed by acquiring modern light utility series helicopters to provide operational flexibility, reduce sustainment costs associated with out aged fleet, and improve safety.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
PDAS James Walsh by
Congressman Reschenthaler (#1)
Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
April 06, 2022

Question 1:

What ongoing efforts is the Bureau engaging in to track the distribution of Captagon?

Answer 1:

The illicit production and trafficking of Captagon strains legitimate economic activity and contributes to instability in the Levant. Along with our interagency partners, we are committed to tracking and interrupting the Captagon trade and supporting law enforcement efforts to target and dismantle trafficking networks. Last year, we transmitted a demarche to seek partner government cooperation to promote bilateral and multilateral actions to disrupt, interdict, and dismantle the illicit Captagon trade, and to encourage increased information sharing in the region. To better track Captagon and other substances implicated in the illicit drug trade, we support an International Toxic Adulterants Database (ITAD) in partnership with National Medical Services (NMS) Labs and Colombo Plan, and we are starting to receive Captagon-related data from ITAD forensic laboratory contacts. We will continue to leverage diplomatic tools to raise the profile of this issue and encourage multilateral and bilateral collaboration to address this illicit trade.

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2022.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

WITNESS

HON. ANTONY BLINKEN, SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LEE

Ms. LEE. Good morning, and welcome to today's hearing with Secretary of State Antony Blinken regarding the President's proposed fiscal year 2023 budget request for the State Department, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. On behalf of my colleagues, I want to thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us today and for your ongoing leadership and service to our country and our global community.

The international challenges we face today are obviously immense. The COVID–19 pandemic still ravages the world. Fundamental democratic values are under threat—not least in Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, but also in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Climate change is fueling a looming food crisis. And division, violence, poverty, and natural and manmade disasters seem on the rise on just about every single continent.

Your budget for the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and our international agencies, is tasked with responding to all of these challenges. That is why I have long argued that our international affairs budget should be equal to, if not greater than, our military budget. Our military tools should be used as the last resort, whereas the resources we provide to diplomatic, development, and humanitarian efforts are the front lines every single day working to save lives, promote stability, increase engagement, and prevent wars.

Congress must work harder to provide an international affairs budget that addresses today's global problems from the climate crisis to unprecedented levels of human suffering, while at the same time working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. The SDGs are an important opportunity to frame the work the United States does around the world in support of these consensus goals such as gender equality, ending extreme hunger and poverty, and improving public health. This Subcommittee will continue to push all of the agencies under our jurisdiction recognizing we will only succeed on the SDGs with U.S. leadership and our partners working together to our common purpose.

While I hope we can improve on what we were able to secure in fiscal year 2022, we are likely to continue to face limited and overstretched resources. So today we will discuss the Administration's request for $65.77 billion for fiscal year 2023, which is a very modest $7.8 billion increase over the enacted fiscal year 2022 level.

The request includes notable increases for humanitarian, global, health, climate, and democracy programs. It also recognizes that these and our other development and diplomatic goals can only be achieved with a workforce that is fully-staffed, well-trained, committed to the mission, and representative of the diversity of the American people. I'm pleased that the request increases funding for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts at the Department of State and USAID, and much-needed increases in staffing positions and operating expenses.

I also want to commend you, Mr. Secretary, for naming Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley as the Department's first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, and for your work to prioritize diversity in our Diplomatic Corps as well as systemic changes that will hold the Department accountable to its commitments. And, yes, Mr. Secretary, today's hearing will provide members of our subcommittee a timely opportunity to hear directly from you on the latest efforts by the Biden-Harris Administration to pursue an end to the vicious, gratuitous, and bloody assault on Ukraine by Russia.

I also hope you will provide an update on our response to the COVID–19 pandemic around the world, including vaccine development and distribution, and helping developing countries recover from the pandemic's devastating impacts across all aspects of life and livelihood. You've heard me say that I think our response was too slow, and now we face a situation where funding for international efforts has either be de-prioritized or deleted from the discussion altogether. This is unacceptable and short-sighted. I have always said that what affects one, affects all. We will not turn the page on this pandemic without helping the rest of the world recover while we in the United States do so as well.

At the same time, we should all be working as hard as possible to avoid a global food crisis, which experts warn is increasingly likely after so many compounding crises, including the pandemic, supply chain shortages, high energy costs, climate shocks, and, of course the war in Ukraine. The United States has always been a global leader in delivering lifesaving assistance, but averting a global food disaster will require our allies and other donors to step up as well.

It is evident, Mr. Secretary, that the Administration has worked very hard over the last year and a half to restore America's global reputation, promote engagement and dialogue with international organizations and partners, and return to policies that were making progress and producing results before the previous Administration took us in another direction. I applaud you in your efforts to bring the United States and Iran back into compliance with the JCPOA, and I know that the ongoing negotiations are extremely difficult given how much time and trust has been lost. But I urge the administration to continue to engage with Congress on the developments in Vienna.

I am also eager to discuss this Administration's ongoing approach to continually under-prioritized regions in the world, including Sub–Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, both of which represent untapped potential in terms of partnership and economic opportunity. Also, on the migration issues from Central America, we

want to make sure that it is just and it is humane and sustainable. Of course, you know we lost time and progress during the previous Administration's suspension of assistance to the region, and yet we still face challenges supporting locally-led efforts to end endemic corruption and impunity while investing in human security and durable development outcomes.

These are just a few of the many issues, Mr. Secretary, that are on the top of mind and others. Our appreciation, I want to express, for the strong support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria for their replenishment cycle. And now, I would like to once again thank you for your tireless work on behalf of our country and look forward to your testimony.

But first, I would like to yield now to my colleague, our Ranking Member, Mr. Rogers. Thank you, again, Mr. Rogers, for your opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER ROGERS

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair, and, Mr. Secretary, welcome back before the subcommittee. Thank you for taking the time to be with us. In these extraordinary times, I want to convey my gratitude to you for your service and for taking time to share with us today.

It was not long after our hearing with you last year that things began to deteriorate rapidly in Afghanistan. The manner in which the United States left Afghanistan sent messages to everyone around the world, for our allies and partners, that raised legitimate questions about whether the United States is a reliable partner. For our adversaries, it signaled weakness and a lack of resolve. The most dangerous regimes around the globe were watching closely. Iran, North Korea, China, Russia have increased their capabilities and hostile actions since last summer's debacle. I do not believe this is a coincidence.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan was made up of many failures that, taken together, will have lasting consequences for U.S. security. I hope you and other senior leaders in this administration are committed to restoring the reputation of the United States following those dark days last summer. You have a tremendous opportunity to begin doing so by continuing to support Ukraine's heroic resistance to Russia's unprovoked, brutal invasion, which is inspiring the world. We and our allies must continue to provide the assistance critical to defeat Russian aggression and help preserve Ukrainian independence.

Here I should note that the strong and unified response of our allies and partners to Putin's campaign of conquest has been both striking and deeply welcomed. For European republics who thought that war was a 19th or 20th century concern, who perhaps believed that the environment was the preeminent challenge of our times, this crisis has underscored the importance of capable military alliances, the centrality of NATO, and the critical importance of American leadership in the Transatlantic Alliance. I know this impressive marshaling of resolve does not happen by accident, and that it is due in no small measure to the tireless work of our diplomats, soldiers, and intelligence community.

As we think about the work of this committee, how are we to make sense of the challenges of our time, and how should that understanding inform the Department's budget? Historical analogies can be misleading, but if we look to the past, there are many disturbing parallels to the late 1930s. In the heart of Europe, an authoritarian Russia has brutally assaulted the people of Ukraine, attempting to dismember that state and decapitate their government. To the East, Putin's partners in Beijing are not only supporting the invasion of Ukraine, but, more ominously, accelerating efforts to dominate the Indo-Pacific and overturn the rules-based international order.

In this circumstance, America's priorities should be clear. The centerpiece of American strategy needs to be rallying and defending our fellow democracies as well as other supporters of the rules-based system against this axes of autocrats. If we and our allies are to prevent the emergence of an era in which the strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must, then investments and the tools of hard power are essential if we are to deter and shape the imperial aspirations of our great power rivals. As one American historian notes, "The invasion of Ukraine signals a new phase in an intensifying struggle to shape the international order. The democratic world won't have a better chance to position itself for success."

Mr. Secretary, before I close, I want to note that this year's budget request for State, Foreign Operations looks fairly similar to what was requested last year. It represents significant increases that are not attainable and misaligned with the urgent priorities of our Nation's foreign policy. I encourage you to focus on what really matters and proceed with caution when considering funding commitments that are above and beyond the resources that you already have at hand. The credibility of the United States will be further diminished if checks are written that cannot be cashed.

Once again, Mr. Secretary, thank you for your time. Thank you for being with us for these few moments. I look forward to your testimony.

Ms. LEE. Let me now yield to the Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee, Ms. Granger, for any opening statements you may have before the Secretary's presentation.

OPENING STATEMENT OF MS. GRANGER

Ms. GRANGER. Thank you, Madam Chair. Secretary Blinken, we appreciate your being with us during this very busy time, and thank you for your service.

Threats to our own security as well as the security of our partners and allies dominate the headlines every single day. I look forward to your testimony in order to better understand how the United States is continuing to assist Ukraine, strengthen the Transatlantic Alliance, and respond to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Please speak to how the budget request would address the threat from China as we continue to watch them try to increase their power and influence around the world.

Mr. Secretary, as we face these threats in Europe and Asia, we must also focus on the dangerous situation at our Southern border. I have been engaged in this issue for many years, and what we see

today is absolutely startling. In just the past 6 months, Border Patrol agents have encountered 1 million migrants crossing the border illegally. When I chaired this subcommittee, we could not have imagined reaching numbers this high in a 12-month period, much less 6 months. Due to this administration's failed border policies, illegal crossings have skyrocketed, and it is only getting worse. We are on track to have an enormous surge of migrants this summer that will crush our already overwhelmed Homeland Security agencies. The administration's request to increase aid to Central American countries is shortsighted when your current border policies are enticing people to illegally enter the United States. We can't expect these countries to use our assistance effectively, to uphold the rule of law, and improve living conditions if we are not doing our own part to enforce the law at our border.

Now to the Middle East. I just returned from the region and had the chance to visit Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey. The region continues to face the growing threat of a hostile Iran and its terrorist proxies. I want your assurance that the current negotiations with Iran will not result in a flawed deal. Honestly, Russia and China's involvement does nothing to give me confidence in the outcome. It is also crucial that any talks address Iran's destabilizing role in the region, including its ballistic missile capabilities.

Mr. Secretary, you have a very difficult job, and we all wish you success as you work to advance America's interests abroad. I hope you will consider the issues I raise today going forward. Thank you for your time today, and, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Granger.

Secretary Blinken, if you could summarize your oral statement in less than 5 minutes. I want to make sure that we leave time enough to get to our questions, and I realize you have a hard stop, I believe it is 12:15. Your full statement will be included in the record. After your testimony, I will be calling on members based on seniority of the members that were present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between majority and minority members. I will then recognize any remaining members in order of their appearance. Each member is asked to keep their questions to within 5 minutes per round.

Mr. Secretary, please proceed.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SECRETARY BLINKEN

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Lee. It is great to see you. Ranking Member Rogers, Ranking Member Granger, thank you for being here today as well. It is very good to be with you, and I am really grateful for this opportunity to speak to you about the administration's proposed budget for the State Department.

As you know, I recently returned from Kyiv with Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, where we sought to demonstrate, by our presence as well as by our actions, the United States' commitment to Ukraine and its people. This brutal war of aggression being committed by Russia against Ukraine has brought into sharp focus the power and purpose of American diplomacy. Our diplomacy is rallying allies and partners around the world to join us in supporting Ukraine militarily, economically, and with humanitarian assist-

ance, to impose massive costs on the Kremlin for its aggression, while strengthening our collective security and defense, and addressing the war's mounting global consequences, including the refugee and food crises that you have alluded to. We have to continue to drive that diplomacy forward, to also seize the strategic opportunities and address the risks presented by Russia's overreach as countries are reconsidering their policies, their priorities, and their relationships. The budget request that you have before you actually predates the crisis, but fully funding it is critical to ensuring that Russia's war in Ukraine is a strategic failure for the Kremlin, and also serves as a powerful lesson for those who might consider following the same path.

As we are focused on this crisis, the State Department continues to carry out the missions traditionally associated with diplomacy, particularly responsibly managing great power competition with China, also facilitating a halt to fighting in places like Yemen and Ethiopia, pushing back against the rising tide of authoritarianism and the threat that it poses to democracy and human rights. We also face evolving challenges that require us to develop new capabilities: the emergence and reemergence of infectious disease, an accelerating climate crisis, and a digital revolution that holds both enormous promise but also peril if not managed correctly.

A few months ago in the fall, I had a chance to set out a modernization agenda for the State Department and for U.S. diplomacy to respond to all of these demands and all of these needs. And in no small part thanks to the significant fiscal year 2022 budget that was approved by Congress, we have been able to make real progress on this agenda, but much remains to be done. Just to give you a few quick examples, we have strengthened our capacity to shape the ongoing technological revolution so that it protects our interests, it boosts our competitiveness, it upholds our values. With bipartisan Congressional support and encouragement, we recently launched a new Bureau for Cyberspace and Digital Policy with 60 team members to start, and this is something that was done very much in collaboration and with the counsel of Congress.

We are also making headway on ensuring our diplomats reflect America's remarkable diversity, which is one of our greatest strengths. As the chairwoman said, our Department's first ever chief diversity inclusion officer, Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, has spearheaded an effort to analyze and address the obstacles that prevent underrepresented groups from joining and advancing at the Department. We have expanded the Pickering and Rangel Fellow Programs, and we have paid internships at State. Again, strong congressional input and support for these initiatives. We recently welcomed a new cohort of 179 exceptional Foreign Service professionals. That puts us on track for our largest annual intake in a decade.

These first 15 months on the job for me have only strengthened my conviction that these and other reforms are not just worthwhile, they are essential to delivering for the American people. Today's meeting, by our count, marks the 103rd time that I have had the opportunity to brief Congress in one way or another—meetings, calls—which is one of the ways that I have worked to meet the commitment I made in my confirmation to ensure that Congress'

role as a partner, both in our foreign policymaking and in modernizing the State Department, is realized. Ensuring that we can deliver on this agenda requires sustained funding. It requires some new authorities. Most importantly, it requires our partnership.

If we want to deepen our capability in areas like climate, like public health, like multilateral diplomacy, if we want to expand on Secretary Powell's vision of a Foreign Service float, if we want to strengthen global health security to prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks, we need these additional resources. If we want to be able to swiftly stand up new missions to deploy diplomats when and where they are needed and make these decisions based on risk management rather than risk aversion, we need to reform the Security Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act and the Accountability Review Board statute. If we want to rapidly scale up the response to crises, like refugee surges and epidemics, while also avoiding costly overhead, we need more flexible domestic hiring authorities. These are just a few examples.

And I just want to stress in closing, this is not about advancing the goals of any one administration or any one party. It is about refocusing our mission and our purpose on the forces that are affecting the lives of all of our fellow citizens—their livelihoods, their security—for decades to come. So I really appreciate the opportunity to speak today about why this matters and look forward to working with this committee, the subcommittee, Congress as a whole, as a partner in these efforts.

Thank you very much.

[The information follows:]

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken
Testimony on
Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request for the Department of State
Before the
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Thursday, April 28, 2022

Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak with you about the Administration's proposed budget for the State Department.

I just returned from Kyiv, where Secretary of Defense Austin and I demonstrated the United States' stalwart commitment to the government and people of Ukraine.

Moscow's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has brought into sharp focus the power and purpose of American diplomacy, and why it's more crucial than ever to our national security and the interests of the American people. Our diplomacy is rallying allies and partners around the world to join us in supporting Ukraine with security, economic, and humanitarian assistance, imposing greater costs on the Kremlin, strengthening our collective security and defense, and addressing the war's mounting global consequences, including the refugee and food crises.

President Putin's war of choice has achieved the exact opposite of his objectives. Uniting, rather than dividing, Ukrainians. Strengthening, rather than weakening, NATO and the U.S.-EU partnership. Undercutting, rather than asserting, the Kremlin's claims of military might. And that's not only because of Ukraine's bravery and resilience. It's also because of effective U.S. diplomacy.

We must continue to drive that diplomacy forward to seize the strategic opportunities and address risks presented by Russia's overreach, as countries reconsider their policies, priorities, and relationships. The budget request before you predated this crisis, but fully funding it is critical to ensuring Russia's war in Ukraine is a strategic failure for the Kremlin and serves as a powerful lesson to those who might consider following its path.

As we focus on this urgent crisis, the State Department continues to carry out the missions traditionally associated with diplomacy, like responsibly managing great power competition with China, facilitating a halt to fighting in Yemen and Ethiopia, and pushing back against the rising tide of authoritarianism and the threat it poses to human rights.

We also face evolving challenges that require us to develop new capabilities, such as the emergence and reemergence of infectious diseases, an accelerating climate crisis, and a digital revolution that holds both enormous promise and peril.

Last fall, I set out a modernization agenda for the State Department and U.S. diplomacy to respond to these complex demands, built on five pillars. Deepening our expertise in areas that are critical to the future of America's national security. Continuing to attract, retain, and develop the world's best diplomats. Fostering greater innovation and feedback. Modernizing our technology, communications, and analytical capabilities. And reinvigorating in-person diplomacy and public engagement – to get our diplomats beyond embassy walls and engage the people we need to reach most.

In no small part thanks to the significant FY22 budget approved by Congress, we have been able to make real progress on this agenda, though much remains to be done.

To give just a few examples, we have strengthened our capacity to shape the ongoing technological revolution, so it protects our interests, boosts our competitiveness, and upholds our values. With bipartisan Congressional support and encouragement, we recently launched a new bureau for cyberspace and digital policy, with 60 team members to start.

We are also making headway on ensuring our diplomats reflect America's remarkable diversity, which is one of our nation's greatest strengths. Our Department's first ever Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, has spearheaded an effort to analyze the obstacles that prevent underrepresented groups from joining and advancing at State, and will soon release a four-year strategic plan to tackle these problems. We have expanded the Pickering and Rangel fellowship programs and paid internships at State – again with strong Congressional input and support.

These efforts are showing results. We recently welcomed a new cohort of 179 exceptional Foreign Service professionals, putting the Department on track for its largest annual intake in a decade.

My first 15 months in this job have only strengthened my conviction that these and other reforms are not just worthwhile, but essential to delivering for the American people.

Today's meeting marks the 103rd time I have briefed Congress in meetings or calls, which is one of the ways I have worked to meet the commitment I made in my confirmation hearing to restore Congress's role as a partner both in our foreign policymaking and in revitalizing the State Department. These engagements have also helped further refine and strengthen our modernization agenda.

Ensuring we can deliver on that agenda will require sustained funding, new authorities, and most importantly, partnership from Congress.

If we want to deepen our capability in key areas like climate, public health, and multilateral diplomacy; expand on Secretary Powell's vision of a foreign service training float; strengthen global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks; and equip our workforce with the training, tools, and technology that today's challenges demand – we need additional resources.

If we want to be able to swiftly stand up new missions… deploy diplomats when and where they're needed… and make those decisions based on risk management rather than risk aversion – we need to reform the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act and Accountability Review Board statute to enable greater flexibility, while meeting important security standards.

If we want to rapidly scale up in response to crises like refugee surges and epidemics, while also avoiding costly overhead, we need more flexible domestic hiring authorities.

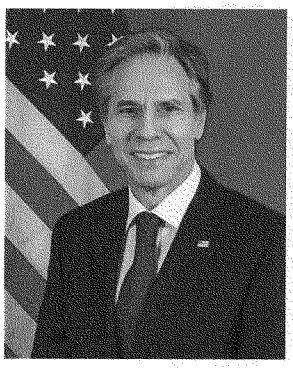
This is not about advancing the goals of any one administration or party. It's about refocusing our mission and purpose on the forces that will affect Americans' lives, livelihoods, and security for decades to come.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today about why this matters, and look forward to continuing to make this Subcommittee, and Congress as a whole, a partner in these efforts.

Thank you.

Antony J. Blinken

SECRETARY OF STATE
JANUARY 26, 2021 – PRESENT



Antony J. Blinken is the 71st U.S. Secretary of State.

He was nominated by President Biden on November 23, 2020; confirmed by the U.S. Senate on January 26, 2021; and sworn in by Vice President Kamala Harris the following day.

Over three decades and three presidential administrations, Mr. Blinken has helped shape U.S. foreign policy to ensure it protects U.S. interests and delivers results for the American people. He served as deputy secretary of state for President Barack Obama from 2015 to 2017, and before that, as President Obama's principal deputy national security advisor. In that role, Mr. Blinken chaired the interagency deputies committee, the main forum for hammering out the administration's foreign policy.

During the first term of the Obama Administration, Mr. Blinken was national security advisor to then-Vice President Joe Biden. This was the continuation of a long professional relationship that stretched back to 2002, when Mr. Blinken began his six-year stint as Democratic staff director for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Then-Senator Biden was the chair of that committee from 2001 to 2003 and 2007 to 2009.

During the Clinton Administration, Mr. Blinken served as a member of the National Security Council staff, including two years as the senior director for European affairs, the president's principal advisor on the countries of Europe, the European Union, and NATO. He also spent four years as President Clinton's chief foreign policy speechwriter, and he led the NSC's strategic planning team.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. I will start and will try to ask my questions as consolidated and concise as possible, because I have many.

One, the failure of the emergency COVID funding package last month and the imminent exhaustion of funds of global vaccination campaigns is deeply, deeply concerning. Can you describe the consequences of not being able to deploy vaccines that the United States has already purchased and not reaching the 70-percent vaccination goal target? And also, I know next month you will be cohosting another global COVID summit with international partners. What do you expect to come out of those discussions, and how will uncertainty around COVID, Global VAX, and U.S. efforts impact or limit our leadership?

My second question is, as it relates to the Eastern Caribbean, I just returned from a conference with parliamentarians from Barbados and other Eastern Caribbean countries. One concern that I heard over and over again was their inability to access global climate assistance and additional development assistance due to being classified upper-to-middle income countries by the World Bank, even though they repeatedly are in both the "bulls eye" of hurricane after hurricane, and they are impoverished countries. They face serious threats to their lives, their homes, and their livelihoods from these storms, and much of the impact hits the poor the hardest, of which there are many.

I want to know what we could do because I know the United States, quite frankly, has been missing in action in terms of the Caribbean. So what can we do to address these needs of our neighbors right next door, to address these barriers, and to combat the effects of the storms and the climate crisis, recognizing how vulnerable they are. I mean, we talked a little bit about a vulnerability index. And also, just how can we demonstrate to the people of the Caribbean that the United States values their partnership and will help better increase our bilateral relations, and that we recognize them as a region worthy of our friendship and partnerships? They are our closest neighbors, and they deserve to be seen and be part of our foreign policy and funding priorities, which, in the past, you know, we talk about China and other outside actors. We have been, quite frankly, missing in action.

Secretary BLINKEN. Madam Chairwoman, thank you very much for both questions, and thank you for your consistent focus on COVID and in trying to ensure that we have the funding to pursue this.

Look, this has been, I think, a very significant and important success for us in two ways, first, of course, substantively. The President's commitment to get 1.2 billion vaccine doses around the world is making a big difference in being able to address the immediate challenge posed by COVID. And as you said in your own opening statement, we know that unless we get to this everywhere, no one, including Americans, will be fully safe. We always run the risk that as long as this is moving around even in distant shores, that a new variant could emerge and undo much of the progress that we have been able to make at home. So we need to stamp this out, and we need to try to do the best that we can in getting to the goal that was set for the entire world, which is getting to 70–

percent vaccinations by the end of this year. That is a tough goal to meet, but we have got to drive toward it.

The other way, though, this has been important and a success is our standing in the world. Our diplomacy has been enhanced by the fact that we have committed to donate these vaccines, to do it through COVAX so that they are distributed equitably, to do it with no political strings attached. This is in stark contrast to China, which has been selling vaccines and been using them as a cudgel to get countries to do what it wants in a variety of ways. And as I go around the world, I am hearing in virtually every place gratitude for what we have done and appreciation for the fact that we are doing it in a way that is in stark contrast to the way the China is doing it.

Now, the challenge we have immediately is that we do have a sufficient supply of vaccines. The problem is getting shots into arms. It is the last mile, particularly in Africa, but also in other parts of the world, including in our own hemisphere, and we have a program where we have gotten other countries to stand up. It is called the Global Action Plan, to stand up, to take responsibility, geographically and functionally, for dealing with these last-mile challenges, getting shots into arms, cold chain storage, making sure that there are distribution routes, healthcare workers to administer shots, support for those healthcare workers, other things that go into this, including therapeutics, PPE, et cetera.

And we have countries that have stood up to do this with us, to take responsibility, but we need to continue to engage and show the way, and the money that we have to do this is running out. If we do not get additional resources to do this, we won't be able to get the job done, and I think that would be a big mistake substantively, and it would set us back in terms of our standing in the world.

Quickly on the Caribbean, the President met with the leaders of virtually all of these countries at the COP25 and talked at great length about the climate challenge that they are facing as well as other challenges. And I very much agree with you that we have an issue with this middle-income trap of another kind, which is the fact that, as you said, some countries classified as middle income nonetheless are bearing the brunt of COVID and bearing the brunt of climate, and we need to find ways to more effectively help them as they adapt and build resilience with regard to climate change.

We are talking to the international financial institutions about that. We are looking ourselves at what we might be able to do. We have significant resources dedicated to climate and, particularly, that go to building adaptation and resilience in countries that need help. That is in the budget, and I hope we can get that done.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and we will follow up with you. We have some specific recommendations out of the last visit led by Chairman Price of the bipartisan House Democracy Partnership. And so we will follow up with you on this.

I will yield now to Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Mr. Secretary, while we and our partners have made strenuous exertions to support Ukraine against Putin's brutal invasion, more challenges lie on the horizon. With security assistance for the Ukraine from the

initial supplemental largely exhausted, I look forward to reviewing the supplemental request we have just now received just a few moments ago. What specific new security assistance resources, including the additional presidential drawdown and other military assistance, what are needed over the next 3 to 6 months to sustain Ukraine and bolster NATO's deterrence against Russia?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, and, yes, I am glad the supplemental request is now before you, and this is critical to sustaining our efforts in a variety of ways: sustaining our efforts in terms of security assistance to Ukraine but also vital in helping partners and allies continue to bolster their own security. A number of these countries, for example, have themselves supplied equipment to Ukraine. They now have some gaps as a result, but, in short, the request, and I speak just based on what I had last night, and it is possible that what you have before you has some modest changes to it, so I want to make sure that what I am saying reflects exactly what you have.

But more or less, the supplemental request would provide for $15.5 billion in security assistance, some of that through foreign military financing, some of that through presidential drawdown authority, some of that through the Pentagon's equivalent of FMF, as well as programs like INCLE and NADR for things like demining. The is the bulk of the request that is before you, and it would address the needs that Ukraine has now for the equipment that it needs to continue to repel this Russian aggression, as well as supporting allies and partners.

Mr. ROGERS. With respect to Ukraine's economic and fiscal challenges, what mix of bilateral and multilateral assistance is being considered to help support the resilience of these people and sustain the government? As you know, the needs are immense. Ukraine's finance minister projects that the country needs $5 billion a month just to cover its own budget purposes, an amount that doesn't include the eventual cost of reconstruction. Where will this funding come from?

Secretary BLINKEN. You are exactly right, Ranking Member Rogers. So the supplemental that we have before you includes about $8-and-a-half billion in economic support. Seven and a half billion of that would be for direct budget support to Ukraine and via ESF, and that would account for about $1.5 billion a month of the deficit you rightly point to that Ukraine has. Other countries, with our leadership and encouragement, are coming together as well, along with international financial institutions. To help fill the rest of that gap, there are various pledging conferences that are taking place in the weeks ahead that we are very much engaged in, including with European partners, but the objective is to get to that goal of making sure that Ukraine can meet its needs.

Most of this is most effectively done through direct budget support, at least over the near term, to make sure that the resources can get to the Ukrainians and they can use them quickly. There are some other things in the supp that you have before you, but the bulk of it is direct budget support.

Mr. ROGERS. On the humanitarian side, what are your estimates for additional needs to support internally-displaced populations as

well as refugees, and how closely are you coordinating with Kyiv in the development of relief plans?

Secretary BLINKEN. There is an extraordinary need, and it is reflected in two ways. It is reflected, of course, in the huge number of refugees, more than 5 million who are outside of Ukraine. Now, most of them hope very much to be able to go home. They have left, in many cases, sons, husbands, fathers behind who are fighting, so they want to go home. And, in fact, we have seen in the West a change where there are more people going back into Ukraine than going out. However, in the South and the East, I think we can anticipate more refugee outflows, which is where the fighting is focused.

And so we have resources both in the budget and in the supplemental request to address the needs of the populations both inside of Ukraine that are displaced as well as outside, and also to help the countries that have taken in so many refugees be able to support what they are doing. The Europeans have been incredibly generous with this. Refugees who are in Europe now have the ability to be there for 2 years and to get benefits and support for those 2 years. So this is, of course, a burden on some of our partners. We are working to address that, but the primary focus of the request that you have before you is focused on making sure that humanitarian assistance can get to people who need it in Ukraine as well as the refugees who are immediately outside Ukraine.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your service. Stay safe.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Now I will yield to Ms. Meng.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Thank you, Secretary Blinken, for your testimony here today. And I am pleased to see that the State Department's budget justification supports $2.6 billion to advance gender equity and equality. I was particularly excited to see a 400 percent increase in funding for the Office of Global Women's Issues at State. However, what is not clear in the administration's budget justification to Congress is how the administration accounts for the $2.6 billion. The administration has previously stated prevention and response to gender-based violence is a top priority with a newly-updated strategy on preventing and responding to gender-based violence globally. Does this doubling of funding for gender equity and equality include increased funding to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including the Safe From the Start Program, and how will the Department uphold protections against gender-based violence as a core pillar of diplomatic efforts, programming, and operations?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, and let me first thank you for your leadership on this issue for a long time. It is greatly appreciated, and it has also inspired our own efforts. Yes, the focus of the budget request in this area, first, the overall number, the $2.6 billion to advance gender equality to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and to promote women peace and security, is vital and critical. And within that, for gender-based violence, the request is $252 million. That is a $77 million increase from fiscal year 2022.

As you know very well from all the work that you have been doing on this, gender-based violence has become a more acute prob-

lem, especially during COVID as a result of lockdowns, mobility restrictions, economic insecurity, the shadow pandemic. So we have in this budget various programs to offer support services and to use our foreign assistance and our diplomatic action to address the challenge. One critical aspect of this, from my perspective, is something we focused on, which is making sure that we have a gender-based approach to water, sanitation, health, and hygiene in refugee and displaced person situations because, again, as you know very well, this is critical, making sure that things are accessible, sex segregated, safe supplies.

This is very much part of our focus, and the resources that we have will help us advance that, including in our work with international organizations. And we anticipate that some portion of these resources will support Safe From the Start to prevent and respond to GBV at the start of emergencies. I agree with you that that is critical because if we can get ahead of this, we wind up not having to play catch-up with the problem as it evolves.

Ms. MENG. Thank you so much for that. My second question is, with the Taliban now in control in Afghanistan, many Afghani women and girls are now being denied access to secondary education. I appreciated your March 23rd statement decrying the Taliban's actions to limit educational opportunities for girls and women saying education is a human right. Yet a few days later, the administration released a budget that would reduce international basic education funding below congressionally-approved appropriated levels, which included a reduction in funding for vital bilateral education programs and multilateral programs where U.S. leadership is so important. For example, the Global Partnership for Education and Education Can't Wait.

Secretary Blinken, can you outline the administration's views on these programs and plans to increase funding for education programs, including GPE and ECW?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. Let me say first just to your point about Afghanistan, this is something that we are intensely focused on, particularly the denial of basic rights to all Afghans, but also and especially to women and girls, and within that, this focus on education. One of the things that we have worked to do was to make sure that as long as the Taliban was actually making good on commitments it made to ensure that girls could go to school, that we could and the international community could find ways to support teachers, including with stipends. But as you know very well, some weeks ago, they reneged on that commitment, and girls above the 6th grade, for now, at least are not able to go to school. This is a grievous violation of commitments that the Taliban had made, as well as, I think, a disastrous development for the future of the country. So we have the resources if the Taliban reverses this decision to support, for example, teachers in Afghanistan to make sure that once girls go to school, there is actually someone to teach them. But I focus on this because it is one example of places where we have seen a tremendous backsliding on the basic upholding of rights, especially for women and girls.

As I said, we are intensely focused on this. I created two senior positions in the Department focused exclusively on Afghan women and girls as well as human rights. We have a special envoy for Af-

ghan women and girls and human rights, Rina Amiri. I think she is known to a number of you, and she and her team have been engaged on these issues on a daily basis as well as with the Hill. More broadly, on education and resources, this is something I am strongly committed to. We have to make assessments on, of course, tradeoffs across the entire budget, which is always difficult, and an evaluation of how we think we can effectively use the resources and where they can be most effectively dedicated.

So the budget you have before you is our best judgment, including in the area of education, of what we need and what we think is effectively possible to advance the mission. Having said that, we welcome working with you to look at ways to refine that if, you know, we believe that we need to do more and focus more in that area.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I will now yield to Ms. Granger.

Ms. GRANGER. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, I just returned from Israel, as I mentioned, and I am very concerned about the increasing violence. I remember the last time when Israel was being bombarded with rockets, the loss of life would have been much worse had we not invested in the Iron Dome Program, which I strongly support. The United States should be using assistance to the Palestinians as leverage for deescalating tensions and preventing violence. Are you using this assistance as leverage, and if not, why not?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, and I am very glad you were there. I just returned a couple of weeks ago as well from Israel as well as other countries in the region. And we have been intensely focused on exactly what you are talking about because we didn't want to see a repeat of last year. We were able to get that back in check relatively rapidly, but damage was done and lives were lost. And we have been very focused on trying to make sure that this doesn't happen again. I sent a senior team to Israel to work with the Israelis, to work with the Palestinians, to work with the Jordanians and others to try to help everyone avoid taking actions that could precipitate more violence. And I think this has been largely for now—I am knocking on wood—largely successful.

Second, thanks to Congress and your leadership, we were able to replenish Iron Dome in a significant way, which means that if there were to be attacks against Israel coming from Gaza and rockets, the Israelis would have, once again, the means they need to defend themselves. When it comes to Palestinian assistance, we have increased that assistance. We have it in our budget. We think it is vital that the Palestinian Authority, for all of its shortcomings, be supported because the alternative is Hamas, and that is in no one's interest, well, I would say starting with the Palestinian people, but also starting with Israel, never mind us.

So we are making sure at the same time that, of course, all of the assistance that we do provide is fully consistent with things like the Taylor Force Act. We are working very hard with the Palestinians to get them to end the so-called martyr payments that go to those in prison for terrorism or their families, and using assistance in a variety of other ways to try to make progress with the Palestinian Authority.

Ms. GRANGER. Thank you. I have a second question. Just last month, Iran fired as many as a dozen missiles at the capital of Iraq's Kurdistan region. This is the latest in a string of attacks by Iran and its proxy forces. First, how is the U.S. Government assisting our partners so they can push back at Iran, and second, can you commit today that you will not sign onto a new nuclear agreement with Iran unless they stop their destabilizing actions in the region?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. We are working very closely with all of our partners in the region to help give them the means as well as our own means to push back against myriad destabilizing actions by the Iranians, including things like missile attacks, support for terrorist proxies, et cetera. For example, we are trying to ensure that countries have the defensive capacity to deal with incoming missiles via proxies like the Houthis against the United Arab Emirates and against Saudi Arabia. We are working to interdict the movement of weaponry, to sanction various entities involved in that, and doing that in a way that is very collaborative with all of our partners in the region—Israel, the Arab countries, et cetera. And, of course, we are taking necessary measures to protect our own forces.

I will say two things. First, when it comes to the Iran Nuclear Agreement, that is still something that is being engaged in to see if we can get a return to mutual compliance. I would tell you this is no longer a hypothetical exercise because we have seen what the situation looks like with the agreement when it was enforced. We have seen what it looks like without it. And I can tell you that from the perspective of American interests and American security, we have clearly been better off with it than without it, not only with regard to Iran's nuclear program, but indeed with regard to its destabilizing and dangerous activities. From 2012 to 2018, when we started to negotiate the original agreement to the time the previous administration pulled out of it, there were virtually no attacks on Americans in the region: Iraq, Syria, you name it.

Since then, those attacks have gone up dramatically. Since we pulled out of the agreement, since we designated IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization, since Soleimani, for whom no one is shedding any tears, was killed, those attacks have gone up dramatically. From 2019 to 2020, the attacks against Americans in the region went up 400 percent. At the same time, despite the maximum pressure effort, Iran's nuclear program has gone full steam ahead, and whereas we had a breakout time of more than a year for Iran to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon under the agreement, now that breakout time is down to a matter of weeks.

So the question is not one of, you know, the theoretical. The question is what is the most effective way for us together to deal both with the Iranian nuclear program but also with its destabilizing activities and the threats that it poses to us, and to our allies and partners. And one way or another, we are going to do that. If there is an agreement, that agreement takes, in no way, away from us any of our abilities to deal with Iran's other dangerous actions: the ballistic missiles, the support for terrorism, et cetera. If there is not an agreement, similarly, we are going to make sure

that we are doing everything we can with allies and partners to address these challenges.

Ms. GRANGER. Thank you very much.

Ms. LEE. Now I will yield to Mr. Price.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome, Mr. Secretary. We are happy to have you with us and commend you and your colleagues for the hard work you are doing. And you are facing this daunting array of challenges around the globe with prioritization required, but also an attentiveness to areas that we must make sure we don't let slip and let slide because we must remain attentive.

I have a particular lens on this by virtue of chairing the House Democracy Partnership, which works cooperatively with parliaments in emerging democracies around the world in a kind of mutual effort to share best practices and offer encouragement and support. And that leads us to focus on democratic progress, or democratic backsliding, or worse, which is going on in the countries we work with. We, of course, are distressed with the ongoing coup, the persistence of the situation in Burma. We keep a close eye on Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, other countries, and I should say Ukraine.

I mean, our partnership with Ukraine has been very, very solid, especially since Maidan, and we knew our Ukrainian colleagues were striving to build a democratic institution and to determine their country's course. But, of course, we had no idea what brutality Russia was capable of or what courage and resilience the Ukrainians would exercise. So we, of course, support every effort to back our colleagues in Ukraine. And by the way, the Ukrainian parliament has managed to meet in the midst of all this and itself has shown great courage.

I want to focus today on Tunisia, a country that is widely described as the only democratic success story of the Arab Spring. I think that is probably accurate. And it is a country that, over a decade, managed to keep democratic development going. Leaders of the country received a Nobel Peace Prize for extraordinary efforts at one juncture. But now there has been a turn for the worse, and it is not getting better. Since the middle of last year, Tunisian President Saied has dissolved parliament. He shuddered the independent National Anti-Corruption Authority. He seized control of the Independent High Authority for Elections. He has consolidated his power over the judiciary, and he stated his desire to outlaw foreign funding for civil society. And as you are well aware, the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute have had a significant presence in Tunisia.

The Biden administration has spoken out against this, has said that it "shares the Tunisian people's goal of democratic government responsive to the country's needs." The question is, what can we do? What are we doing? Are we doing enough? I think a lot of us have thought that this was a situation that wasn't quite as desperate as some others, that it was subject to diplomatic influence. What does our toolbox look like here, and are we fully utilizing it. And then just quickly, of course, the budget is part of that and are cutting the aid to Tunisia in this budget by a good amount. I am unsure what the rationale is behind that and how it relates to try-

ing to influence the movement of that country back into the democratic family of nations.

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, thank you, and can I just first thank you for an extraordinary 34 years of service in Congress and for your leadership on issues of democracy? It is greatly appreciated, and it is making a difference around the world.

I share the concerns that you have just expressed. Tunisia had been a relative success story in the region, one that we long supported through a couple of administrations. I share your deep concern about the unilateral dissolution of the parliament. I have spoken to President Saied myself a number of times on this. We are pressing for a transparent, inclusive, to include political parties, labor, civil society reform process. He is committed to holding a referendum in July and holding parliamentary elections in December. Ideally, that would have moved a lot faster, but, at the very least, Tunisia needs to hold to that. They have had a consultative process, as you know, for the reform agenda and for the constitution. A very small percentage of eligible Tunisians have actually participated in that. It was online, and I think about 6-and-a-half percent of Tunisians actually participated. That does not augur well for something that is really an inclusive process of reform. Also, we have seen the use of military courts to prosecute civilians, particularly for political speech. That is something we have been pressing back against, and infringements on civil society, on judicial independence.

All of these factor into our assistance. And so part of what you have in the budget before you is an assistance plan that is calibrated on the realities that we face in Tunisia now, but with the ability, if President Saied moves the country back on to a better track, to provide additional support for Tunisia going forward. At the same time, I think the most important thing that they need to do is to make themselves fully eligible for support from the international financial institutions. And, again, what has happened now has gotten them off track on that, so they have a tremendous, as you know, crisis. They have an immediate budget crisis, and then they have a long-term economic sustainability crisis.

The long-term economic sustainability crisis is best met by working with the international financial institutions. Others potentially could provide some direct budgetary support, but, honestly, that is dependent on the president moving the country to a better track. We have been urging that. We have been making clear that our support can be there, but we need to see Tunisia return to the track that it was on.

So we are looking at all of these things that I just described as indicators of whether things are moving back on track. If so, our support can increase.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you very much.

Ms. LEE. I would yield to Mr. Diaz-Balart, and I am trying to ask to stay within our 5-minute time frame. Mr. Diaz-Balart.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Mr. Secretary, let me first thank you for what I thought was a very important visit to Ukraine in a pivotal moment. I thought that was a very important thing that you did, and I thank you for that, and I appreciate it.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I don't expect you to know, these are folks that have rewards over their heads. These are major narco-traffickers, murderers. The Department of State has rewards—$5 million, $5 million—over their heads, but I do know that you know this individual that has a $15 million reward over his head.

Secretary BLINKEN. I can't see. Can you tell me who —

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I am sorry. Yeah, this is a smaller picture. This is the narco-terrorist individual, Maduro of Venezuela, a $15 million reward over his head. There is also here another major, Maduro ally who has also a $10 million dollar reward. So let me tell you what was hard to understand when high-level members of this administration, Department of State, met with Maduro in Venezuela, by the way, without even telling the legitimate recognized president of Venezuela that that meeting was taking place. You know, you might as well have met with El Chapo, right, I mean, or these other individuals.

The Department of State has now decided to meet with Maduro, his cronies, or his other thugs. Can you reassure me that there are no meetings taking place with Maduro or other narco-terrorists that have these rewards over their heads or others between this administration, your administration, and these thugs in Venezuela?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. Thank you for the question. Let me just say two things quickly. First, we continue to recognize the interim presidency of Juan Guaido and the 2015 democratically-elected National Assembly as the representatives of the Venezuelan people, and we are doing a number of things to support the democratic aspirations of Venezuelans. The trip that you referenced was focused on two things. It was focused on securing the release of detained Americans. This is something that we and I are focused on around the world. When we have arbitrarily-detained Americans, people being used as political pawns, we are working around the world to get them home, and the trip was focused on getting them home. We managed to get two of those arbitrarily-detained Americans home, and I am very pleased about that fact. We are going to continue to get the remaining Americans home.

The other aspect of this trip was focused on pressing the Venezuelan regime to get back into talks in Mexico City with the unitary government to move forward on trying to get democracy and human rights back on track in the country. That was the purpose of the trip. There are currently no other engagements. The Maduro regime made some commitments about getting back to these talks, but we haven't seen that develop yet.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. All right. So right now, there are no talks. That is correct?

Secretary BLINKEN. That is correct.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Okay. Good. You are not new at this, Mr. Secretary. You are well aware that the Castro regime has used mitigation to extort concessions from the U.S. governments when they perceive to be weak over the years. They did so with President Carter. They did so with President Clinton. They did so with President Obama, and no surprise they are now trying to do it as well. By the way, this was forewarned. Many folks talked about that. Senator Marco Rubio warned about that, a lot of us did. I have men-

tioned that this year it was very unlikely that the Castro regime would not try to do it with this administration, and they are doing it now with this administration.

And so I know that there, again, have been meetings between members of your team and the Castro regime. The irony, though, is that, we have seen this pattern before when the Castro regime detects weakness, they use migration to try to extort concessions. In a hearing in front of the Foreign Affairs Committee you said that no such talks would take place without first notifying and consultation with the Cuban-American community. Mr. Secretary, you said that publicly, and yet that is not what happened. So I just want to remind you that you made a commitment which you have not kept, which I think is, well, unfortunate.

Are those conversations still taking place? What is the nature of those conversations, and is the United States looking at potentially giving concessions to the Castro regime in order to, placate this latest attempt to blackmail who they perceive to be a weak administration?

Secretary BLINKEN. Congressman, a couple of things. First, as you know, and we have the same objectives, we are focused on two basic principles when it comes to Cuba—the establishment of democracy and human rights and empowering the Cuban people to actually determine their own future—so same objectives. There are good faith judgments among many about the best way to do that, but those are the objectives. We, like you, have been deeply concerned by the worsening human rights situation in Cuba, and, you know, that really means going from bad to worse, including the unrelenting crackdown that we have seen since last July and as well as an economic crisis that is, I think, having very challenging effects on the Cuban people.

There are, by our count, about 740 political prisoners currently in Cuba. That includes Afro-Cubans. It includes——

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Including children.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes, and minors, and extraordinary sentences, 30 years in some cases, so we share these concerns across the board. When it comes to the talks, there have been many over the years with many administrations, talks with the Cuban Government on specific issues where there is a mutual concern, and, yes, we have had migration talks with them just about a week ago, and this is to deal with a very specific challenge. We have, as you know, across the board a historic migration challenge around the world but also in our own hemisphere. And, of course, it is not just Cubans. It is Haitians. It is people from Northern Triangle countries—Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador. It is Nicaraguans, it is Venezuelans, et cetera, et cetera. But the Cuban piece of this could exceed the arrivals that we saw from the Mariel boatlift back in the 1980s.

So from our perspective, these talks are necessary to address our own interests in making sure that there is safe, legal, and orderly migration, including when it comes from Cuba. I think this is a double-edged sword for Cubans, and you have probably gotten more about this than I will know. But the double-edged sword is that there is also a tremendous flight of talent from Cuba that the Cuban regime has some interest in also keeping at home for the

future of the country. But the long and short of it is, I think these talks are important to address our interests in making sure that we have a handle on extraordinary migration.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Secretary, I am going to yield now to the chairwoman——

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I thank you for that, but there is no coincidence. It shouldn't surprise us that you are right. It was during the Carter administration and now during this administration because——

Ms. LEE. Okay. I have got to yield now to the Chair of the Appropriations Committee, Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro. Also, I am going to ask members to please remember we have to leave time for the Secretary to respond to your questions. We only have 5 minutes for each block of time. Thank you.

Chairwoman DeLauro.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate the time, and I appreciate my colleagues allowing me to move forward in trying to deal with several hearings this morning and to be at as many as I can.

Secretary Blinken, thank you for your testimony today, and for your unwavering commitment to Ukraine, and the bravery that you and Secretary Austin showed during your recent visit to Kyiv. You have my word that myself and this committee will continue to support Ukraine as they battle for democracy and freedom. If Ukraine is defeated, so, too, with democracy. I am proud that in coordination with the White House, the State Department, and with the Chairwoman of the Committee and the Appropriations Committee, we responded to the Russians' unprovoked war of aggression with $13.6 million dollars in emergency assistance to support the people of Ukraine and its neighbors. We need to do more, and we must do more.

To the extent it is possible, can you share with us what you saw on the ground during your visit to Ukraine? I know we just recently received a formal request for a Ukraine supplemental package a few moments ago. How did your visit to Ukraine inform that request? What in your mind are the top priority items that have been included in this supplemental request?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, and thank you for your very strong support for Ukraine and for all of the efforts that we are undertaking there. A couple of things, we had this extraordinary train ride from the Polish border into Kyiv, about 12 hours, and I was extremely comforted in the fact that I was with the Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, and I figured if anything bad happened, I would just get behind him and everything would be fine. But what we saw were two things.

First, as you are going through the countryside in Western Ukraine and then as you get to Kyiv itself, the country there right now looks remarkably normal. Kyiv itself, as best we could tell in the time we were driving in the city to get to President Zelensky, looked like it was, you know, back to something approaching a normal life: people on the streets, even sitting at cafes. It was their Easter Sunday, so there is that to factor in, but it looked relatively normal, and most of the destruction that was done in the Kyiv area was mostly in suburban parts of it before the Ukrainians repelled

the Russians and forced their retreat. That is in stark contrast, however, to what is going on right now in Eastern Ukraine and Southern Ukraine where the brutalization of the country by the Russians is going on full force.

The Ukrainians have done an extraordinary job, because of their courage, in pushing Russians back, but also because they had the means in their hands to do it. And a big part of the reason that is the case is because well before this aggression, as we saw it coming, we tried everything we could to prevent it, but we also prepared to make sure that everyone would be ready, including Ukrainians. The President initiated a drawdown for security assistance to Ukraine last Labor Day. We did another very big one around Christmas time of more than $200 million. The result of those drawdowns before the aggression was that the Ukrainians had in their hands the anti-armor, the anti-air, and other systems that they needed to deal with the Russian attack in and around Kyiv.

What has happened now, though, is the battle has shifted East and South. So has the terrain and so have the needs of the Ukrainians. Secretary Austin and I spent about 3 hours with President Zelensky, his defense minister, his chief of the armed forces, foreign ministry, et cetera, and a big part of the focus was on what is it that the Ukrainians need now to deal with the specific challenge they are facing from Russia in East and Southern Ukraine. And, among other things, what they need are longer-range artillery of a heavier caliber. They need armored vehicles, tanks. They need shore-to-ship weapons to deal with the Black Sea and a number of other things. So we spent a lot of time on that.

Much of this is already in the most recent drawdown that the President has done, but as well, European partners and allies are providing this equipment. The day after our meeting, the Secretary of Defense went on to Germany where he convened 40 defense ministries, an extraordinary thing, to focus in on making sure we were, together, providing what the Ukrainians needed. The supplemental request that you have before you has the resources that we would need in a variety of ways to actually get this job done, and it includes about $15–and-a-half billion in security assistance, much of it for foreign military financing and the Pentagon's equivalent of that program, as well as significant funds for additional drawdowns from our stocks.

It also gives us the means to help allies and partners, who have given their weapons to Ukraine, to backfill.

The CHAIRWOMAN. To backfill.

Secretary BLINKEN. And that is really critical. I know you know this. You have heard this. That is in the supplemental as well, as well as in our budget request. Foreign military financing is the best way to be able to do this, and that is in the budget, and it is in the supplemental.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much, and the backfill piece is very, very important because it looks as if, in all probability, almost $20 billion for defense in this supplemental, but that means coming from the U.S., so that backfill piece is very critically important to making up the difference here.

Madam Chair, thank you very, very much, and thank you for, you know, chairing this subcommittee. And I think it is fair to say that, in a bipartisan way, we are committed to making sure that we can help Ukraine sustain its democracy because it means democracy worldwide. So thank you very, very much.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for being with us this morning. I will yield now to Mr. Reschenthaler.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate it, and, Secretary Blinken, thanks for being here this morning. I wanted to just revisit some of the responses you gave to Ranking Member Granger. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but you basically indicated that it was your belief that Iran and its proxies have been relatively well behaved since the Iran nuclear deal. I just got to push back on that a little bit because I think it might be myopic just to focus on Iran itself when Iran is funding proxy wars, the Houthi rebels, for example, in Yemen, propping up the Assad regime, money to Hamas in Israel, Hezbollah in Lebanon.

So do you still stand behind that statement that Iran has been relatively well behaved since 2012?

Secretary BLINKEN. Congressman, you are right that would be putting words in my mouth because here is what I said, and if I didn't express myself as clear as I should, let me try again. What I said was that in terms of Americans—diplomats, military, et cetera—in the Middle East, from 2012 when we started to negotiate the original agreement to 2018 when the previous administration pulled out, there were virtually no attacks on our immediate interests—diplomats, forces—in the region. There were absolutely attacks against allies and partners, and that is a problem that we have been focused on during the pendency of the agreement. Nothing in the agreement took away from our ability to work with them to push back on that, but I was talking about Americans. And what we saw after pulling out of the agreement, after the designation of the IRGC as an FTO, after the killing of Soleimani, again, for whom no one is shedding a tear, we saw those attacks go up dramatically against Americans 400 percent from 2019 to 2020, despite maximum pressure.

And so the question is, how can we be most effective in two things. How can we be most effective in dealing with the Iranian nuclear program, which also has galloped forward under maximum pressure after we pulled out of the nuclear agreement where they are now on the verge of having the capacity to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon within in the space of a couple of weeks as opposed to more than a year under the agreement, and they continued to act even more aggressively. This policy that has been followed the last few years has not deterred them. On the contrary, they are doing worse in all areas, nuclear and the destabilizing activities. So I think the question all of us have to ask ourselves, because we have the same objective, is how can we be most effective in dealing with both of these problems.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Well, thanks for clarifying. I still have to push back because I think we are still not looking at the Shia militia groups in Iraq, which are clearly being led by the IRGC, but my time——

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, now they are. That is my point. You are exactly right. What we have seen the last few years is an absolute increase in attacks by these groups. You are exactly right. But that was after we got out of the agreement, after the designation of the IRGC, after Soleimani, et cetera. So you are right, and we are deeply, deeply not only concerned about that but acting against it. But my only point is none of this is a hypothetical exercise. We have seen what the world and the region looks like when we have the agreement. We have seen what it looks like without the agreement. We need to take stock of that and deal with that effectively.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. I am still incredibly concerned that if we do get an agreement, we are not going to be able to do anything to protect our allies in the region, specifically Israel. And also, we are not going to be able to control Iran to use the proxy groups in Iraq, the Shia militias, to attack our bases in Iraq. But I only have a minute left, Mr. Secretary, and I would really like to talk about Taiwan.

I think that Dictator Xi is looking at the disaster that was the withdrawal in Afghanistan, the weakness I think we have shown vis-a-vis supporting Ukraine. I think we should be much more robust in our support, and we should have done more earlier. But be that as it may, I am very concerned that the CCP will invade Taiwan. Do you think that we should just affirmatively right now say that we will militarily defend Taiwan, and additionally, what can we be doing now to give Taiwan the weapons they need to defend against an invasion?

Secretary BLINKEN. I share your concerns about Taiwan. We have seen Beijing act increasingly aggressively toward Taiwan over the last few years. I would say two things. First, I think that Beijing does and is looking very carefully at what is happening in the response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and is seeing this extraordinary response that American leadership helped produce in terms of the massive consequences we made clear would follow if Russia committed the aggression. And the unprecedented sanctions, the unprecedented export controls against Russia are having a devastating effect. In the near term, on its economy, we are looking at a 15–percent contraction of the Russian economy, all of the gains of the last 15 years wiped out. We are looking at Russia being unable to modernize key industries, including defense, including energy exploration, all of this, and we have seen the exodus, as you know, of something like 800 companies from Russia because of reputational risk.

So quickly put, the response that we have given to Ukraine, I think, is concentrating some minds in Beijing. But second, and to your point as well, it is vital that we continue to do everything that we have been doing over many years and are continuing to do now to make sure that Taiwan has the means to defend itself. And we have seen significant transfers of defense articles to them. We have had about $18 billion in foreign military sales since 2017. That pace continues. We have had about $2–and-a-half billion in direct commercial sales, and we are looking to do a number of things, including improving delivery timelines, an intense focus on that, but also making sure that Taiwan is thinking in terms of asymmetric

defense to any kind of potential aggression from Beijing, and working closely with them on that.

So I think we need to be continuing down that track. We have had on Taiwan, for many decades, a success in making sure that it its democracy could thrive and emerge while the status quo was preserved, both by Beijing and by Washington. The challenge to that status quo is coming from Beijing, and we need to make sure the Taiwan has the means to defend itself so that it deters any possible——

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Well, what about just affirmatively saying that we will——

Ms. LEE. We will have to yield to Ms. Frankel now, Mr. Reschenthaler. Your 5 minutes——

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. I know, but, Madam Chair, the question wasn't answered. I mean, the question was, can we just affirmatively say that we will defend Taiwan militarily. It wasn't answered.

Ms. LEE. We are going to try to have a second round where you can follow up.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Okay. Thanks.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thanks, Madam Chair.

Ms. LEE. Ms. Frankel now.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being with us today. Reports of sexual violence and rape as a weapon of war against Ukrainian women are deeply appalling. It is horrendous the stories that we are hearing, so I have a couple questions related to that. Are there any realistic efforts that can be made to stop that particular kind of violence? What kind of efforts are you making in terms of the supplemental emergency funding to support survivors of sexual violence, including many who are becoming pregnant, and is there any extra accountability that Russian can be held to?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, and I share your view that these reports are appalling, and we continue to get new ones every day. As this Russian tide has receded from parts of Ukraine, we have seen what has been left in its wake, and one of the things that has been left in its wake is clear evidence of gender-based violence and other atrocities. So two things on this. First, we are very focused on supporting efforts at accountability.

Ms. LEE. I am getting some feedback from someone who is not muted. Okay. Continue.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thanks. There are a number of efforts that are going on to try to ensure that there is accountability, and accountability, especially when it is visible, may serve as something of a deterrent going forward, but we want to, regardless, make sure that there is that accountability. We are directly supporting the efforts of the Ukrainian prosecutor general and her team to accumulate evidence and to be able to prosecute war crimes of one kind or another, and we have our experts who are working with them every single day.

Second, because we were able to get back on the U.N. Human Rights Council, one of the things we were able to do was get it to stand up a commission of inquiry into abuses of human rights, in-

cluding gender-based violence in Ukraine, and we are supporting that effort. Third, we have welcomed the International Criminal Court opening an investigation, and I believe we can find ways to support that investigation going forward. And a piece of each of these investigations will be the crimes committed against Ukrainian women and girls. At the same time, we are looking at how our assistance programs can provide support to victims, to survivors. The funds that you have as a request before you, both in our budget but also in the supplemental, I think some of that can be used to address that aspect of humanitarian concern that we have.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you. I would just urge you to keep talking loud and at the top of your lungs on this violence on the women in Ukraine. I wanted to say just a quick statement on Grace Meng's question, on education. There are still 130 million girls out of school internationally, and 11 million of them who had been in school before COVID, and are predicted will not go back. I just want to say that education is a game changer for girls and for their communities. So I hope that you will pursue efforts to try to reduce the barriers around the world that are keeping girls from school.

So on the Iran agreement, I think, listen, we all agree we don't want Iran to have a nuclear weapon. Two quick questions on that. What do you see as the current role of Russia, and what do you see as the current role of Congress?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. So with regard to Russia, as you know, it has been a member of the group who helped negotiate the original agreement along with the European Union—France, Germany, the U.K., and China. It remains part of that group. Since the aggression, it took some steps within the negotiations to make life more complicated. But the other parties in the group pushed back against that, and, at least as we speak, they are not currently an obstacle to seeing if we can get back into mutual compliance with Iran. But they would also have an important role to play in any such return to the agreement in terms of taking out of Iran the excess enriched materials and getting them out of the country so that the stockpile in Iran is kept at a level that doesn't allow them to break out and produce fissile material for a weapon on short order. So we would have to see if they would actually cooperate with that. There are no indications they wouldn't but something that we would be looking at very carefully.

And, of course, when it comes to Congress, it is vital that Congress continue to be a full partner in this. Of course, during any actual negotiation, negotiations have to take place to preserve the ability to actually negotiate, but we have had our envoy and negotiator, Rob Malley, as well as his team engage in a series of briefings and meetings with members of Congress. If this were to go forward, of course, we would be in ongoing close consultations with you on the details of any agreement. We are not there right now, but if that happens, we will be.

Ms. LEE. Okay. I want to yield to Mrs. Torres. Let me remind members that you may submit your questions for the record to get a more thorough response if you feel that you haven't been able to complete your response, the answer to your question during this round. Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Secretary, I want to begin by thanking you and your incredible team for the work that you are doing unifying the world to save the people of Ukraine and their democracy.

When you came before this subcommittee last year, we spoke about the administration's goal in Central America to help stem the tide of migrants to the U.S. by ensuring that they have safety and the opportunity to thrive within their own borders. I am glad to see the steps that you have taken in the Northern Triangle, including progress on diplomatic appointments, publicly naming corrupt and undemocratic actors, and funding civil society instead of government actors who seek only to advance their own personal interests. Thank you for your commitment to the fight against corruption in the region. We cannot give taxpayers' money in foreign assistance to governments that continue to misuse it.

Unfortunately, in the last year we have seen civil society actors, journalists, independent prosecutors, and judges, under attack in both El Salvador and Guatemala. El Salvador declared a state of exception that bypasses citizens' rights and exempts security funding from regular oversight. And in Guatemala, there are concerted attacks against the independent judiciary. Some are in jail afraid for their lives or seeking asylum in our country. We can't trust these governments to administer aid to fight corruption and the rule of law when they are doing everything in their power to work against those very issues.

At the same time, the Northern Triangle is at a pivotal moment, and I believe the increased funding requested in your budget is urgently needed to support good actors who are continuing to fight corruption and upholding the rule of law.

So, Mr. Secretary, given the lack of political will we have seen from some governments in the region, what clear and effective conditions will be required for funding our efforts to address the root causes of migration from Central America?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, and I share the concerns that you have raised as well as the need to make sure that our assistance is channeled in an effective way and deals with this issue. And just quickly, I very much share the concerns about the countries that you mentioned. For example, in Guatemala, we have seen efforts to strip judges of immunity, expose them to retribution. We have seen meritless cases against media that was trying to expose corruption. We have seen the arrest of anti-corruption prosecutors, et cetera. And similarly in El Salvador, we have real concerns about some of the steps that have been taken as they have been backsliding from democracy.

Having said that, two things. First, one of the things that we have been able to do is work effectively as necessary around problematic potential partners, including directly with civil society, directly with local government, directly with the private sector. And by the way, the Vice President, as you know, last year did a call to action to raise investment resources for the Northern Triangle countries, and companies came forward with about $1.2 billion in new investments, and those private sector investments will go to creating opportunity and jobs for people in these countries in ways that will actually give them a choice between staying at home or

trying to make the hazardous journey to a country where they won't get in if they don't have an asylum claim. So that is a big focus.

Second, we continue to take real action against corruption. In Honduras, we brought a case against the former President Hernandez. We listed him first in a classified way, then we did that publicly. We just, I think about a week ago, had him extradited to the United States obviously by the new Honduran Government. So this is a very clear sign and a very clear message that not only do we take it seriously, we act on it.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you. You know, I agree with all of the efforts. It is just very difficult for me to look at a company that is, you know, wanting to expand and provide an opportunity for jobs in the region without, you know, the warning label that these are very corrupt actors and it will be very difficult to do business. But my time up, and I want to be respectful to the rest of my members. And, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. Now I will yield to Ms. Wexton.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you, Secretary Blinken, for your service and for your testimony. And thank you, Representative Torres, for being so gracious about yielding

Secretary Blinken, you know, I know a lot has happened since you were last before us, but I do want to follow up on a couple of the things that we spoke about when you were last here before us. First of all staffing. I want to just commend the State Department on your efforts to make a dent in the 800 positions that you lost over the last 4 years. I also want to commend you on your efforts in hiring the new 179 Foreign Service and in making them more diverse than they have historically been. So I just want to say thank you for that.

Now, I also want to talk a little bit about the transnational threats to Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities who are fleeing persecution in China. We have heard reports from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and other countries about Uyghurs being forcibly returned to China where they are likely to face, at the very least, violations of their human rights and even imprisonment or death. So I know how much you care about this issue, and I would like to work with you to address this growing problem because I think we need a larger strategy involving international partners rather than just dealing with it on a case-by-case basis. So I hope that this will remain a priority for the administration, and I would like to work with you in order to make that a reality because I think that we can explore better ways to make sure that these countries know that they should not be violating these non-refoulement principles, and I think a lot more can be done on that. So thank you very much for that as well.

The first question I have for you is about opening of a consulate in Jerusalem. I do appreciate the budget's commitment to advancing security and prosperity for both Israelis and Palestinians, and consistent with that, President Biden promised that he would reopen a consulate in Jerusalem specifically designated for Palestinian affairs as a part of his pledge to restore economic and security assistance to the Palestinian people. And I know that that has

not yet happened, and a lot of people are clamoring for to happen. I understand that you have put in a request in this budget in order for funding in order to make that a reality. How would you assess the likelihood of that happening?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. By the way, thank you for your initial comments, including, I think, the very good and important idea on dealing with non-refoulement obligations that countries have with regard to Uyghurs and others who would be persecuted if sent back to the countries that they came from. We have been working very closely on that and engaging a number of countries where there was a risk of Uyghurs being sent back against their will to China. But I like your idea——

Ms. WEXTON. If you could address the question about the consulate, that would be really——

Secretary BLINKEN. Yeah, yeah. No, no, I will. I will come to that. I just wanted to thank you for raising that because I also think the idea of working more collectively on that issue is a good one, so just to say that. On the consulate, we are committed to reopening the consulate. That remains very much a part of our plan. We are consulting with the Government of Israel on that. Their support ultimately is needed for that because they, for example, would have to give privileges and immunities to those serving in the consulate. So it is important that we do this, of course, with them and in consultation with them.

I want to point out that it is important for everyone to recognize that the reopening of this consulate, which was there for well over 100 years before it was closed, would not affect in any way U.S. Embassy Jerusalem or change our recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. But we are committed to moving forward on this, and we are working with Israel on that.

Ms. WEXTON. Very good. I am glad to hear that, and I hope it will reopen, but I understand that the Israelis are very opposed to it. And since we will need their agreement, I hope that you would at least consider perhaps appointing a special envoy to the Palestinian people in order to be able to more and better engage with them diplomatically, because my understanding is that they are feeling very ignored and very, you know, shunted off to the side at this time.

Secretary BLINKEN. I was just in Ramallah with President Abbas 3 weeks ago, I think. Despite the Ukraine crisis, I was in Israel, the West Bank, met with a number of Palestinian civil society leaders, and we have been engaged with the Palestinian Authority across the board.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Secretary Blinken. And then my final question for you is, you know, I also serve on the Congressional Executive Commission on China.

Secretary BLINKEN. Mm-hmm.

Ms. WEXTON. And as you are probably aware, that is a bipartisan and bicameral commission that really focuses on human rights violations in China. And during the last administration, there were no executive appointees to the commission, and there still hasn't been an appointee from the Biden administration. So I hope that you will make it a priority to make sure that you guys get someone appointed.

Secretary BLINKEN. I will follow up on that.

Ms. WEXTON. Very good.

Secretary BLINKEN. I will follow up on that.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thanks.

Ms. WEXTON. And I am going to yield back with 8 seconds to spare, Madam Chair. Thank you. [Laughter.]

Ms. LEE. I want to thank you and Mrs. Torres for helping us make up our time, and hopefully we will be able to get to the second round. Thank you again. I will yield now to Mr. Espaillat.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I will claim those 8 seconds. [Laughter.]

Thank you, Secretary, for your appearance here today. Yesterday, we passed H.R. 4133, the Caribbean Basin Security Authorization Act that allocates $75 million from 2022 to 2026. Could you highlight, Mr. Secretary, the benefits of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative for that region?

Secretary BLINKEN. So, first, let me just thank you for your leadership on this, and one of the things we are trying to do more, and I had an opportunity to talk to the chairwoman about this as well yesterday, is to focus more on the Caribbean Basin across the board. Of course there is the climate challenge which is, as you know very well, acute, and helping to make sure that our nearest neighbors have the means to engage in adaptation and building resilience to that. We talked about this challenge that is this middle-income trap, another way by which some countries, because they are classified as middle income, don't qualify for some of the assistance that is given to countries that are classified as lower levels, and yet they are on the immediate receiving end of both COVID–19 and climate. So we are working on that and looking at that.

I look forward to seeing your legislation and to looking at how we can work together more effectively, both to address resources to the Caribbean Basin but also to engage. We are going to have a Summit of the Americas in just about a month-and-a-half's time. Our CARICOM colleagues will be critical participants in that. President Biden has already had a couple of opportunities to engage with them directly, but I think the summit will be an important opportunity to look at how we can continue to deepen our engagement with them. I have had senior colleagues from the Department who have just recently been working directly with CARICOM to look at what are the needs and opportunities for deepened cooperation between us and them. All of that we are factoring in, and there are different parts of the functional budget that can be used to address some of these needs. But also very happy to pursue that with you and your team as we focus in on this in the months ahead.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you. I look forward to that. Last year, this committee passed language that addresses the needs of pregnant Haitian women that cross the border to the Dominican Republic. So services with the near collapse of the health system there, and, of course, that places tremendous economic burden on the Dominican health system itself. And the language calls for our assistance in perhaps helping provide those services at the border for pregnant

Haitian women. Can you elaborate on perhaps how we can go about that.

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, this is something, if it is all right, I would love to come back to you on because I have to acknowledge I wasn't aware of that specific provision, but it obviously identifies an important need. So give me an opportunity, if you will, to just talk to colleagues about that and then come back to you on it.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. It was followed by a bipartisan letter led by Congressman Diaz-Balart and myself. We will send you a copy of that.

Finally, Mr. Secretary, as you know, the cost of energy, oil, has put tremendous strains on Caribbean and Latin American countries, and many leaders feel what they call [Speaking foreign language], which is civil unrest because the price of essential goods and [Speaking foreign language], the family breadbasket has gone up tremendously. And yet these nations have difficulty accessing the dollars that we may provide through the U.S. Development Finance Corporation, the board on which you sit on. What can we do to help them? Otherwise, they are going to go to China. It is very simple. They will go to Venezuela or they will go to China because they have to survive, and the price of oil is just going through the roof. What can we do to assist them and exert our leadership in the region?

Secretary BLINKEN. Two things. First, you are exactly right that we have seen, as a result of COVID, as a result of climate, and now as a result out of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, a number of dramatic consequences for countries around the world, but not the least, in our own hemisphere and closest to us, in the Caribbean, in terms of food security, both the availability and the prices, and energy, and we are working intensely on both. And I am happy to get into more detail, but broadly speaking, when it comes to food, we are making sure that the World Food Program Food, Food and Agricultural Organization, have the resources they need to engage in their programs. We are incentivizing our own producers of fertilizer to produce more. We are getting countries that have stockpiles of food to release them and not to put export restrictions on them. And I will be focusing our presidency of the Security Council at the U.N. next month on food security, and similarly, a number of steps on energy.

But this comes back again to the point you were making before and we were talking about before, which is we want to make sure that, for example, the various financing programs that we have available, that countries are not sort of statused out of those programs because of the income level at which they are they assessed. This is something I am looking hard at. It is very challenging, but I recognize this problem. I heard it directly from Caribbean counterparts. I spent some time meeting with the prime minister of Jamaica just a few weeks ago, and this was one of the things that we focused on.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. We will have a 3-minute round now so everyone can have at least second round of questions.

Let me just follow up, Mr. Secretary, on what Mr. Espaillat has been leading on in terms of the Caribbean Basin Security Initia-

tive, and when I was in the Caribbean, we talked a little bit about that. But one of the issues was in terms of what is broadening the definition of "security" as it relates to the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, and how perhaps resilience could be a part of that and some redefinition of what "security" means under the context, under the rubric of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. So that is just another issue that was raised.

But let me ask you with regard to the treatment of black and Asian refugees, African and Asian refugees, fleeing Ukraine being denied and detained at the border crossing. We talked about this, and the International Organization for Migration characterized these reports as verified and credible. And so we did put into the omnibus bill a statement directing USAID and yourself to investigate such reports and to ensure that all individuals fleeing the conflict were treated humanely and provided equal access to humanitarian assistance. So I am just asking you to be sure to report back to us based on what is in the report so that we get a good handle. We are still getting reports. We believe it has been reduced in terms of the mistreatment, in terms of acts of mistreatment, but we are still hearing quite a bit.

And with my 1 minute left, I want to just ask you about the diversity efforts of the Department of State, and what can we do to help escalate your efforts. I don't want to see it taking 5 or 6 years. We need to do this quickly, and we need to do whatever it takes as it relates to inclusion in the State Department because we have to repair the damage of the lack of inclusion of diversity forever, since the State Department has been in existence. And so I don't want to see us taking a long time to correct these unfortunate discriminatory practices, so what can we do to help move this quicker?

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, first, I am grateful for your leadership on this for a long time. Second, we are not waiting, we are acting, and we are acting in a number of ways that I think are genuinely historic. You referenced the appointment of the first chief diversity and inclusion officer, Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, and her entire team that report directly to me on the 7th floor. We have senior officials now in each of our bureaus responsible for tracking the diversity, and inclusion, and accessibility efforts that we are making. As a result of the work of this office, we now have a 5-year strategic plan that will hold us to account on whether we are actually succeeding in creating a Department that actually looks like the country that it represents. And the plan was the product of intense work by the new CDIO but also reflected comments before we put it out, I think, of more than 700 of our Foreign Service and civil service officers.

Next, we are instituting a program to focus on retention because, as you know very well, part of the problem we have is not simply getting people through the doors of C Street to join. It is making sure that once they are in, they stay, and we have had real problems there, too, and underrepresented communities in the Department have left disproportionately. So clearly, there are challenges.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Secretary, my time is up and I want to yield to Mr. Rogers, and so I will follow up with you——

Secretary BLINKEN. Sure.

Ms. LEE [continuing]. To submit the rest of my questions, or you can respond to it in writing, but I want to get——

Secretary BLINKEN. I am happy to do that.

Ms. LEE. Thank you again.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Rogers. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Madam Chair, thank you. Mr. Secretary, 7 months into Taliban rule, the world is witnessing an alarming increase in human rights violations against Afghans as the Taliban continue to show blatant disregard for international interests and norms. As you know, the fiscal year 2022 State, Foreign Operations bill prohibits funds from going directly to the Taliban. I have several questions. How are you ensuring compliance with that requirement, why are you seeking a national interest waiver to this prohibition in your budget request, and what circumstance do you believe it might be in the U.S. national interest to provide taxpayer resources to the Taliban, and, then more broadly, what is the administration's strategy to address the human rights and humanitarian crises facing Afghanistan, including steps to support and protect opponents of the regime?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. First, broadly, you are, of course, exactly right that the Taliban have far from lived up to both public and private commitments that they have made to respect the rights of all Afghans, including particularly women and girls. There is widespread reporting of human rights backsliding and violations. And, of course, the inability of girls to go to school above the 6th grade is one egregious example of that, a commitment the Taliban had made and that it reversed itself on. We will see if that changes. At the same time as we have been keeping countries together around the world to insist that the Taliban make good on the clear commitments that they have made as well as the criteria that the international community has set in terms of respect for human rights, in terms for freedom of movement and the ability to leave the country, in terms of making good on counterterrorism commitments they have made, in terms of having an inclusive government, that not only the United States but the international community hold them to that, and, for example, not recognize the Taliban as a government unless and until it actually makes good on these commitments and on these requirements.

With regard to assistance, though, our focus has been on humanitarian assistance because the situation for Afghans is dire. A huge percentage of the population is food insecure. A huge percentage of the population needs humanitarian assistance just to survive. And so we have done that work, including the resources we provided through NGOs, through United Nations' agencies that have tried and true means and methods of making sure that the assistance gets to the people who need it, not to the Taliban Government, and that has been our focus. At the same time, we think that we do have to find ways to allow the basics of the economy to function. Otherwise, we will continue to put a humanitarian band-aid on something that will not hold back the trauma that Afghanistan is dealing with.

And so ultimately, some ability to have teachers paid, civil servants paid, healthcare workers paid, some basic ability to have a functioning banking system, these are necessary. We are looking at mechanisms to do that. We want to make sure that we have the flexibilities to do that if we can find the right mechanisms and ways that don't benefit the Taliban directly but do benefit the Afghan people. So the flexibilities that we look for in the law would be to enable us to do things of that nature. We are still working on the most effective way to do it.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thanks for your service.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. Now I will yield to Ms. Meng.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I want to thank the State Department and its staff for its ongoing efforts to evacuate U.S. citizens, their family members, as well as our Afghani allies and partners from Afghanistan, and relocate those who are eligible to the U.S. As you are likely aware, I had many constituents and their loved ones in Afghanistan at the time of the Taliban's takeover, some of whom were stuck on lily pads for months and who have only just been able to return to the U.S. Again, I appreciate the continuous support of the coordinator for Afghanistan relocation efforts, but I just have a few questions.

It was recently brought to our subcommittee's attention by the CARE team that the Biden administration assigned a gender advisor to each of the lily pads used to evacuate American citizens, allies, and partners. This caught my staff off guard as the State Department never shared such information, previously. Secretary Blinken, can you confirm that the State Department deployed gender advisers to all lily pads? From when and for how long were the advisers deployed, and is it State Department's policy to deploy a gender advisor in all humanitarian contexts, and if so, approximately how much funding is going toward the additional training and technical assistance required for the staff that serve in the role of gender advisor?

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes. Thank you for focusing on that. So as I recall, yes, we sent gender and protection advisors to the Operation Allies sites in the United States. Not at the lily pads, in the United States. One of the things we have been concerned about were reports of gender-based violence and abuse being committed against Afghan women and girls who had left the country, including potentially in relocation places. So we wanted to make sure that we had done that as well as making sure that we had people who could give them expert dedicated support. So that is where we did it.

This is not something that we do in other places around the world. The way we focused on this more generally is all of the staff in the Population, Refugee, and Migration Bureau, including folks in the field, are trained on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, protection of women and children in humanitarian situations, and they are the folks who are often deployed in different places. They have that training. They have that expertise. But the gender and protection advisers were deployed specifically to the OAW sites in the United States.

Ms. MENG. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. Now I yield to Mr. Diaz-Balart.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Mr. Secretary, we have very little time, so let me ask two questions, if I may. You talk about the horrors that are taking place in Afghanistan, particularly to women and girls. So let me ask you, were you surprised that the Taliban would backtrack on their commitment, something they have always done? Were you surprised at that? Did it catch you off guard, or did you know that they would do what they always did, which is backtrack on all their deals and then do what they are now doing and they have done before to women and children? So were you surprised or did you know and you just thought, it is okay, we will pretend it didn't happen? That is question number one.

Number two is, there have been press reports about how three folks of the negotiation team on the Iran deal have stepped back. That is not usual. It is not something that happens every day. And so you can understand why there is so much concern, about what may be or may not be in this deal when you even have folks from the negotiation team stepping back. Reports say they were concerned about too many concessions been given to Iran. If it is a good deal, then you would have no reluctance to bring it to Congress for an actual vote, an actual ratification vote, not just a fake one, but an actual ratification vote. So you anticipate that you would bring it to Congress, not for a fake dog and pony show that doesn't have any teeth, for an actual vote for Congress ratifying or not ratifying it?

So two questions. Were you surprised or did you know what was going to happen and would bring it to Congress on the Iran deal?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. The second question first. We were, of course, looking at the law, including INARA, to make a determination that if there is an agreement under the law, it needs to come before Congress in that way. We take that very seriously. We will follow the law, so that is clear.

Second, with regard to Afghanistan, no, we were prepared either way. We were extremely clear-eyed about the challenges posed to Afghanistan by Taliban rule, particularly with regard to human rights for all Afghans, but especially for women and girls. There are a number of very clear incentives that the Taliban would have to act in a way that actually upholds rights, including the significant support that they seek from the international community. We have led a very widespread effort to make sure that country after country would not provide that support unless the Taliban makes good on the basic commitments that it has made. And by the way, we led an effort to get a U.N. Security Council resolution laying those out. We succeeded in that. We got more than 100 countries to sign on to clear statements of expectations of the Taliban.

And so the question is really before the Taliban. If they expect to be treated in any form or fashion as a government by the international community, there are basic things they have to do. If they are not doing them, they are not going to get that treatment. So a lot depends on how they see their own interests on a number of fronts that are important to us. We have seen an absolute failure to make good on commitments they have made. Some other areas, they have done so modestly, for example, on freedom of movement,

the commitment to allow people out of the country. That has actually gone forward. It is challenged by the lack of transportation means to get out of the country, but, for example, we have had——

Ms. LEE. Mr. Secretary, can you complete the answer in writing so I can yield to Ms. Frankel and Mrs. Torres?

Secretary BLINKEN. Certainly.

Ms. LEE. If we have a few more minutes, we will come back around to complete it during this hearing.

I will yield now to Ms. Frankel.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you. Thank you again for your testimony. Secretary Blinken, I am going to try to ask just two questions. One has to do with the Abraham Accords. We know that at least between Israel and UAE, there has been a big boost in their commercial interaction. Can you tell us how you envision the expansion and whether you think it is successful? I know the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco have become the first Arab nations since Egypt and Jordan to officially recognized Israel. That is the first one. The other one has to do with antisemitism, which, as you know, globally, is increasing all over the world, and what kind of efforts are going to be put forth in that regard.

Secretary BLINKEN. Great. Thank you. With regard to the Abraham Accords, it is an absolute focus of the State Department and my focus to deepen them and expand them. We think this is a very important initiative in terms of Israel normalizing relations with various neighbors and the countries close to it. I recently took part in the Negev Summit with the foreign ministers from Israel, from Bahrain, from the United Arab Emirates, from Morocco, from Egypt, so either early partners of Israel or new ones as a result of the Abraham Accords. And we are pushing forward on a shared agenda for cooperation and integration on everything from energy, to water, to food, to tourism, to healthcare. I had previously convened an economic a partnership group between Israel, the UAE, and India, to do joint infrastructure investments. That is something that we created coming out of the Abraham Accords as well. We have launched working groups with Israel and the UAE on religious coexistence, on energy and water.

Now, none of this is a substitute for resolving the challenges between Israelis and Palestinians, but it is profoundly important, and it is something that we are driving forward.

Ms. FRANKEL. I am sorry to interrupt you, but on that point, how do you feel that the Abraham Accords can actually advance Israeli-Palestinian peace?

Secretary BLINKEN. At our Negev Summit, we spent some time talking with all of the participants about how we could collectively help address some of the needs of the Palestinian people, including, for example, supporting projects in the West Bank, 4G, solar projects, which would improve lives, supporting the Palestinian hospital network. And this is going to be very much a part of what the Abraham Accord countries actually do with Israel. So I think this can be, in that sense, a win-win because it is profoundly important to Israel and, I think, to countries in the region and beyond to have a very new relationship, and at the same time make sure that we are not leaving the Palestinians behind.

Ms. LEE. I will yield now to Mrs. Torres.

Ms. FRANKEL. Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. LEE. Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you, Madam Chair. Secretary Blinken, on the topic of sanctions, I want to make you aware of a bipartisan bill that I introduced with Ranking Member Crawford on the Intel Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, requiring the State Department to look into the impacts of El Salvador's embrace of cryptocurrency on U.S. national security interests, including the effectiveness of sanctions. You know, I am very concerned with the communication, or lack of communication, between Treasury and State around sanctions.

I received some very important reports from you about corrupt and undemocratic actors in the Northern Triangle, and I understand that you revoked individuals' visas to the U.S. But the Treasury Department has not sanctioned them, even though the State Department has determined them to be working against U.S. interests. And in fiscal year 2022, I supported funding increases for the offices that deal with sanctions at both Treasury and State. So given, you know, this new bill that we have introduced, and given the lack of coordination between State and Treasury, how can we improve communications between Treasury and State to ensure that, you know, we are maximizing all of our tools to bring attention to these bad actors?

Secretary BLINKEN. I am happy to follow up on that, but let me just say quickly two things. One is my sense is we have increasingly strong coordination between our departments. It took a while, but we just recently got confirmed by the Senate our sanctions coordinator, Jim O'Brien, a deeply experienced person who, again, reports directly to me. He is part of my larger office. He is going to be a terrific addition now, including making sure that we are well coordinated. At the same time our assistant secretary for economic affairs, Ramin Toloui, is deeply expert in these issues. He was, during the Obama administration, the assistant secretary of the Treasury for international, including sanctions policy, and, of course, knows his former Department very, very well. So I think we have what we need to be fully coordinated.

Now, of course, most important, I suppose, I am in regular touch with my counterpart, the Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen, as well as the deputy secretary, Wally Adeyemo. Having said that, if you are seeing specific instances where you think something is not happening that should be happening, please let me know.

Mrs. TORRES. Yes, and I recently wrote her a letter addressing the specific issue and asking her to do more to coordinate with State. Thank you so much, and I yield back, Madam Chair.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. Well, first, let me thank you, Secretary Blinken, for your time and your testimony today. You gave us a very comprehensive understanding of the work being done around the world by the State Department to preserve U.S. leadership and support our global engagement. And so let me just say on behalf of this committee how much we appreciate the work of the people of the State Department to address these very complex issues and needs.

And also, I was very heart warmed last year when we received over 6,500 requests for our bill, the State, Foreign Operations Sub-

committee's bill, which really, I think, showed me, surprisingly, that it is not only this committee that has a keen interest in the work of the State Department and global affairs, but it is the entire Congress on a bipartisan basis. So you have a partner in this committee in this important work discussed today, but you also have a partner in the entire House of Representatives, which I am telling you was quite remarkable to see. So it really was very heartwarming, though, to see that.

And so just know that we want you to keep us apprised of both the progress and your needs, and that we will work together as we move forward in this year's efforts with regard to the budget. So thank you again.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you so much.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Rogers, do you have any closing remarks? Mr. Rogers, you don't have any closing remarks?

Mr. ROGERS. No. We wish the Secretary well. Godspeed.

Secretary BLINKEN.Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member Rogers. We really appreciate working with both of you and working with every member of this of the subcommittee and the larger committee. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. Mr. Secretary, I know that you will be submitting, and I want members to know if they have questions, to submit for the record. Please submit them to the subcommittee within the next 7 days, and I am sure we will get the responses to the questions that are asked by the Secretary.

Ms. LEE. So thank you all again very much.

This concludes today's hearing.

[Questions and answers submitted for the record follow:]

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #1
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Afghanistan: Please describe the bilateral and multilateral discussions with our allies and partners regarding efforts to help stabilize the Afghan economy.

Answer:

The United States has worked to support the Afghan people through the interrelated humanitarian and economic crises in the country. The United States has provided a total of approximately $720 million in humanitarian assistance since September 2021. Separately, we have worked closely with bilateral partners and international organizations, including the UN, to deliver other forms of aid. The United States has supported the World Bank's approach to the provision and transfer of close to $1.3 billion from the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund to UN agencies and international NGOs to support the delivery of essential basic services, as well as a package of $405 million in similar support for the Afghan people from the Asian Development Bank in January.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #2
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How is the United States working to ensure availability of health and education services for the Afghan people?

Answer:

Support for Afghanistan remains a key Administration priority. U.S. funding for assistance flows directly to the UN and experienced, carefully chosen international NGOs. U.S.-funded support will meet the basic needs of the Afghan people for food, health, education, and their everyday livelihood. The United States has supported the World Bank's recent expansion of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) to further support the basic needs of Afghans, with plans to release close to $1.3 billion of ARTF funds directing much need assistance to the UN agencies and international NGOs to deliver basic services. One example is the Sehatmandi program, which provides primary health care through a network of health clinics. The United States supports the Asian Development Bank's package of $405 million in grants; some of these funds will also be used to deliver essential health and education services for the Afghan people.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #3
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What concrete steps have been taken to improve financial liquidity in the country?

Answer:

In January 2022, the UN began delivering approximately $20 million weekly to support humanitarian operations in Afghanistan. These cash shipments have been critical in helping to stabilize Afghanistan's banking system. The Department of the Treasury issued a general license (GL 20) on February 25, 2022, to expand authorizations for commercial and financial transactions in Afghanistan, including with its governing institutions. GL 20 aimed to ensure that U.S. sanctions do not prevent or inhibit transactions and activities needed to provide aid to and support the basic human needs of the people of Afghanistan and increase commercial activity in the country.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #4
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the current status of the approximately $7 billion in U.S.-held Afghan central bank reserves?

Answer:

The Taliban do not have access to any of the Afghan central bank funds held in the United States. The Executive Branch is actively engaged in efforts to protect, for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan, $3.5 billion in Afghan central bank funds that were licensed by the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). Litigation related to the disposition of the unlicensed Afghan central bank funds held in the United States is ongoing, and the Executive Branch has taken the position that plaintiffs with judgments against the Taliban should be afforded a full opportunity – consistent with the purpose and standards of relevant U.S. law – to submit their arguments as to why they believe they are entitled to the remaining, unlicensed funds.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #5
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Haiti: What are the prospects of, and obstacles to, the Montana Accord coalition and Prime Minister Henry and his supporters reaching consensus on a way forward?

Answer:

I am encouraged by the renewed dialogue between Prime Minister Ariel Henry and Montana Group representative Magali Comeau-Denis. The pursuit of competing accords, despite agreement on many substantive issues, has delayed progress toward a consensus solution. We continue to urge Haitian interlocutors to reach agreement on a political accord so that Haiti can restore its democratic institutions. It is up to Haitians – throughout the country and across the political and social spectrum – to create the conditions that allow for free and fair elections and a democratically elected government to assume office.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #6
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

In the meantime, what steps are the State Department taking to facilitate a dialogue involving a broad array of representatives of Haitian civil society to resolve the current crisis?

Answer:

We regularly encourage Haitian political and civil society stakeholders to engage in earnest dialogue to reach agreement on a political solution that will allow elections to take place as soon as conditions permit. We have also offered to support third-party facilitation, if requested, and initiated a series of senior-level meetings to keep partner countries and multilateral organizations engaged in supporting Haiti's security needs and a Haitian-led solution to the political impasse.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #7
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the current outlook for holding credible elections before the end of the year?

Answer:

Free and fair elections in Haiti require improved security conditions, political consensus around the path forward, and the necessary electoral infrastructure. Lacking this progress, elections seem unlikely by the end of the year. When elections can take place, the United States stands ready to assist in Haiti's electoral process and continue to provide support to the government.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #8
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Climate Change: The Administration has pledged $11.4 billion per year by 2024 in climate finance. Please provide details of what this amount supports.

Answer:

The FY 2023 budget request includes over $11 billion government-wide in international climate finance, underscoring the President's commitment to tackling the climate crisis. This funding will advance critical U.S. interests at home and abroad and is essential for the global effort to limit temperature rise to no more than 1.5°C, reducing the need for costly humanitarian aid following extreme-weather events and safeguarding decades of U.S. investment in global development. This funding will also advance energy security in the near -and -long -term, drive markets for U.S. exports and investments towards the technologies and markets of the future, and advance U.S. climate leadership internationally. The request includes $2.28 billion in international climate assistance for the State Department and USAID to support core bilateral and regional programs for this whole-of-government imperative.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #9
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Combatting climate change can only succeed through global partnership and with agreement among the top emitters of carbon dioxide emissions to tackle this crisis collectively. This includes working with China. What progress, if any, has been made on cooperating with China on the climate crisis?

Answer:

As the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, the People's Republic of China (PRC) must act faster to reduce its emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. We will continue to engage constructively with the PRC on ambitious climate action. Last November, the United States and the PRC announced the Joint Glasgow Declaration on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s, which is focused on cutting methane emissions, reducing coal consumption, and addressing illegal deforestation. The PRC committed to adopt an ambitious National Action Plan this year to reduce its methane emissions in the 2020s. Last year, the PRC also moved to end its support of new coal power plant buildout abroad.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #10
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

In addition, what would a "just" transition to address climate change look like and what efforts are being made to support this?

Answer:

The climate challenge threatens everyone in the world, but it can be solved in ways that will benefit everyone. To the extent that the movement towards sustainable, low-carbon economies displaces workers or affects the economic viability of certain industries, we need to provide an equitable and inclusive transition for workers and vulnerable communities. That is why the United States is supporting the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) effort alongside our G-7 partners to help high-emitting developing states transition to low-emission, climate resilient economies based on clean, green energy and technology.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #11
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

International Family Planning: During his first week in office, President Biden rescinded the Global Gag Rule that had been reinstated and expanded under the previous administration, requiring non-U.S. organizations receiving U.S. global health funding to choose between receiving U.S. resources or providing comprehensive health care to their patients. Please describe why rescinding the Global Gag Rule is good policy and how permanently repealing it would further the effectiveness of resources to achieve our goals on health, human rights, and gender equity.

Answer:

The permanent repeal of the Global Gag Rule is not simply good policy, it is essential to U.S. foreign policy and national security. Disruptions to equitable, life-saving healthcare for women and girls can place them on a lifetime trajectory of negative health and socioeconomic outcomes. Advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights is central to the Administration's approach to advancing equity and equality for all. I support the permanent repeal of the Global Gag Rule because the United States provides critical foreign assistance to international non-governmental and civil society organizations that reaches those who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #12
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

U.N. and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Please provide specific examples of the benefits to the United States and our foreign policy interests by resuming strong engagement with the UN and its specialized agencies over the last year and a half?

Answer:

We have demonstrated our commitment to full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and resumed leadership on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including through senior participation at the Financing for Development Forum and the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, and unprecedented, in-person presence at the UN Regional Economic Commissions' annual Forums for Sustainable Development. Our sustained engagement throughout the UN system on the full scope of SDG issues advances core U.S. values and foreign policy priorities, including those related to women's empowerment, the environment, education, health, and food security.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #13
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

The UN Sustainable Development Goals provide a useful framework to measure U.S. development goals and progress toward them. How does the State Department's budget request for FY2023 help to further the SDGs?

Answer:

Our requested FY 2023 budget will strengthen U.S. leadership on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including global education, ending hunger and poverty, and environmental protection. For instance, our request boosts U.S. leadership on SDG three (Good Health and Well-Being) by strengthening global health security systems; SDG 13 (Climate Action) by scaling up international climate programs, including $2.28 billion for Department of State and USAID climate programs; and the multiple human rights-focused SDGs through robust funding related to racial and gender equity, rule of law, and empowerment of marginalized communities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #14
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How is the State Department working with UN partners on how to get the SDGs back on track after the COVID pandemic has caused so much backsliding across all our development goals? Are the SDGs still achievable by 2030?

Answer:

The Administration is committed to full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN assessments and self-reporting by UN Member States have cautioned that the COVID pandemic and other unanticipated challenges have made it unlikely that many countries will achieve all 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We are working with the UN and partners around the world to address the COVID pandemic, restore supply chains, and revive the global economy, which will allow governments to rededicate resources toward advancing the SDGs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #15
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Countering the PRC: Some view the PRC's increased influence in the Pacific Islands, including in the Solomon Islands, as a result of the lack of U.S. engagement and attention to the region. What is the U.S. strategy in the region and what efforts are we making to be more proactive in the region, working with like-minded partners such as Australia and New Zealand?

Answer:

Through the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the United States will strengthen ties with Pacific Island countries and promote the United States as the preferred partner in the face of intense regional competition. We are prioritizing the successful completion of the negotiations related to the Compacts of Free Association and South Pacific Tuna Treaty Annex negotiations, two pillars of the United States' engagement with the Pacific Islands. The United States will increase our presence in the region and work with likeminded partners through the Indo-Pacific Quad, Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership, and Trilateral Pacific Security Dialogue to coordinate our efforts.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #16
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Democracy Programs: Currently, we are in the Year of Action after the first Summit for Democracies. What progress the United States has made on our deliverables stemming from last year's Democracy summit?

Answer:

The United States is delivering on our commitments made during the Summit for Democracy under the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal. We leveraged existing initiatives such as the multilateral Global Anti-Corruption Consortium and Lifeline: Embattled CSOs Assistance Fund for emergency responses by securing additional support from like-minded governments. We deepened our commitment and support to key democracy platforms such as the Media Freedom Coalition and Freedom Online Coalition and are in the process of launching new efforts to protect media, support democratic reformers, combat corruption, and ensure technology is harnessed to support democratic renewal.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #17
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Also how are we monitoring progress and holding our democratic partners accountable for their own deliverables?

Answer:

The State Department and other U.S. agencies consistently engage Summit participants at all levels regarding commitment implementation. We are working with government partners through the Year of Action to translate their commitments into meaningful action with an expectation that governments should report on positive progress at the second Summit. Governments will report on progress through our Focal Group process. The Department continually reviews reporting cables from posts' engagements in the field and various data sources from nongovernmental stakeholders. Civil society is also actively monitoring and reporting on commitment progress – including commitments made by the United States.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #18
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Will the State Department commit to prioritizing work with Congress during this Year of Action and greater congressional participation in the next Summit?

Answer:

Yes, the Department will prioritize working with Congress during the Year of Action. We have conducted ongoing briefings with committee staff and intend to continue to expand such engagement. We welcome opportunities to meet with members and their staff to discuss how to participate in the Summit. We hope to invite Congress as participants during the Year of Action events. Additionally, we hope to work with Congress in the weeks and months ahead to ensure continued resources for the Presidential Initiative on Democratic Renewal (PIDR), including through the FY 2023 President's Budget Request.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #19
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Yemen: U.S. Special Envoy Tim Lenderking has said the recent ceasefire represents a first step toward a "new Yemen." What would a comprehensive agreement look like, and how will the United States urge the parties toward such a goal?

Answer:

The United States continues to prioritize adherence to the terms of the UN-negotiated truce to build on this momentum towards a permanent ceasefire and an inclusive, UN-led political process that includes meaningful input for women and civil society leaders and members from other marginalized communities. We support the aspirations of the Yemeni people for an effective, democratic, and transparent government that includes diverse political and civil society voices. Most importantly, Yemenis deserve a government that protects rights and freedoms while promoting justice, accountability, and reconciliation.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #20
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How will the U.S. respond if the ceasefire is broken by either the Houthis or Yemen's internationally recognized government?

Answer:

All the parties made tough decisions and compromises in accepting the truce, and it is now up to the parties to uphold the terms that they agreed to. The truce has brought a greater measure of calm and stability than Yemen has seen in years, and we continue to urge the parties to sustain the truce for the benefit of the Yemeni people.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #21
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

The United States has provided nearly $4.5 billion in humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people since 2015. As mediation efforts continue, and hopefully a long-term truce, what additional resources will the Administration need to help Yemenis rebuild their lives?

Answer:

We are working to build on the two-month UN-brokered truce reached on April 2 to realize an inclusive, durable peace, which would allow for greater stability and development in Yemen. Alongside our humanitarian assistance funding to address the country's critical needs, we have been working to improve Yemen's self-reliance, capacity to govern effectively, and ability to provide necessary services. Targeted assistance in relatively stable communities can bolster the resilience of locally legitimate authorities, prevent further fragmentation, and lay a foundation for long-term development. Investments in development assistance now will better enable Yemenis to bolster their economy and society in the event of a political settlement.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #22
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Palestinian Assistance: What impact has the resumption of U.S. assistance had, so far, on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem?

Answer:

Since April 2021, the United States has provided over half a billion dollars in assistance for the Palestinians. U.S. foreign assistance for the West Bank and Gaza serves important U.S. interests, including providing critical relief to those in great need, fostering economic development, and supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination. U.S. economic and humanitarian assistance programs have improved the lives of millions of Palestinians by providing immediate relief and advancing development across sectors such as health, infrastructure, economic growth, and civil society, while security sector programs support Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation to enhance the stability of the West Bank.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #23
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

During the recent Negev Summit, Secretary Blinken emphasized that the Abraham Accords are not a substitute for a two-state solution. How is the Department reinforcing that message with regional leaders?

Answer:

The Administration has been clear, including in discussions with our partners in the region, that Israelis and Palestinians alike equally deserve to live in freedom, security, and prosperity. We have also been clear that a two-state solution is the best way to achieve these goals. As such, the United States is strongly encouraging both Israeli and Palestinian leaders to avoid unilateral actions that undermine that goal, including settlement activity, annexation, and demolitions, as well as incitement to violence and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism. We are also working with our likeminded partners, including my colleagues represented at the Negev Summit, to identify specific opportunities to improve the lives of the Palestinians.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #24
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How does the Department plan to build upon and expand the normalization agreements to include and benefit the Palestinians?

Answer:

The Department is working with our partners in the region to identify opportunities to advance peaceful co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, as well as help create the conditions for direct negotiations of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians. For example, in July 2021 the Department helped facilitate an agreement between Israel and Jordan that will improve Jordan's access to fresh water and increase Palestinian access to Jordanian products. Most recently at the March 2022 Negev Summit, I engaged with my colleagues from Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates to identify other tangible opportunities to improve the lives of the Palestinians through cooperation and diplomacy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Barbara Lee #25
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the Administration's current plan to re-open a U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem to serve as a diplomatic mission to – and center of engagement with - the Palestinians?

Answer:

The Administration has stated its desire to re-open the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem. Our objective is to ensure that the U.S. presence in Jerusalem furthers our national security interests and enables our government to carry out the full range of diplomatic activities that we have historically undertaken. The Department will also comply with all applicable Congressional consultation and notification requirements related to re-opening the Consulate General in Jerusalem.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #1
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

In recent years, China has become even more confident about the assessment that the U.S. is in decline, that Western democracies have failed, and that U.S. alliances are fraying. Do you see that as changing and what other lessons will China draw from the conflict?

Answer:

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has adopted a more aggressive foreign policy in recent years. Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable war against Ukraine threatens the very foundations of the international rules-based system that has brought decades of peace and stability across the globe, including in the Indo-Pacific. Investing in our allies and partners is critical to our approach to the PRC, and we are coordinating our response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine with allies and partners to ensure that the PRC learns the right lessons as it considers its own foreign policy actions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #2
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Is there evidence yet that Beijing is doubling down on its growing axis with Moscow, such as by providing material or financial assistance?

Answer:

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is amplifying Russian propaganda blaming the United States, NATO, and the EU for the war, and is providing diplomatic cover to Russia at the UN, where it voted against resolutions condemning Moscow and opposing its expulsion from the Human Rights Council. We have warned the PRC that economic or military assistance to Russia and sanctions evasion will have serious consequences and we continue to monitor Beijing's actions closely.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #3
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Will the administration continue to support Taiwanese efforts to develop asymmetric capabilities necessary to counter potential Chinese aggression, including through targeted security assistance?

Answer:

Yes. Our defense relationship with Taiwan is rock solid and continues to be commensurate with the threat from the PRC and consistent with our one China policy. The U.S. government continues to focus on supporting Taiwan through the acquisition of asymmetric capabilities, and the Departments of State and Defense are also coordinating closely with Taiwan to support non-material and indigenously produced solutions to improve Taiwan's defenses. We would be willing to explore security assistance funding with Congress.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #4
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

There has been legislation introduced in the Senate to provide Foreign Military Financing (FMF) to Taiwan. Are you supportive of this idea to help Taiwan with FMF? Are there any other tools you believe could better prepare Taiwan in the event of an attack from China?

Answer:

I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss with Congress tools to support Taiwan's self-defense capabilities, such as security assistance. Historically, the Department has not provided Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) to Taiwan due to its high-income status and ability to use its own national funds for foreign military sales. Further, Taiwan's requirements and existing defense budget exceed available FMF resources. Unfortunately, approximately 93 percent of the FMF global topline has historically been subject to Congressional earmarks and directives, leaving very little flexibility for emerging priorities unless the FMF topline is increased. However, it is important for us to learn the lessons of Ukraine when it comes to Taiwan.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #5
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

North Korea has been taking advantage of the world's attention being focused on Ukraine to rapidly increase the pace and scope of its ballistic missile testing. This is an obvious threat to the United States and our allies in the region, particularly South Korea and Japan. What is the goal of North Korea's accelerated tests and is there any sign that North Korea is interested in diplomatic discussions with the United States or anyone else about its ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs?

Answer:

The Biden Administration has made clear the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) recent unlawful and destabilizing ballistic missile launches have consequences, that the international community will not accept these actions as "normal," and most importantly, that the only viable path forward for the DPRK is through dialogue. While the door remains open to diplomacy, the United States will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the U.S. homeland and our allies. In particular, the United States is committed to defend the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan using the full range of U.S. capabilities.

As we have emphasized publicly, we have no hostile intent toward the DPRK and are willing to meet without preconditions. The DPRK has not yet indicated a willingness to engage in dialogue.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #6
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

From a regional perspective, how have our allies in Japan and South Korea reacted to these developments?

Answer:

A robust and effective trilateral relationship between the United States, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Japan is critical for our shared security and common interests in promoting regional and global peace and economic security, strengthening the global nonproliferation regime, and bolstering the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region and across the globe.

We have enjoyed close trilateral cooperation and coordination on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Special Representative for the DPRK Sung Kim is in regular contact with his counterparts. I have also held multiple trilateral meetings with the ROK and Japanese foreign ministers, most recently in Honolulu in February.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #7
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Is it likely to help advance cooperation between Seoul and Tokyo?

Answer:

We have worked together with the ROK and Japan on DPRK issues. Increased provocations by the DPRK have strengthened our collective resolve to achieve the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. A robust and effective trilateral relationship between and among the United States, the ROK, and Japan is critical for our shared security and common interests. The United States is committed to defend the ROK and Japan using the full range of U.S. capabilities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #8
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

The new government in South Korea wants to accelerate ballistic missile defense, such as a Korean "THAAD" battery to cover Seoul and early deployment of a Korean version of Iron Dome. Do you support this goal and are you prepared to help advance it?

Answer:

Our commitment to the defense of the ROK is ironclad. After a July 2016 Alliance decision, the United States deployed a THAAD battery to the ROK as a prudent, purely defensive, capability designed to counter the DPRK's expanding arsenal of short, medium, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, including those capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. Working closely with the ROK to enhance our collective integrated air and missile defense cooperation and capabilities continues to be an important priority for the United States. We remain committed to discussing defense acquisitions with the ROK.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #9
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which has been in the works for several years, is the cause of major contention between Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt. Does the United States agree that the GERD is a serious threat to water supplies in Egypt and Sudan?

Answer:

We acknowledge and affirm the importance of Egypt and Sudan's water security, as well as Ethiopia's need for power generation. We urge all parties to resume talks toward a substantive, results-oriented, negotiated agreement under the auspices of the chairperson of the African Union.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #10
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the status of the ongoing project?

Answer:

Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and the filling of its reservoir continues. The Government of Ethiopia announced that it had started to operate some of the dam's turbines to generate electricity in February, and we expect Ethiopia to continue the third filling of the reservoir this summer, as it did in summer 2020 and 2021. We support African Union Chairperson President Macky Sall's engagement with Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan on a dialogue to reach a transparent and equitable agreement on the filling and operations of the GERD.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #11
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How would completion of the GERD impact the economies and security of these neighboring countries?

Answer:

The GERD is part of Ethiopia's plan to pursue regional power exporting arrangements in the coming years. We support collaborative and constructive efforts by Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan to reach an agreement on the GERD. We understand the importance of the Nile water to all three countries. We believe that Egypt's water security, Sudan's safety concerns, and Ethiopia's development goals can be reconciled through good faith negotiations, and we encourage a productive dialogue.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Hal Rogers #12
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What implications has the project had on U.S. international aid in the region?

Answer:

In February 2021, we de-linked U.S. assistance to Ethiopia from our policy on the GERD. We informed the Ethiopian government of our decision.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #1
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

It is encouraging to see the Biden Administration request $10.9 million for CARE to effectively sustain Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). Can you clarify how many permanent staff $10.9 million would support?

Answer:

There are discussions underway to consider establishing a CARE Office to allow durable staffing and greater knowledge retention. Such an office likely would be composed of a mix of permanent employees, U.S. personal services contractors, and some employees on third-party contracts.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #2
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

As you may know, there are thousands of Korean Americans who were separated from their families in North Korea by the Korean War. These Americans have lived without knowing whether their spouses, children, or grandchildren are still alive. While there have been over 21 opportunities for divided families to have reunions between Seoul and DPRK, none of these reunions have included Korean Americans. While Seoul, as well as other international organizations, has committed to helping facilitate the inclusion of Korean Americans in these reunions, time is running out as these family members age into their 80s and 90s. Have you had the opportunity to raise this issue with members of the incoming Yoon government?

Answer:

We are deeply concerned about the difficulties Korean-American families face when trying to reunite with relatives who remain in the DPRK. We will continue to engage with the ROK to encourage the inclusion of Korean-Americans if such an opportunity arises.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #3
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

In order for this issue to really get the attention it deserves, we need a Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights. The former President never appointed anyone to this position, which was a huge mistake. Can we expect a nominee for this role?

Answer:

The Administration is committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy. We continue to work with the international community to raise awareness, highlight abuses and violations, increase access to independent information, and promote respect for human rights in the DPRK. For decades, the United States has championed efforts to improve respect for the human rights and dignity of North Koreans and will continue to promote accountability for the DPRK government for its egregious human rights record, including through the appointment of the Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #4
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

U.S. security assistance to the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) has been a bipartisan priority of administrations of both parties dating back to the George W. Bush presidency. Considering the ways in which assistance to the Palestinian Authority Security Forces promotes larger American security interests in the Middle East, why did the President's budget and the State Department Congressional Budget Justification propose a cut for security assistance to the West Bank/Gaza from $75 million just two years ago, to $33 million?

Answer:

The Administration's Palestinian Authority (PA) security assistance request is $40 million when coupled with $7 million requested within INL's budget for the related administrative support. This is an appropriate level for funding the program initiated in FY 2021. It emphasizes building operational skills and institutional capacities of the PA security and justice sectors but does not include some of the more expensive but less critical infrastructure and equipment projects under the former program. Future assistance requests will reflect the PA's commitment to security sector reforms and how well it utilizes U.S. assistance.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #5
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is State Department's view of the importance of the U.S. role in training and developing a robust Palestinian security force that can maintain stability in the West Bank and continue vital coordination with the IDF?

Answer:

The United States plays an essential role in developing the capabilities of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) to maintain stability in the West Bank, address crime and terrorism threats that directly affect Israel, and protect human rights. U.S. assistance to the PASF specifically helps to strengthen security institutions that are necessary to achieve a two-state solution, improve rule-of-law and access to justice for Palestinians in the West Bank, and combat crime and terrorism threats in the West Bank that undermine Israeli security and trust in the Palestinian Authority.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #6
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

USAID Global Health Security program has a track record of funding zoonotic surveillance and preventing the spillover of pathogens from animals to people, in its ongoing efforts to prevent pandemics. Any financial intermediary fund for global health security should also include within its scope of eligible activities preventing the spillover of pathogens from animals to people. How will State Department Global Health Programs ensure these strategic objectives are within the scope of a new FIF?

Answer:

The United States is one of the largest founding donors to the pandemic preparedness and global health security (GHS) FIF and will play a leading role in the selection of fit-for-purpose implementing partners to fill gaps in GHS capacities, including by leveraging a One Health approach to strengthen surveillance and prevent risk of zoonotic spillover. The Department, as the coordinating agency for U.S. GHS bilateral partnerships, will coordinate U.S. efforts to work with FIF recipients to provide additional technical assistance, as needed, and maximize coordination with existing programming. The G20 Finance and Health Task Force, as a key venue for FIF discussions, has highlighted the need for a One Health approach to preparedness.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #7
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How will State Department Global Health Programs integrate One Health capacity in developing countries to strengthen Global Health Security Zoonosis Plans as a tool to prevent future pandemics?

Answer:

My team is vigorously working at global, regional, and bilateral levels, including through U.S. global health security bilateral partnerships, to bolster preparedness and leverage One Health tools to strengthen surveillance, address zoonotic disease, and reduce the risk of future pandemics. Through diplomatic influence, programmatic activities, and diverse engagement platforms, the Department is also well-positioned to convene key multisectoral stakeholders working in health, agriculture, wildlife, climate and the environment, as well as development and finance sectors and the private sector, to bolster resilience and advance health security.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #8
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Locally-led peacebuilding is critical to preventing and managing violent conflict and building sustainable peace in conflict affected and fragile states. Sustainable peace relies on the institutionalization of peacebuilding efforts by local actors. Research and case studies consistently demonstrate peacebuilding is more effective when led and owned by local stakeholders, who are best placed to develop cost-effective, and durable solutions. The U.S. can no longer afford to continue to overlook, minimize, and undervalue local knowledge and leadership in its foreign assistance. How will the State Department ensure that U.S. foreign assistance prioritizes support for locally-led peacebuilding and locally-designed programming to better help prevent and reduce violent conflict and fragility in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer:

Consistent with the Global Fragility Act of 2019 (GFA), the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (the Strategy) highlights the important role of foreign assistance in advancing the Strategy's prevention and stabilization goals. The GFA and the Strategy encourage and empower local actors to address citizen concerns and build community resilience against violence and extremism. The Strategy and accompanying 10-year country implementation plans will support locally driven political solutions that align with U.S. national security interests, reflecting the U.S. commitment to partnerships and burden-sharing with local partners, including civil society and the private sector.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #9
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Global attention to the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda is increasing exponentially. With a global youth population (ages 15-29) of over 1.8 billion, an estimated one-in-four youth are living in or otherwise affected by armed conflicts and violence. Millions of young women and men have mobilized in an intergenerational nationwide civil disobedience movement to peacefully protest the military coup in Burma/Myanmar. The U.N. Special Rapporteur for Myanmar has highlighted that youth have "had a taste of freedom" and do not want their country and future to regress under oppression with military rule—they have been met with tear gas and bullets. In Afghanistan, where over 65% of the total population is under the age of 30, young people, especially young women, have been excluded from the negotiations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. Even worse, the Taliban is targeting and attacking young human rights defenders and educated youth, such as the Hazara girls' school in Kabul. Much of the youth-related funding provided in the Biden Administration's FY23 budget request focuses on economics, health, and education. Considering youth populations must live with the consequences of our actions now, how will you meaningfully include youth and emerging young leaders in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution efforts?

Answer:

The Global Fragility Act of 2019 (GFA) and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (the Strategy) emphasize the U.S. government's commitment to engage youth in meaningful participation in the political processes of all GFA priority countries and regions. In creating our 10-year strategy county implementation plans, we will promote locally driven, inclusive political participation and economic opportunities for members of marginalized groups, including youth, in partner countries. As part of our consultative and locally led partnership approach, we are committed to seeking out and partnering with local youth and emerging young leaders to ensure they have a significant stake in our planning and efforts to strengthen meaningful participation in conflict prevention, governmental reform, and peace building efforts.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #10
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How will the State Department prioritize the role of youth in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery efforts, recognizing that youth are the majority population in conflict-affected countries and have a unique role to play in long-term peace and stability?

Answer:

Large youth populations with few prospects for political participation and economic advancement can be a significant driving factor of fragility. Recognizing this, both the Global Fragility Act of 2019 (GFA) and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (the Strategy) emphasize the U.S. government's commitment to engage youth in meaningful political participation in GFA priority countries and regions. In creating our 10-year strategy country implementation plans, we will promote locally driven, inclusive political participation and economic opportunities for youth in partner countries.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Grace Meng #11
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

From Laos to Afghanistan, State Department Conventional Weapons Destruction programs are vital for saving lives and represent a critical foreign policy tool. I am particularly concerned about the demining needs in Ukraine. However, this year, the Administration has proposed reduced funding for these programs at a level of $237.05 million, which is nearly $18 million under what the Administration proposed in FY22 and what Congress appropriated last year. At a time when more, not fewer, resources are needed for demining, can you explain the reduction in proposed CWD funding?

Answer:

The Administration recognizes the need for demining resources and requested an extra $100 million in Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR) in the Ukraine supplemental. The President's budget ensures that the United States remains the single largest contributor to conventional weapons destruction programs in the world. We remain strongly committed to protecting civilians from harm caused by landmines and explosive remnants of war. Over the past two decades, no one has done more than the American people to protect the world's most vulnerable populations from these deadly hazards, and the president's request confirms that this will not change.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #1
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Cuba: The Biden Administration invited operatives of the Cuban dictatorship to discuss "migration" on April 21. What concessions did the State Department offer these dictatorships during these talks? What did the Maduro and Cuban regimes demand?

Answer:

The United States continues to stand with the people of Cuba and support their democratic aspirations. The Migration Talks evolved from 1984 bilateral discussions, becoming a biannual occurrence following the signing of the 1994/1995 Accords. The Talks have generally been held regularly since 1995 across multiple administrations, with the last round (prior to April 21) held in July 2018. The United States and Cuba resumed Migration Talks to ensure safe, legal, and orderly migration between Cuba and the United States, which remains a primary interest of the United States consistent with our interest in fostering family reunification and promoting greater respect for freedom and human rights in Cuba.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #2
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the status of the Cuba Policy Review, and the Remittance Working Group, and are these attempts at dialogue, and the administration's requested cuts to broadcasting at OCB, the beginning of a new pro-dictatorship, appeasement policy?

Answer:

Our policy toward Cuba focuses first and foremost on support for the Cuban people, including their political and economic well-being, and human rights. The Administration plans to implement a series of measures in the coming weeks and months to increase support for the Cuban people and safeguard our national security interests. As we implement these measures, we will continue to call on the Cuban government to respect freedom and human rights for all Cubans as they work to determine their own futures. The Remittance Working Group shared its analysis and options with the White House in August 2021.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #3
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Could you please elaborate on what was meant by the State Department's statement, in its April 28, 2022 Cuba Policy Review (00484), that "serious human rights concerns" are an "irritant" in the relationship between the Biden Administration and the dictatorship in Cuba?

Answer:

Serious human rights concerns, including harsh sentencing for protestors, extensive restrictions on fundamental freedoms, and the passage of a restrictive Penal Code, continue to be a major impediment in our relationship with the Cuban government. We remain committed to promoting respect for Cubans' human rights and accountability for Cuban government officials involved in human rights abuses. We consistently condemn human rights abuses in our diplomatic conversations with the Cuban government and in our public statements and urge the Cuban regime to release political prisoners unconditionally and protect and respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals in Cuba.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #4
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

U.S. law requires that all political prisoners be liberated, independent press, labor unions, and political parties be legalized, and free, fair, multiparty elections be scheduled before sanctions are lifted. Are the regime's failures to meet those basic requirements also an "irritant" in the Biden Administration's relationship with the regime in Cuba?

Answer:

The Biden-Harris Administration policy toward Cuba is centered on human rights and empowering the Cuban people to determine their own future. We pursue the goals you outline as we continue to call on the Cuban government to release all political prisoners and advocate for freedom of expression, labor rights, and a democratic political process in Cuba. We have made clear that Cuba's authoritarian government remains a glaring, unacceptable exception to a largely democratic Western Hemisphere. Policy actions that will be implemented in the coming weeks and months aim to benefit the Cuban people while minimizing or eliminating any benefits to the Cuban regime.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #5
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

This same review also states that the Biden Administration plans to assist semi-independent and "independent" businesses in Cuba. How does the Biden Administration determine whether a business is independent or semi-independent? Does the Biden Administration consider, in its licensing and policy-making processes, that the regime only licenses those businesses that are close to it, such as close relatives or regime cronies, and excludes most ordinary Cubans and particularly anyone who dares to speak against it?

Answer:

Our policy supports Cubans' aspirations for freedom and promotes greater opportunities for them to determine their own futures. Part of that approach includes encouraging the growth of Cuba's nascent private sector. We regularly engage stakeholders, including small business owners and sole proprietors on the island, to identify their needs in developing an economic base that operates, as much as possible, independently of government control. We provide tools to help achieve that goal, including entrepreneurship training and networking opportunities through the Academy of Women Entrepreneurs and Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative programs.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #6
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Because Cuba does not have a free market, and "independent" and "semi-independent" businesses must receive licenses from, and pay fees to, the Communist dictatorship, doesn't this policy support the regime and evade the purpose of U.S. sanctions?

Answer:

The Administration supports the Cuban people's demands for freedom and greater economic opportunities. Our actions aim to encourage commercial opportunities – outside of the state – for Cuban entrepreneurs, and we plan to design those actions to maximize benefits to the Cuban people in a manner consistent with U.S. law.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #7
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Why did the administration request only about $13 million for the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, despite the regime's attempts to silence opposition, imprison activists including children, and block internet use in the wake of the July 11 protests?

Answer:

We refer you to USAGM as an independent U.S. government agency.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #8
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Shouldn't the United States be expanding broadcasts to Cuba? USAGM has admitted that these cuts will require massive reductions and probably firings, at a time that in your testimony you boast about 179 new foreign service hires at State, and 60 new staff for a new digital and cybersecurity bureau. Meanwhile, USAGM has already begun coordinating with OPM on how to start firing people at the Office of Cuba Broadcasting.

Answer:

We refer you to USAGM as an independent U.S. government agency.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #9
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Venezuela: The Biden Administration sat down with the Maduro dictatorship over the weekend of March 5-6. What concessions did the State Department offer the Maduro regime during these talks? What did the Maduro regime demand?

Answer:

U.S. officials' visit to Venezuela focused on securing the release of U.S. wrongful detainees and urging the Maduro regime to return to the negotiating table in Mexico with the democratic opposition's Unitary Platform to restore democracy in Venezuela. The visit reinforced U.S. support for Interim President Juan Guaidó's call for a negotiated solution through the Mexico process. We welcome the return of two wrongfully detained U.S. citizens from Venezuela. We also noted Maduro's statement that he is willing to return to negotiations with the opposition's Unitary Platform. We continue to believe Venezuelan-led, comprehensive negotiations represent the best mechanism available to restore Venezuelan democracy.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #10
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Was the Juan Guaido administration consulted prior to the talks with the Maduro regime?

Answer:

We coordinate with the Guaidó administration on a continual basis. The purpose of the March visit sought the release of American detainees and urged the Maduro regime to return to negotiations with the opposition. The U.S. delegation coordinated details of the visit with Interim President Guaidó. The visit reinforced Interim President Guaidó's call for a negotiated solution to Venezuela's crisis.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #11
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Are future talks with the Maduro dictatorship planned?

Answer:

We believe Venezuelan-led, comprehensive negotiations represent the best mechanism available to restore Venezuelan democracy and the rule of law. In close coordination with Interim President Guaidó, we support the Unitary Platform's goal of immediately resuming their negotiations with the Maduro regime to restore free and fair elections, democratic institutions, the rule of law, and a respect for human rights in Venezuela. We will also continue working to bring home every U.S. national wrongfully detained in Venezuela.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #12
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Iran Deal: What is the current status of the administration's attempt to secure another Iran deal?

Answer:

Over the past months significant progress was made in the negotiations, but some key differences remain related to certain Iranian demands that fall outside the scope of a mutual return to full implementation of the JCPOA. The onus is now on Iran to decide whether to drop these extraneous demands or accept a negotiation that would also address concerns of ours that are outside the scope of the JCPOA.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #13
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How is the administration handling Russia's request to continue to be able to assist with, and have access to, Iranian energy?

Answer:

A return to full implementation of the JCPOA would mean restored constraints on Iran's nuclear program plus expanded verification and monitoring in exchange for sanctions relief. It is not a deal about Russia, and we are committed to addressing any sanctions evasion that Iran and Russia engage in to avoid U.S. and EU sanctions with respect to Russia.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #14
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Are you concerned that, with Russia and Communist China brokering the deal, that they will frame it in a way to ensure that Russia, the PRC and Iran will be able to work together to evade any sanctions still in place?

Answer:

Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) are participants in the JCPOA and in the Vienna talks; they are not brokering negotiations for a return to full implementation of it. The Administration has a robust, interagency effort dedicated to monitoring and implementing our sanctions regimes with respect to Russia and Iran. We are committed to working with our allies and partners to counter any attempt by Russia or Iran to evade these sanctions.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #15
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Are you requiring Iran to stop its malign activities, such as acts of terrorism, supporting terrorist organizations, and attempting to murder U.S. government officials and former government officials, as a condition to any easing of sanctions?

Answer:

Regardless of the outcome of negotiations, the United States will do whatever it takes to protect and defend its citizens. This includes those serving the United States now and those who formerly served. The unfortunate reality is that sanctions have not stopped Iran's destabilizing activities. An Iran with a nuclear weapon would present a threat of a far greater magnitude. A mutual return to full JCPOA implementation is the best available option to constrain Iran's nuclear program and provide a platform to address Iran's other destabilizing conduct.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #16
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What non-nuclear sanctions would be lifted?

Answer:

The precise nature and sequence of the sanctions-related steps that the United States would take in connection with a mutual return to full implementation of the JCPOA is a subject of the talks.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #17
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Russia/Ukraine: Was it a mistake to allow Russia's Nordstream 2 to move forward, to the enormous benefit of Russia, while killing the Keystone XL Pipeline, to the enormous detriment of our neighbor and democratic ally Canada and the American people?

Answer:

The Biden Administration has consistently opposed Nord Stream 2 as a Russian geopolitical project and remains committed to implementing the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act of 2019 (PEESA), as amended. We have sanctioned ten persons related to Nord Stream 2's construction and identified 17 of their vessels as blocked property. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Germany halted certification of the pipeline.

Russia's actions show that the way to make America truly energy independent is to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The Keystone XL Pipeline would not have an impact on American energy supply today, as the oil continues to flow in through other means. President Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau have pledged to work together to strengthen action towards a net-zero future.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #18
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Should the U.S. be begging other dictators, such as Maduro and the mullahs in Iran, for oil and gas, rather than expanding purchases from Canada or producing more domestically?

Answer:

U.S. sanctions remain in place against both Venezuela and Iran, and we continue to enforce them. Our overall sanctions policy on both countries remains unchanged. I have long made clear we would review our sanctions policy if the Venezuelan parties make meaningful progress in the Venezuelan-led negotiations in Mexico toward a democratic solution. In the case of Iran, U.S. sanctions limit exports of petroleum, petroleum products, and petrochemical products from Iran, unless subject to a waiver or exception. These sanctions remain in place and continue to have a clear impact on Iran. We continue to rigorously enforce U.S. sanctions and counter Iranian sanctions evasion.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #19
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the rationale behind helping Russia transport its energy products, while preventing ally and neighbor Canada from transporting its energy products more efficiently to the U.S.?

Answer:

On March 8, 2022, President Biden signed an executive order to ban the import of Russian oil, liquefied natural gas, and coal to the United States that will further deprive President Putin of the economic resources to finance his war against Ukraine. Additional sanctions also blocked U.S. involvement in new investment in Russia's energy sector. We are working with allies and partners to further reduce purchases of Russian energy products.

We welcome our partners' efforts to increase production to address supply shortages due to Russia's unprovoked war on Ukraine, including Canada's March pledge to incrementally increase oil and gas exports by up to 300,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day. This crisis shows the need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and accelerate the clean energy transition.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #20
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Israel: I am concerned that Israel has become a permanent agenda item at international organizations such as the International Criminal Court, and the UN Human Rights Council. Recently, the State Department posted a NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) to spend up to nearly $1 million to look into Israel's human rights record. Why would the State Department spend taxpayer dollars to look into the human rights record of a democratic ally which has basic human rights and liberties, and what are you doing to counter the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement and other forms of antisemitism in multilateral institutions?

Answer:

We actively engage with the Government of Israel, as we do with many partners and allies, to promote and sustain our shared democratic values. U.S. funded programs are not punitive and do not cast value judgments on our partners. The Administration has been clear that all democracies, including the United States, should take steps to strengthen democracy, rule of law, and human rights at home. The Administration firmly rejects the BDS movement. Even as the United States will always respect the right to freedom of expression, we continue to be a strong and unwavering partner in combatting antisemitism and fighting all efforts to delegitimize Israel.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #21
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Are you leading a multinational effort to end the UN Human Rights Council's permanent Commission of Inquiry (COI) to investigate Israel?

Answer:

Yes, we are leading a multinational effort to end the open-ended and vaguely defined COI to investigate Israel, which we firmly oppose. We believe it is different from the way other countries are treated in the Human Rights Council (HRC). In December 2021, the United States, joined by partners in this effort, successfully pushed for a reduction of resources for the COI, including a 25 percent reduction in staffing positions, and we will continue to oppose funding for this body. In partnership with Israel, the United States is currently leading and lobbying in support of a joint statement that criticizes the open-ended COI mandate at the upcoming HRC session in June.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #22
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Are you building on the success of the Abraham Accords in leading other countries to normalize relations with Israel, and strengthening relations with those countries that have recently normalized relations with Israel? How are you implementing the Israel Relations Normalization Act?

Answer:

I welcome and strongly support the Abraham Accords and normalization agreements between Israel and Arab and Muslim-majority countries. All members of my team and I are committed to working with countries across the region to build on existing relationships and develop new ones. Most recently, on March 28, I joined the foreign ministers of Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Egypt for the historic Negev Summit, where we decided to develop a shared agenda for cooperation and regional integration. I look forward to working with my counterparts at the Negev Summit and our many other partners to advance Israel's relations and broader cooperation in the region.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #23
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Why is the U.S. continuing to provide more than half of its assistance to the Palestinians through the UNRWA, an organization wracked by corruption, and which has failed to account for its funding, and which has failed to prevent its funding to going to terrorists?

Answer:

The Administration supports UNRWA, the services it provides, and the role it plays in promoting regional stability, including with respect to the security of Israel. The Administration takes seriously our oversight of UN operations, including UNRWA, to ensure U.S. taxpayer-funded assistance is reaching the intended recipients. The Biden-Harris Administration provides assistance in a matter consistent with U.S. law. UNRWA employs safeguards to prevent support from reaching terrorist organizations, including vetting of staff, contractors, and beneficiaries; robust monitoring of its programs; through investigations of any allegations of abuses; and accountability for those who violate its policies.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #24
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Haiti: Congressman Adriano Espaillat and I sent a letter to Secretary Blinken in March requesting that the Biden Administration intensify efforts through diplomacy, assistance, and coordinated action to address the ongoing crisis in Haiti. What is the Biden Administration doing to address the humanitarian, political, and civil society concerns in Haiti?

Answer:

The United States provided nearly $105 million in humanitarian assistance in FY 2021 for Haiti and continues to work with Haitian officials to support Haiti's critical needs, including citizen security, post-disaster reconstruction, and expanding access to COVID-19 vaccinations. In December 2021, Assistant Secretary Brian Nichols initiated a series of high-level discussions with likeminded international partners to promote a Haitian-led solution to the political crisis and to galvanize financial, material support, and other commitments, particularly in the security sector. Since December, partner nations and international organizations have mobilized an additional $140 million in commitments.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #25
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the Biden Administration doing to engage others in the international community to ensure that Haiti emerges from the many crises that it has endured?

Answer:

To help focus international attention on Haiti, on April 21, Assistant Secretary Brian Nichols participated in the third of a series of high-level discussions initiated by the United States with likeminded international partners to ensure that Haiti remains a priority for the international community and to galvanize financial, material support, and other commitments for Haiti. Since December, international partners and organizations have mobilized more than $140 million in additional commitments that include training for the Haitian Coast Guard and Haitian National Police. These meetings have also focused on encouraging Haitian interlocutors to reach agreement on a political accord.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #26
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the plan to assist in stabilizing this important region in our hemisphere?

Answer:

Haiti's selection as a priority country under the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability offers an opportunity to comprehensively address the challenges and drivers of instability in Haiti. The Strategy will pave the way for a 10-year, evidence-based effort to foster peace and long-term stability through locally driven solutions. Our conversations with Haitian civil society and diaspora continue to inform these efforts. We are coordinating closely with multilateral organizations and like-minded countries to support Haiti as it navigates these challenges, strengthens its democratic institutions, and develops the conditions necessary for elections.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #27
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Afghanistan: It has been eight months since the United States withdrew from Afghanistan. Following the takeover by the Taliban, many have faced immense challenges in ensuring the evacuation of U.S. citizens and Afghan allies that supported us over the last 20 years. In August 2021, an exception was made by Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) to grant P2 eligibility to certain individuals, employees, grantees and partners of U.S. organizations working in Afghanistan, and to facilitate their evacuation through the Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) pipeline. However, it seems that PRM is submitting names of employees only for OAW evacuation, and that partners and grantees are no longer considered eligible.

Answer:

The Priority 2 (P-2) designation granted U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) access for certain Afghan nationals and their eligible family members by a referral submitted by a federal government agency or by the senior-most U.S. citizen employee of the relevant U.S.-based NGO or media organization. Afghans eligible and referred to the USRAP must be outside of Afghanistan in a third country for their cases to be processed. Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) eligibility may not apply to individuals referred to USRAP unless they are eligible for OAW relocation assistance through one of the Deputies-approved criteria for entry into OAW, such as an immediate family member of a U.S. Citizen. The United States does not facilitate travel to a third country for applicants to complete their USRAP processing. Individuals referred to USRAP have been and will continue to be processed through the normal USRAP process once they notify USRAP that they are outside of Afghanistan and in a country where refugee processing is possible.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #28
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What prompted this seeming change in eligibility?

Answer:

Afghans eligible and referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) must be outside of Afghanistan in a third country for their cases to be processed. Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) eligibility may not apply to individuals referred to USRAP unless they are eligible for OAW relocation assistance through one of the Deputies-approved criteria for entry into OAW, such as an immediate family member of a U.S. Citizen. The United States does not facilitate travel to a third country for individuals for their case to be processed because they have a USRAP referral. Individuals referred to USRAP have been and will continue to be processed through the normal USRAP process once they notify USRAP that they are outside of Afghanistan and in a country where refugee processing is possible.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #29
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Was the change due to a lack of resources, a result of prioritization, or a policy decision?

Answer:

There has been no change to Operation Allies Welcome since President Biden directed the Department to continue efforts to relocate U.S. Citizens, Lawful Permanent Residents, Afghan Special Immigrant Visa holders and their immediate family from Afghanistan to the United States.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #30
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What were the reasons for restricting the eligibility for processing to the U.S. only for those evacuated between August 14, 2021 and August 31, 2021?

Answer:

Prior to August 14, 2021, there were commercial options to support travel for any individual in Afghanistan who wished to depart the country. These options were suspended as of August 14. After August 31, 2021, with the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the suspension of U.S. embassy operations, there ceased to be any U.S. government personnel in Afghanistan. Without U.S. government personnel on the ground to ensure the fidelity of the intended manifests, there is no ability to confirm whether the passengers would have a legal pathway into the United States, such as a Special Immigrant Visa. And in several instances where private entities chartered aircraft to independently transport individuals out of Afghanistan, identity checks on arrival at transit destinations revealed that many passengers were not eligible for relocation to the United States and, in some cases, that the manifests were not accurate, despite the best efforts of the independent, private organizations supporting these flights.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #31
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the Biden Administration doing to help individuals who supported U.S. efforts in Afghanistan that remain in country?

Answer:

The Biden-Harris Administration remains committed to helping Afghan partners who supported U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. The Department of State continues to accept and process applications for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program. Additionally, the Department of State continues to receive, review, and process Priority 1 (P-1) and Priority 2 (P-2) referrals to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) for eligible Afghans and submit cases to the Department of Homeland Security for Special Public Benefit Parole (SPBP) for individuals facing imminent and immediate threats. There is no deadline for receiving USRAP referrals or submitting SPBP cases.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #32
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

How was eligibility determined for access to Qatar Lilypad system, especially when no official policy existed at the time of the withdrawal?

Answer:

Interagency operations at Camp Al Sayliyah in Doha, Qatar, facilitate the completion of U.S. immigration processing for those Afghans who were relocated by the Department through Operation Allies Welcome.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #33
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Few months ago, Secretary Blinken appointed a special envoy for Afghan women, girls and human rights. What is the Biden Administration doing to improve conditions for women and girls in Afghanistan?

Answer:

The appointment of the Special Envoy for Afghan women, girls, and human rights demonstrates the priority the Biden Administration places on the human rights of Afghan women and girls. We are working closely with international partners to make clear to the Taliban that any movement towards normalization is contingent on their actions, including respecting the rights of women and girls. We are also working closely with the UN Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan, encouraging Muslim-majority countries to engage the Taliban on these issues, and consulting with Afghan women. As the largest donor of humanitarian aid in Afghanistan, we are working to ensure this aid assists the most vulnerable, including women and girls.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #34
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What role does the special envoy have, particularly now that girls are again being denied access to education?

Answer:

The Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights was appointed to ensure that human rights, including women's rights, remains a top priority in our policy towards Afghanistan. The Special Envoy leads engagement with international partners and Afghan leaders to promote the rights of women and girls, including the right to education at all levels, and to engage broadly on the deteriorating human rights situation, to develop a coordinated response to the Taliban's restrictions on the rights of women and girls. The Special Envoy also works closely with the UN Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan, advocates to Muslim-majority countries to engage the Taliban on these issues, and leverages Afghan women's voices.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #35
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

What is the Biden Administration doing to address the mounting humanitarian, political, and civil society concerns in Afghanistan?

Answer:

Given the immense and needless suffering of millions of Afghans, we are committed to robust humanitarian assistance and to pragmatic problem-solving to see a restoration of basic economic functions. We have provided more than $720 million in funding towards the humanitarian response in Afghanistan and for Afghans in neighboring countries since August. In all of our engagements with Taliban members, we urge them to cease infringements on the rights of Afghans and respect education as a human right that is essential to Afghanistan's economic growth and social stability. We also push the Taliban for the safe return of unjustly detained activists and tell the Taliban that they should respect freedom of expression and build an inclusive system to give people a voice to gain credibility and legitimacy from Afghans and the international community.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken by
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart #36
House Committee on Appropriations
April 28, 2022

Question:

Nicaragua: I am concerned by reports that the Ortega dictatorship is seeking weakened sanctions in exchange for the release of prisoners. Could you please confirm that the Biden Administration will not provide concessions to the Ortega regime unless: all political prisoners are released; independent media, political parties, and free expression and assembly are legalized; human rights are respected; and free, fair, multiparty elections are scheduled?

Answer:

We actively press for the release of political prisoners and respect for human rights in Nicaragua – top U.S. priorities in the region. We continue to urge the Ortega-Murillo regime to take steps to return to democracy and respect for human rights in Nicaragua. Our sanctions are not designed to punish, but rather to build pressure on the regime to change course. The regime has not yet shown signs of willingness to do so, and so we continue to explore additional coordinated, multilateral pressure using the diplomatic and economic tools at our disposal.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WITNESS

AMBASSADOR SAMANTHA POWER, ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LEE

Ms. LEE of California. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

Good morning. First of all, let me start by welcoming our Administrator, Samantha Power, back to our subcommittee.

Nice to see you today.

The hearing is fully virtual, and so we need to first address a few housekeeping matters.

For today's hearing, the chair or staff designated by the chair may mute participants' microphones when they are not under recognition for the purposes of eliminating inadvertent background noise.

Members are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves. If I notice that you have not unmuted yourself, I will ask if you would like the staff to unmute you. If you indicate approval by nodding, staff will unmute your microphone.

I remind all members and witnesses that the 5-minute clock still applies during the Q&A. And we are going try to stick with our 5 minutes. If there is a technology issue, we will move to the next member until the issue is resolved, and you will retain the balance of your time.

You will notice a clock on your screen that will show how much time is remaining. At 1 minute remaining, the clock will turn to yellow. At 30 seconds remaining, I may gently tap the gavel to remind members that their time has almost expired. When your time has expired, the clock will turn red, and I will begin to recognize the next member.

After Administrator Power presents her testimony, we will follow the order of recognition set forth in the House rules, beginning with the chair and ranking member; then, members present at the time the hearing is called to order will be recognized in order of seniority; and, finally, members not present at the time the hearing is called to order. That is in terms of how the lineup will happen.

Finally, House rules require me to remind you that we have set up an email address to which members can send anything they wish to submit in writing at any of our hearings or markups. That email address has been provided to you in advance and also to your staff.

I will start by once again welcoming our Administrator, Samantha Power, to our Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

Your agency, the USAID, is America's lead international development agency, supporting people around the world to build safe, prosperous, equitable, and inclusive societies.

The talented and knowledgeable and passionate people at USAID are on the front lines each and every day, helping to save lives and advance human rights and dignity, and their sense of professionalism and duty and patriotism is unmatched by anyone.

And so we are very grateful to have your leadership and expertise at the helm of USAID and that you are joining us today.

This morning, we will discuss the administration's fiscal year 2023 budget request for USAID. And, as I said to Secretary of State Blinken during our recent hearing, I believe our international affairs budget should be equal to, if not greater than, our military budget. That is my personal opinion.

Our military tools should be used as the last resort, whereas foreign assistance resources that we provide are the best and most effective tools we have to address today's most pressing challenges, as well as to build a more just and inclusive and peaceful world.

I have long argued that our foreign assistance is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in terms of eradicating poverty, protecting the planet, and promoting peace and prosperity. The COVID–19 pandemic and its many secondary effects have made achieving these goals by 2030 all the more difficult, while ongoing climate shocks and disasters threatened our development goals even before the pandemic.

And so I am eager to hear from you, Administrator Power, on how we will achieve the SDGs this decade and how USAID's programs are both contributing to and measuring progress toward them.

The fiscal year 2023 request includes notable increases for humanitarian, global health, climate, and accountable governance programs. It also makes bold commitments to gender equity and equality, recognizing ongoing injustices felt by half of the population, who disproportionately bear the burden from poverty, poor health, violence, and climate change.

The request also includes a modest increase in food security, but I fear it will not be enough to avert a global food crisis, which experts, including yourself, Administrator Power, have warned is another catastrophic effect of Russia's devastating war in Ukraine.

I know you have made several trips to the region, and I have recently returned from Poland myself and, like you, heard firsthand about the devastating impact this inexcusable war is having on individuals and communities.

Given the scope and the scale of the crisis, it is clear that there is no quick fix. Our NGO partners and the United Nations community are doing heroic work and scaling up quickly. Most had no presence in Ukraine outside of the Donbas and neighboring countries before February.

While there is already more to do and improvements to be made, this is a humanitarian response like no other, and it presents both

an opportunity and a challenge to think differently and work in full partnership within structures that already exist.

And with your background and decades of experience in advocating for human rights, you are uniquely qualified to assess and report on the human cost of this crisis and other conflicts around the world. I would appreciate hearing your perspective on the never-ending demands on our humanitarian assistance and what changes you have implemented at USAID that have improved our response.

As Congress works through our fiscal year 2023 bills and considers additional emergency resources, such as those passed by the House yesterday, or last night, for Ukraine, we want to know if you have the tools and authorities you need to stretch resources beyond the emergency response and what the U.S. is doing to urge other countries to step up as well.

During your short but impactful time thus far at USAID, you have also prioritized locally led development by supporting leaders in partner countries to play the lead role in shaping and implementing assistance. I agree that, to be enduring, our development efforts must be designed and led by those local actors. I am eager to discuss the targets that have been set to put local organizations in the driver's seat. We will be watching for evidence of significant progress in this effort over the next few months.

Also, you have instituted an agency-wide focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility both in Washington and USAID missions and programs. And you have named a new chief diversity officer to oversee policy changes and hold the agency accountable. And so I applaud these efforts, and I look forward to hearing an update on the progress you have made so far toward a more diverse and inclusive USAID workforce.

Last but certainly not least, I also hope you will provide us an update on our response to the COVID–19 pandemic around the world, especially vaccine delivery and distribution.

Last week, the World Health Organization released its new estimate of coronavirus deaths globally, 15 million, which is a stunning figure.

As a fierce advocate for additional funding for international efforts, like you, I am outraged by the partisan refusal to help the rest of the world recover, as we in the United States try to do so in our own country. This is not only morally unacceptable but also strategically counterproductive. We have ample evidence that new variants do not respect borders or political beliefs.

And so, Administrator Power, I hope in your testimony you will remind the members of this subcommittee just how dire the situation will become if the United States suddenly stops leading the world in combating COVID–19.

I will now turn to our ranking member, Mr. Rogers, for his opening statement, and I want to thank you again, Administrator Power, for being here today.

Mr. Rogers.

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER ROGERS

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And welcome, Administrator Power. Good to see you again. I appreciate your being here to provide testimony and to answer questions on the fiscal year 2023 budget request for USAID.

Let me start by once again acknowledging the good work being done by the foreign and civil servants at USAID. In particular, I want to express my appreciation to you and your colleagues for your robust response to the crisis in Ukraine and its ripple effects around the region and, indeed, around the world. In these extraordinary times, it is important that we acknowledge your dedicated cadre of development professionals that too often are working in or near dangerous circumstances.

Turning to the matter at hand, the President's budget request for fiscal year 2023 for the State-Foreign operations bill is $65.77 billion, which is an increase of $9.678 billion over enacted. The request for USAID-administered accounts is $29.4 billion.

In broad strokes, the State-Foreign operations budget looks fairly similar to what was requested last year. As I noted during our hearing with Secretary Blinken, it represents significant increases that we cannot afford and that are not realistic.

In my judgment, it is important that the administration focuses on matters that are essential to U.S. national security and avoids funding commitments that are above and beyond the resources the Congress can provide. The credibility of the United States will be further diminished if our commitments outstrip our means.

Madam Administrator, I urge you to keep this in mind as you work with your interagency colleagues on what new initiatives and funding commitments will be announced this year.

There are more priorities that I will get to in my questions, so, in closing, let me thank you for your time today and for your continued service to our country.

I thank the chair and yield back.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much.

Administrator Power, now, if you could summarize your oral statement in less than 5 minutes. I want to make sure we have enough time to get to our questions. Your full statement, of course, will be included in the record.

And, after your testimony, I will be calling on members based on seniority of the members that were present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between majority and minority members. I will then recognize any remaining members in the order of their appearance.

Each member is asked to please keep their questions to within 5 minutes per round. And if, in fact, the chair of Appropriations or ranking member arrive, I will definitely yield to them, because they are in several hearings themselves.

So, good to see you again, Administrator Power. Please proceed.

OPENING STATEMENT OF MS. POWER

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much, Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. It is good to be back.

Just to sort of frame the discussion I hope we can have over the next couple of hours, I would just like to start by saying that I

don't think it is an overstatement to say that we are gathered here at a profound juncture in history.

For 16 straight years, we have seen the number of people living under democratic rule decline. The world is now less free and less peaceful than at any point since the Cold War. And for several years, as we are seeing vividly and graphically and horrifically right now, autocracies have grown increasingly brazen on the world stage, claiming that they can get things done for their people with a speed and effectiveness that democracies cannot match.

Today, we see just how empty that rhetoric is and just how dark the road to autocracy can be, from Vladimir Putin's brutal war on a peaceful neighbor in Ukraine to the People's Republic of China's campaign of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang.

Now, when autocracies are on their back heel, is the moment for the world's democracies to unite and take a big step forward after so many years of losing ground. If the world's free nations, with the United States in the lead, are able to unite the efforts of our allies, the private sector, to mobilize our multilateral institutions and marshal the resources necessary to help our partner nations, we have a chance to extend the reach of peace, prosperity, and human dignity to billions more.

This has been USAID's mission since its inception six decades ago. And I am truly grateful to you for your continued bipartisan support for our efforts to save lives, to strengthen economies, to prevent fragility and conflict, to promotion resilience, and to bolster freedom around the world.

USAID's work is a testament to the fact that America cares about the plight of others, that we can competently accomplish mammoth goals that no other country can, and that the work we do abroad also matters to Americans here at home. It makes us safer, it makes us more prosperous, and it engenders goodwill that strengthens alliances and global cooperation and creates a better future for the generations to come.

Thanks to your past support, the United States has helped get more than half a billion COVID–19 vaccinations to people in 115 countries. We have led lifesaving humanitarian and disaster responses in 68 countries, including Haiti, Ethiopia, and Ukraine. We have helped enhance pathways for legal migration to the U.S., while working to strengthen worker protections. And we have assisted the relocation and resettlement of Afghan colleagues and refugees under the most dire of circumstances, while pivoting our programming in Afghanistan to address ongoing food insecurity and public health needs and continuing to push to keep women and girls in school.

We are also making strides to become much more nimble at a time of immense demands, shoring up a depleted agency by welcoming new recruits and operating with greater flexibility. The Biden-Harris administration's fiscal year 2023 discretionary request of $29.4 billion will build on these steps forward, giving us the ability to invest in the people and systems to meet the world's most significant challenges so the United States can seize this moment in history.

Last night, thanks to your bipartisan leadership, the House of Representatives took a major step in that direction by passing a

nearly $40 billion package for Ukraine. Yet the challenges we face are significant. Putin's war has displaced more than 13 million people, including two-thirds of Ukraine's children. It has led to serious disruptions to global food, fuel, and fertilizer supplies around the world, further taxing an already overwhelmed international humanitarian system.

Two difficult years of the COVID–19 pandemic have set back development gains. And, despite U.S. leadership in vaccinating the world, the job remains unfinished. Multibillion-dollar climate shocks appear each year with more frequency. And continued humanitarian crises remain in Ethiopia and elsewhere.

Yet, as grave as the challenges are, I sincerely believe the opportunity before us is even larger. By providing the resources necessary to seize this moment, the United States can galvanize commitments from our allies and private-sector partners, demonstrate to the world that democracies can deliver in a way that autocracies cannot. And these actions are the key to reversing years of democratic decline and creating a more stable, peaceful, prosperous future for people at home and abroad.

With your support, USAID will move aggressively to grasp this opportunity to build a brighter future for us all.

Thank you so much.

[The information follows:]

Written Statement of Administrator Samantha Power,
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (HACFO)
May 11, 2022

Thank you Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 President's Budget Request for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

It is no overstatement to say we gather at a profound juncture in history.

For 16 straight years, we've seen the number of people living under democratic rule decline—the world is now less free and less peaceful than at any point since the Cold War. And for several years, autocracies have grown increasingly brazen on the world stage, claiming that they can get things done for the people with a speed and effectiveness that democracies cannot match.

Today, we see just how empty that rhetoric is, and just how dark the road to autocracy can be. Vladimir Putin's brutal war on a peaceful neighbor in Ukraine has shown a callous disregard for human life, global stability, and the very idea of truth itself. The courage of the people of Ukraine and the stalwart support of the United States and our allies and partners has unified and inspired people around the world striving for peace, democracy, human rights and freedom. Meanwhile, the People's Republic of China continues its campaign of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, forcibly detaining more than one million Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups.

If the world's free nations, with the United States in the lead, are able to unite the efforts of our allies, the private sector, and our multilateral institutions, and marshal the resources necessary to help partner nations stand up to autocracies, manage the aftershocks of Putin's war against Ukraine, end the pandemic, fight climate change, prevent conflict and promote stability, and safeguard democratic reforms, we have a chance extend the reach of peace, prosperity, and human dignity to billions.

This has been USAID's mission since its inception six decades ago, and I am immensely grateful to you for your continued bipartisan support of our efforts to save lives, strengthen economies, prevent fragility, promote resilience, and bolster freedom around the world. USAID's work is a demonstration to the world that America cares about the plight of others, and that we can competently accomplish mammoth goals that no other country can. But the work we do abroad also matters to Americans here at home—it makes us safer, more prosperous, engenders goodwill that strengthens alliances and global cooperation, and creates a better future for the generations to come.

The Biden-Harris Administration's FY 2023 Request of $29.4 billion fully funding foreign assistance this is partially implemented by USAID is a reflection of the critical importance of development and humanitarian assistance in advancing U.S. interests around the world. The FY 2023 request also includes vital assistance to respond to the growing number of development priorities and global humanitarian crises. The Request additionally includes $6.5 billion in mandatory funding for the State Department and USAID to make transformative investments in pandemic and other biological threat preparedness globally, including financing for the new pandemic preparedness and global health security fund being established this summer, with leadership by the Indonesian G20 presidency and other partners around the world.

We know, though, that the mammoth needs around the world—from the COVID-19 pandemic's continued effects to multi-billion dollar climate shocks to a spike in global food, energy, and fertilizer prices due to the Russian Federation's belligerence—are far larger than any single nation's ability to meet them. The request will allow the United States to lead, and in leading, allow us to mobilize allies, organizations, and private sector partners to contribute more to the causes critical to our nation's interests.

Thanks to your past support, the United States has helped get more than half a billion COVID-19 vaccines to people in 115 countries; led life-saving humanitarian and disaster responses in 68 countries, including Haiti, Ethiopia, and Ukraine; helped enhance pathways for legal migration to the U.S. while working to strengthen worker protections; and assisted the relocation and resettlement of Afghan colleagues and refugees under the most dire of circumstances, while pivoting our programming in Afghanistan to address ongoing food insecurity and public health needs, and continuing to push to keep women and girls in school.

We are also making strides to become a much more nimble Agency at a time of immense demands, shoring up a depleted Agency by welcoming new recruits, and operating with greater flexibility. The FY 2023 Request will build on these steps forward, giving us the ability to invest in the people and systems to meet the world's most significant challenges so the United States can seize this moment in history.

Supporting the people of Ukraine and managing the global food crisis stemming from the Kremlin's war of aggression

As we enter the third month of the Russian Federation's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, the humanitarian situation has grown dire, especially in the country's east, even as Ukraine continues to put up stiff resistance on the battlefield. We are actively programming resources passed in the March 15th Ukraine Supplemental Act and seeking additional supplemental resources to continue supporting the people of Ukraine and address rising global

food insecurity as they continue to defend their sovereignty and their country. These resources are critical to making sure that Russia's war against Ukraine is a strategic failure for the Kremlin, while easing the global suffering their actions have caused.

Since the war began, more than 13 million people have been displaced—over a quarter of Ukraine's population including two-thirds of the country's children. That includes 5.7 million refugees, 90 percent of whom are women and children. An estimated 7.7 million more people are internally displaced inside Ukraine. An estimated 15.7 million people inside Ukraine will need humanitarian assistance over the next four months.

These supplemental resources that Congress provided have been instrumental in surging critically-needed assistance to those in need in the country, and to mobilizing the humanitarian systems required to coordinate a significant response. To date, our implementing partner, the World Food Program—which was not present on the ground in Ukraine when the conflict broke out—has scaled up its presence, and has now provided nearly 3.5 million people with rapid response rations, bread distributions, and cash-based transfers, with plans to increase distribution to reach 6 million people by June. With support from the United States and other donors, UNICEF and its local partners have provided critical health supplies to support access to primary health care for over 1.5 million children and women and ensured access to safe water for nearly 1.3 million people in affected areas as of May 3. While much has been accomplished, we recognize that more must be done, particularly in securing humanitarian access to reach those in active conflict zones with the assistance they urgently need.

To support the Ukrainian government's ability to administer services and manage its budgetary needs, USAID has contributed $500 million to the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Ukraine (MDTF), and as President Biden announced recently, we plan to transfer an additional $500 million from the FY 2022 Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, for a total of $1 billion. The supplemental funding will also enable us to provide assistance to Ukraine and neighboring frontline states like Moldova. This plan focuses on economic stabilization, countering disinformation, and promoting energy independence.

Of course, Putin's war has effects beyond Ukraine's borders. The Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine has led to serious disruptions to global food, fuel, and fertilizer supplies, while also denting crop production and household incomes, and causing already high food prices to rise further, thereby taxing the international humanitarian system. USAID is coordinating with other U.S. Departments and Agencies to respond to immediate, medium-, and long-term impacts on global food security and nutrition. Estimates suggest that up to 40 million additional people could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity over the coming year—in addition to the over 800 million people around the world who already face hunger. These populations are mostly focused in the Middle East, and West and East Africa, where higher fertilizer prices today threaten crop yields and harvests tomorrow. With the main planting season about to begin, countries like

Ethiopia and South Sudan face the possibility of significant reductions to projected crop yields, food accessibility, and household incomes.

Putin's attack and its devastating effects on global food security comes on top of two years of record food insecurity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. In FY 2022, nearly two thirds of our Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance's programming was to address food insecurity and prevent famine through emergency food assistance and related programming. This year, a similar proportion of funding will go to address growing food insecurity, however, due to the skyrocketing costs of food and fuel, the same amount of funding will reach 10 million fewer people.

In light of the food crisis, USAID, together with our partners at USDA, have made the exceptional decision to draw down the full balance of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust—$282 million—which will be used to procure U.S. food commodities to bolster existing emergency food operations in six countries facing severe food insecurity: Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen. We are immensely grateful to USDA, which will provide $388 million in additional funding through the Commodity Credit Corporation to cover transportation and other associated costs so that food can get to places around the globe where it is needed most.

Yet even as we meet short-term food assistance needs, we must continue to invest in long-term food security and build resilient food systems so that countries have the ability to feed themselves, lower their dependence on Russian wheat and agriculture, and manage future food shocks.

The United States Government has long been a global leader in addressing global food insecurity. In the first seven years since the launch of the U.S. Feed the Future Initiative, the program is estimated to have lifted 23.4 million people out of poverty, 5.2 million households out of hunger, and 3.4 million children from risk of stunting. That's in addition to the program's measurable benefits for farmers and agribusinesses here in the U.S. and around the world, due to increased agricultural productivity, trade, jobs and income, and U.S. exports.

And yet, new disruptions to food security around the world indicate that our need for funding will continue to be significant. That's why the FY 2023 Request includes over $1 billion in State and USAID economic and development funding for global food security. This money will go towards bolstering Feed the Future initiatives around the world, strengthening food systems, supporting farmers, and building community resilience.

Controlling COVID-19 and Strengthening Global Health Leadership

Much has changed from the haunting early days in March 2020. Thanks to funding from the American Rescue Plan Act and additional supplemental appropriations, the United States has been the clear leader in the international response to COVID-19, already investing over 95 percent of the funding Congress has generously provided to us, and we expect to obligate virtually all of the remaining funds by July.

We have expanded testing, treatment, and surveillance in countries around the world. In hotspots in Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, we have provided rapid responses for urgent healthcare needs, critical commodities, and technical assistance. And we have helped support developing countries in mitigating the transmission and morbidity of COVID-19, while also helping those countries prevent and mitigate food insecurity, gender-based violence, and other secondary effects of COVID-19.

Our Agency has also helped lead the effort to vaccinate the world. In partnership with the Department of Defense, we have procured 1 billion Pfizer vaccine doses for up to 100 countries around the world, free of charge and with no strings attached. We are addressing the most urgent vaccine delivery and country readiness needs in more than 100 countries, including surge support to 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, under the U.S. government's Global VAX initiative. We are leading Global VAX as a whole-of-government effort in close partnership with the Centers for Disease Control—and we are already seeing significant vaccination progress in these countries such as Uganda, where vaccination coverage increased fivefold between January and May, and Nigeria, where vaccination rates increased nearly threefold during that same time period.

And yet, our job remains unfinished. Many countries are still off track to hit their vaccination coverage targets this year. Global testing, treatment, and health services still lag. Without additional resources, many of our programs will begin wrapping up activities and closing down this fall. And we risk a significant loss of progress in our other global health programs if we cannot secure needed emergency funds. That's why President Biden requested $22.5 billion in supplemental funding to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, $5 billion of which would be dedicated to global efforts.

Additional supplemental funding would enable a significant expansion of our international vaccination drive, provide surge support to an additional 20-to-25 undervaccinated countries in significant need, countries like Liberia, where 24 percent of the population is vaccinated, and Haiti, where less than two percent of the population is fully vaccinated. It would also support other international COVID-19 response priorities like providing boosters and pediatric vaccinations, testing, treatments—including the newest, high-impact antivirals—as well as additional health services that would reach an additional 100 million people.

Such funding is essential if we are ever to turn COVID-19 from a damaging global pandemic into a manageable respiratory disease.

Barring additional funding, the United States will have to turn its back on the countries that need urgent help to boost their vaccination rates and access lifesaving treatments. Failing to help these countries get shots into arms and reduce severe disease means we will leave their populations unprotected and allow the virus to continue mutating into new, potentially more dangerous variants. Scientific research has established that new variants are more likely to emerge from a long-term infection in immuno-compromised individuals who lack access to vaccination or treatment. These variants will inevitably make their way onto American soil, close down American cities, and infect and cost American lives.

This week, the United States, Belize, Germany, and Senegal will co-host the second Global COVID-19 Summit. The Summit will redouble our collective efforts to end the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future health threats. And we have called on our global partners—governments, civil society, philanthropies, and businesses—to bring commitments to the table.

As we race to end the pandemic, USAID continues to push ahead on our broader global health efforts. The FY 2023 Request for USAID includes $3.96 billion to advance American leadership in Global Health and Global Health Security. These funds will help to prevent child and maternal deaths, bolster nutrition, control the HIV/AIDS epidemic, expand the global health workforce, and combat infectious diseases. Funding in USAID-managed assistance will respond to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global health programs including tuberculosis and malaria, as well as strengthening health systems and global health security to better prevent, detect, and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks.

In addition, the FY 2023 Request includes $6.5 billion in mandatory funding for the Department of State and USAID for critical pandemic preparedness activities. These funds will make transformative investments in pandemic and other biological threat preparedness globally by strengthening the global health workforce, advancing pandemic vaccine development, replenishing emergency response capacity, and providing health security financing to prevent, detect, and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks.

Bolstering Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance and fighting corruption

As the pandemic stretched into a second year, pro-democracy movements in many countries faltered, while governments, under guise of ending the pandemic, enacted new restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms. Disinformation ran rampant and sowed division within and between free nations. And the Chinese and Russian governments have worsened these trends by supporting authoritarian actors all over the world.

At the same time, corruption has increased in scale and scope. Today's corrupt actors are highly networked, agile, and resourced—and for the most part, they outmatch those who stand against them. USAID's Anti-Corruption Task Force found that USAID Missions have extremely limited—and in some cases, no—resources to defend against corruption. While this is incredibly concerning, it's also a historic window of opportunity for reform.

This opportunity, combined with the increased threats of corruption and democratic backsliding, is why the FY 2023 Request includes over $2.94 billion to revitalize global democracy. These funds will empower local partners, provide transparency in political systems, and address authoritarianism and disinformation. Of this foreign assistance request for democracy, roughly $2.6 billion is in accounts that USAID will fully or partially manage. The request will advance the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal introduced at the Summit for Democracy, a landmark set of policy and foreign assistance initiatives that support free and independent media, empower historically marginalized groups and democratic reformers, and help develop open, secure, and inclusive digital ecosystems.

Traditionally, our democracy assistance has emphasized media training, election monitoring, and human rights advocacy. But as we've seen, countries in the midst of a civilian transition or with a newly elected leader who rose to power on the back of a campaign to fight corruption or expand the rule of law, need not only traditional democracy assistance and investments in civil society to hold governments accountable, but resources that can immediately deliver a democratic dividend that demonstrate the value of good governance and strong institutions and services for citizens. That might include support to acquire vaccines, establish a social safety net, or invest in a power utility to keep the lights on. This funding will give us the flexibility to support countries in the event of a democratic opening—so-called democratic "bright spots"—with the resources they need to demonstrate that democracies can deliver for their people. This amount also includes $100 million to fight transnational corruption by empowering anti-corruption champions, strengthening partner countries' ability to detect and prevent corruption, and exposing and disrupting the flow of illicit money, goods, and natural resources.

The President's FY 2023 request includes $2.6 billion for USAID and the Department of State to promote gender equality and the political, economic, and social empowerment of women and girls; prevent and respond to gender-based violence; expand access to child, elder, and home care services and address gender discrimination and systemic inequities blocking the full participation of women and girls, men and boys, and individuals of other gender identities—all by integrating gender equality across a range of development, humanitarian and security assistance. This historic request would more than double our commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality.

Advancing gender equality reduces poverty, promotes economic growth, increases access to education, improves health outcomes, advances political stability, and fosters democracy. The full participation of all people is essential to economic well-being, health, and security.

Restoring U.S. Climate Leadership

Recently, USAID launched a new Climate Strategy that will guide our efforts to tackle the existential threat of climate change over this decade in a way that is truly transformational.

Our Climate Strategy lays out six ambitious targets to be achieved between 2022-2030, which together would represent a dramatic increase in our Agency's efforts to stem the climate crisis. These targets include preventing six billion metric tons of global greenhouse gas emissions—the equivalent of taking 100 million cars off the road for a decade—and conserving 100 million hectares of critical landscapes, an area more than twice the size of California. We would also support 500 million people to better prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already wreaking havoc on marginalized communities.

The President's FY 2023 Request includes $2.3 billion in international climate financing, and given the substantial gap in climate financing globally, USAID's Climate Strategy places a special emphasis on catalyzing substantial new private investment for climate mitigation and adaptation; our goal is to kickstart $150 billion in new public and private climate finance by 2030. We are also focused on the conservation, restoration and management of 100 million hectares of carbon critical landscapes by 2039—land that captures and stores carbon while preserving biodiversity and helping to prevent zoonotic transfer of diseases driven by habitat destruction.

We also continue to work closely with the Government of India through the support of their global climate initiative, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. The United States is a founding member of the coalition, and we have invested in supporting its technical leadership and formalization, with a goal of creating a global body that will advocate for the creation of infrastructure that can withstand climate and disaster risks and disseminate best practices. Since its founding in 2019, the Coalition now has 35 global members and over 400 companies, all working to share expertise and strengthen resilient infrastructure development across the globe.

Addressing Irregular Migration from Central America

In the past six months alone, USAID programming in Central America has created more than 40,000 jobs, provided life-saving humanitarian assistance to 1.8 million people, supported distribution of more than 10 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, and helped mobilize $1.2 billion

in private investment. Because one of the most effective ways to counter irregular migration is to provide legal means for securing seasonal or temporary migration, we have helped expand labor migration pathways from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras through the H-2B seasonal visa program. And we have used policy, development, and diplomatic tools to pressure leaders in the region to govern democratically and transparently.

But as demonstrated by the continued arrival of migrants at American borders, much more work is needed. Individual migration decisions are complex, but they are rarely made on a whim, and we use data from multiple sources to understand their root causes and target our programs accordingly. As documented by the Government Accountability Office, the decision to suspend most assistance to Northern Central America in 2019 adversely impacted over 80 percent of USAID projects, and we continue to work aggressively to restart, optimize and scale our programs. For FY 2023, USAID and the Department of State are requesting $986.8 million to support the second year of implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Address the Root Causes of Migration in Central America.

Using this money, we will continue working with partners in civil society, government, and the private sector to address the drivers of migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras—drivers like lack of economic opportunity, corruption, violence, human rights abuses, absence of quality public services, and declining trust in government. We will continue building and implementing a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan designed to track progress under the Strategy. And we will defend democracy, human rights, and civic space throughout Central America so that citizens believe they have a voice and a future in their countries of origin. Nicaragua is a case in point. The Ortega regime's gravely concerning wide-scale crackdown on civil society and rejection of democratic norms and processes in Nicaragua has coincided with a major rise in out migration of Nicaraguans fleeing political repression and economic stagnation under Ortega.

Responding to humanitarian crises in places like Ethiopia and Afghanistan

Stopping the threat of famine and addressing atrocities in Ethiopia is a top priority for the Biden Administration and for USAID. Fighting has left as many as 9 million people in northern Ethiopia in desperate need of food and forced more than 2 million people to flee their homes. Food insecurity projections from February 2022 to May 2022 show that up to a million people will face famine-like conditions in northern Ethiopia by June—700,000 of those in the Tigray Region. In the Tigray Region alone, more than 90 percent of people depend on assistance.

At the same time, there have been multiple, credible reports of gross violations of human rights related to the conflict in northern Ethiopia Since last appearing before this committee, I visited

the Um Rakuba refugee camp in Sudan, where I met with victims of the conflict in Tigray and heard their heartbreaking stories of abuse and violence.

Recently, the Government of Ethiopia and Tigray regional authorities reached a truce in their fighting—the source of so much of this human misery. And since the truce on March 24, over 200 trucks have arrived in Tigray in April alone, with the number of trucks slowly increasing. But to meet the immense humanitarian needs in Tigray, more than 500 trucks carrying tons of food and life-saving supplies need to arrive each week. The current flow is woefully insufficient.

We will continue to push for significant, sustained, unconditional, and unhindered delivery of much-needed aid to all those in need. We will also continue working with interagency partners to address and mitigate ongoing human rights violations and credible reports of atrocities by countering hate speech and mis- and disinformation, strengthening protection of freedom of expression and peaceful protest, supporting independent media outlets and watchdog organizations, strengthening local conflict mitigation, supporting the rule of law, building an enabling environment for national dialogue, and monitoring and documenting human rights abuses.

In Afghanistan, an estimated 22.8 million Afghans face food insecurity following the Taliban's seized power in August 2021. Currently, the United Nations estimates that 95 percent of the Afghan population is in need of assistance. And to truly end the humanitarian crisis, we must also address the roots of Afghanistan's economic and development crises as well as advocate for the promotion of human rights for all Afghans. On March 23, the Taliban abruptly reversed its decision to allow girls to attend school past the sixth grade. On May 7, the Taliban imposed additional restrictions on Afghan women and girls freedom of movement, employment, and access to society, all of which jeopardize the human rights and agency of Afghan women The Taliban have also threatened civil society organizations through media crackdowns, intimidation, unjust detentions, and assaults of journalists.

While we continue to work through diplomatic channels and likeminded donors to press the Taliban to reverse course and allow all girls to go to school, women to work and participate in the economy and protect the rights of minorities and civil society; we remain committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan. The United States has been the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance since the fall of Kabul in August 2021. Since then, the U.S. Government has contributed $719 million. Alongside us, the humanitarian community provided another $1.82 billion towards the humanitarian response in 2021. And we are working with our partners to support basic needs like health, livelihoods, agriculture, and education.

We will continue programs to enable the direct delivery of humanitarian assistance. Our aid helps support rural livelihoods, improve food security and develop resistance in food systems in

Afghanistan, enable women and girls to access quality healthcare, education, support for gender-based violence, civil society organizations, and training and livelihood programs. And we support journalists and media organizations, while also working to counter human trafficking.

Supporting community-led development

Across all our efforts, it is crucial that we engage more frequently and more intensely and sustainably with a broader range of partners. That's especially true of the community-led organizations and companies based in the countries in which we work. When we partner with these local NGOs and businesses, we have an opportunity to double our impact—to not just manage a project and deliver results, but to grow the local capacity of that business or organization so its impact will be sustained long after its relationship with USAID ends.

Our current approach to community-led development draws upon more than a decade of the Agency's prior experience. It aims to devolve more power and leadership to local actors, elevate diversity and equity in our partnerships, and address some of the systemic and operational constraints at USAID. We have to approach localization as a shift in not just with whom we work, but also in how we work: creating intentional shifts in the way we design and implement our programs so that we are putting local communities and stakeholders in the lead. This is about deeper, more systemic change.

Our efforts to advance community-led development have been warmly embraced by more than 1,000 local development organizations, as well as by many of our implementing partners and some of the largest international non-governmental organizations. Thanks to your support, the FY 2022 appropriations bill provided an initial $100 million in the FY 2022 appropriations bill to support our Centroamérica Local initiative, along with the authority, flexibility, and staff resources to prioritize working with local organizations in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

With more support from Congress, we can deepen this approach across our Agency and our Missions. The FY 2023 Request includes $47.6 million for the Centroamérica Local initiative—$40 million for direct awards to local organizations and $7.6 million to help staff this effort.

Investing in our people and building a stronger culture

Of course, none of what we set out to achieve would be possible without USAID's dedicated team of development professionals serving our nation throughout the world. Many of our staff are still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic, having lost loved ones even as they sought to protect others in their community from the virus.

With your support, we are also increasing the size and agility of the career workforce to better advance U.S. national security priorities. Since last year, we have hired approximately 500 career employees and are working to reach our target levels of 1,850 Foreign Service and 1,600 Civil Service employees this year.

The FY 2023 Request includes $1.7 billion to continue these efforts to invest in our people and build our institutional capacity, increasing the number of U.S. direct-hire positions that advance our most critical and effective foreign assistance program. This funding covers salaries and benefits of our direct hire Foreign Service and Civil Service workforce, overseas and Washington operations, and central support, including human capital initiatives, security, and information technology. The FY 2023 Request also includes resources for the launch of the Global Development Partnership initiative, a workforce expansion program, that will focus on democracy and anti-corruption, global health security, national security, climate change, operational management, and a more permanent humanitarian assistance workforce.

But in reconstituting our workforce, we want to recruit and retain talent differently than we have before, with an emphasis on hiring and nurturing a workforce that truly represents America. Thanks to the sustained leadership of our staff, we've taken several steps toward these aims. Their work and advocacy over many years enabled one of my first acts as Administrator, which was signing the USAID Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan—a framework document to guide the Agency's efforts to integrate DEIA into every aspect of our work.

Since signing this document, we've taken concrete steps to advance our DEIA goals. We have conducted assessments that provided us with data and employee experiences to help us decide how to prioritize our efforts and resources. We onboarded five DEIA Advisors in Washington operating units and are actively recruiting more. And we have established the Office of the Chief DEIA Officer and welcomed our Agency's first-ever Chief Diversity Officer. We also launched our first recruitment conferences for students at both Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, with another planned for Arab American students later this year.

Since appearing before you last year, I have had the chance to travel to three HBCUs—Delaware State, Tuskegee University, and Alcorn State—as well as Florida International University, the largest Hispanic-Serving Institution in the U.S., to sign new agreements that will help expand our recruitment and research partnerships.

Additionally, we are addressing current DEIA data gaps by making our data collection process more inclusive. We're expanding our talent recruitment pipelines and lowering barriers to entry for development partnership opportunities by collaborating with minority-serving institutions,

increasing engagement and career development opportunities for underrepresented students, and establishing hiring goals to increase the number of employees who are persons with disabilities.

However, it is not enough just to recruit talent, we must nurture and develop it. We will expand access to professional development and learning opportunities and equip our managers with the tools to lead talented and diverse teams. We are also developing commitments to our locally-employed colleagues to codify entitlements, benefits, and career advancement and professional development opportunities for our Foreign Service Nationals, who constitute 70 percent of our overseas workforce.

Conclusion

The challenges we have encountered in the past year are grave and loom large, but I sincerely believe the opportunity before us is even larger. By providing the resources necessary to seize this moment, the United States can galvanize commitments from our allies and our private sector partners, support the people of Ukraine in their moment of need and help manage the impact the Kremlin's war is having on the world's food supply, control the COVID-19 pandemic while laying the groundwork to detect and prevent future pandemics, strengthening health systems, and quickly rollout future vaccines, help countries adapt to the worst effects of climate change while embracing new renewable technologies and green jobs, and demonstrate to the world that democracies can deliver in a way no autocracy can. These actions are the key to reversing years of democratic decline and creating a more stable, peaceful, prosperous and stable future for people at home and abroad.

With your support, USAID will move aggressively to grasp this opportunity to build a brighter future for us all. Thank you.



SAMANTHA POWER

ADMINISTRATOR

Samantha Power was sworn into office as the 19th Administrator of USAID on May 3, 2021.

In leading the world's premier international development agency and its global staff of over 10,000 people, Power will focus on helping the United States respond to four interconnected challenges: the COVID-19 pandemic and the development gains it has imperiled; climate change; conflict and humanitarian crises; and democratic backsliding. Power will also ensure that USAID enhances its longstanding leadership in areas including food security, education, women's empowerment, and global health. Additionally, Power is the first USAID Administrator to be a member of the National Security Council, where she will ensure that development plays a critical role in America's responses to a range of economic, humanitarian, and geopolitical issues.

Prior to joining the Biden-Harris Administration, Power was the Anna Lindh Professor of the Practice of Global Leadership and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School and the William D. Zabel Professor of Practice in Human Rights at Harvard Law School. From 2013 to 2017, Power served in the Obama-Biden Administration as the 28th US Permanent Representative to the United Nations. During her time at the UN, Power rallied countries to combat the Ebola epidemic, ratify the Paris climate agreement, and develop new international law to cripple ISIS's financial networks. She worked to negotiate and implement the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals, helped catalyze bold international commitments to care for refugees, and advocated to secure the release of political prisoners, defend civil society from growing repression, and protect the rights of women and girls.

From 2009 to 2013, Power served on the National Security Council staff as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights. At the NSC, she advised the Obama-Biden Administration on issues such as democracy promotion, UN reform, LGBTQ+ and women's rights, atrocity prevention, and the fights against human trafficking and global corruption.

An immigrant from Ireland, Power began her career as a war correspondent in Bosnia, and went on to report from places including Kosovo, Rwanda, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. She was the founding executive director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, and has been recognized as one of Time's "100 Most Influential People," one of Foreign Policy's "Top 100 Global Thinkers," and by Forbes as one of the "World's 100 Most Powerful Women." Power is an author and editor of multiple books, and the recipient of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction.

Power earned a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much, Administrator Power.

I will start now. And I will try to summarize my questions very quickly.

First of all, until the world is vaccinated, American citizens will continue to be faced with the possibility of future and more deadly viruses, in terms of deadly variants. It is essential that we ramp up the deployment and delivery of vaccines in Africa and around the world.

So what do you see as the consequences of Congress not providing an emergency supplemental to deploy vaccines already purchased and not reaching the 70-percent goal vaccination target? What do you expect to come out of the discussions in terms of the second global summit? And how will uncertainty around Global VAX and U.S. efforts limit our leadership?

And with regard to the Caribbean, I just want to ask you—because I just returned from a conference with parliamentarians in the Caribbean, and they voiced over and over their inability to access global climate assistance and financing due to being classified as upper- to middle-income countries. And, of course, they feel very left out, and our partnerships have not been strengthened in the eastern Caribbean like they should have been with U.S. support and alliances.

So what more can USAID do to help our Caribbean neighbors address the barriers to assistance and financing and better combat the effects of these storms and the climate crisis, recognizing their specific vulnerability as small island nations, which really are very low-income and poor, given the devastation of the hurricanes and the climate crisis? And how do you think we can better demonstrate to the people of the Caribbean that the United States values their partnership?

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much, Madam Chairwoman. Let me take the questions in reverse order, if I can.

First, let me just say that, just in the last month, I have had the chance to meet with the Prime Minister of Barbados and the Prime Minister of Jamaica, touching on exactly this kind of structural aspect of your question, namely that these countries, by and large, fall into categories that render them ineligible for, for example, investments by the Development Finance Corporation and out of the reach of the kind of scale of investment by the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

So I think, with the Summit of the Americas coming up, we are deliberating, I think, internally about what more can be done.

USAID has increased—as you know well, thanks to you and some of what you have put in past appropriations bills—but we have increased our investments through CARICOM and through other kind of regional groupings. And that has a country-by-country effect—for example, in helping Barbados deal with flooding; helping ensure the creation of a catastrophe bond in Jamaica, which I think, you know, helps the country build its resilience to the kinds of climate shocks that are ever more prevalent in the region.

But there is no question that USAID financing a loan, without some of these other tools, will not give the countries what they

need to endure what is coming at them, and more and more every year.

If I could pivot, because I know I don't have a lot of time, to the ever-so-important issue of COVID vaccination, first, to step back and to just say: It is working. We are getting shots in arms.

The statistics are really, really striking. When President Biden had his last summit on COVID back in September, when he sought to rally the world around vaccinating the world, when we finally had supply coming on line, when he announced that we were going to be donating a billion Pfizer doses, we were, in lower- and lower-middle-income countries, at 13–percent vaccination coverage. Today, we are at 52 percent in lower- and lower-middle-income countries.

Why stop when we have now the vaccines and the supply being brought on line, arriving in ports? And what we need is the assistance to get those shots in arms. It requires everything from strengthening cold chain storage to addressing what I think is the biggest issue that goes even beyond vaccine resistance or vaccine hesitancy, which is risk perception, people just believing, "Well, I have lived for COVID now for 2 years without a vaccine. You know, I have five bigger problems, including inflation and other issues that I am sure we will talk about. You know, why go that extra mile?"

Well, if we make vaccines more convenient and accessible, it turns out that people are much more likely to get those shots in arms. And why does that matter? For the very reason that you put your finger on, which is the risk of new variants, which we are not out of the woods on, and specifically the risk of new variants as they mutate in immunocompromised people.

So, for all of the success in bringing those numbers up, the numbers are still woefully low in sub-Saharan Africa. We were just beginning to make a dent, for example, in Uganda through this new initiative I launched in December called Global VAX, helping bring the first-dose vaccination rates from 20 percent in November 2021 to 71 percent last month. I mean, that is what we can do just with a surge of resources.

But our resources are spent. By the end of July, we will have obligated the American Rescue Plan funds that were dedicated to this cause. And there could not be a cause more vital for the sake of the people who have not yet been inoculated and for our own public health here at home.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Ranking Member Rogers.

And we will come back to this if we have a second round.

Ranking Member Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Administrator Power, we recently passed the emergency supplemental for Ukraine, providing critical resources to many parts of our government in support of the brave people of Ukraine and our European allies and partners.

With respect to the humanitarian aid, there have been criticisms that the U.S. response has been over-reliant on United Nations agencies to deliver the assistance to the Ukraine. The supple-

mental included language emphasizing the need to engage local organizations and other NGOs outside of the U.N. system.

What can you say about this? Are you trying to prioritize working through local groups and other nongovernmental organizations, as well as faith-based groups, to deliver critical aid to Ukraine?

More broadly, what mechanisms have we or our international partners put in place to guard against waste, fraud, and abuse in the disbursement of this assistance?

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much, Ranking Member Rogers. I could not be more grateful for both parts of your question, because they relate to one another.

I think the rules and requirements that have been put in place at USAID over the years in order to guard against fraud, waste, and abuse entails an awful lot of due diligence on the front end. Sometimes that process, in the past, has taken as long as a year. I know we don't have a year; we don't have a day, in terms of actually getting resources to the Ukrainian people who need it most.

But I think if you want an account as to why there are some startup costs in actually moving toward partnering with local organizations, it is actually the second part of your question. Whereas with the World Food Programme, with UNICEF, with UNHCR, we have those systems in place, there is more overhead, of course, that is associated—and, thus, more cost for those systems—with some of the local partners we would most like to work with.

We just want to make sure that we are going to be faithful stewards of taxpayer money at the same time that we are looking for speed and nimbleness. So I think the key is getting the right balance.

We are shifting both by pushing international organizations to, themselves, subcontract and provide sub-grants to local organizations. I think that is going to be a critical part of the solution.

I think when the U.S. Embassy reopens in Kyiv and our DART team is back where it belongs, in the country, in the field, really scrutinizing the extent to which these local organizations can be reliable stewards, I think we will be able to move more quickly in that direction.

And we are also looking now at a consortium arrangement with an NGO that would, in a sense, be a kind of umbrella—we would offer an umbrella grant, and it would go to some of these very nimble faith-based and other local organizations on the ground.

But the last thing I would say, just if I could—because it is so important, and it is in what you did for the Ukrainians last night—we have come back as an administration, not as USAID per se, but asked for this much larger sum in direct budget support.

And I really do believe, sir, that over time what we really want to see is Ukrainian Government systems in a position to be providing, for example, the cash assistance that the World Food Programme and UNHCR is doing now. And they are doing it for some vulnerable groups. But what we would like to see is, whenever there is this very acute emergency phase, for that direct budget support to go to the Ukrainians' ability, through their social service ministry, to be able to be meeting the needs of displaced persons, vulnerable people of all kinds.

But that requires the kinds of strictures also you put in the sup' last night and the language around making sure that that is done transparently, that we have the checks and balances on direct budget support so that it is actually, again, being expended in the way that you all had intended.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, I thank you for that response.

I have some questions about Afghanistan that I will put in for the record, Madam Chair, but, in the meantime, let me yield back.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you, Mr. Rogers.

I will yield now to Ms. Meng.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Rogers.

And thank you, Administrator Power, for your testimony here today. It is great to see you again.

Thank you again for inviting me to participate in USAID's youth and development policy launch event last Friday. As you know, I have been focused on making sure that the voices of young people are integrated into U.S. foreign policy.

Today, there are 2.4 billion young people, ages 10 to 29, in the world, the largest youth population in history. In countries facing conflict, it will be young people who will bear the burden of sustaining peace over generations, leading society from reconciliation to prosperity.

We must work to ensure that the U.S. promotes the inclusive and meaningful participation of youth in mediation and negotiation processes that prevent, mitigate, or resolve conflict overseas.

I am especially excited to see that youth participation, including in peace-building, is one of the central policy objectives of USAID's updated youth and development policy. However, it is not clear how USAID accounts for its support of youth and youth participation in its fiscal year 2023 budget request.

The transparent accounting of international programmatic activities for youth has always been a challenge. Funding data is not often broken down in a way to account for children and youth, and demographics are not always desegregated by age, gender, disability, minority, location, and other key factors to ensure that we are reaching youth as intended.

Administrator Power, how will you ensure more clear and public reporting of U.S.-funded investments in these programs intended to benefit children and youth?

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much, Congresswoman. And this is actually the third time I think I have seen you in the last calendar week—the youth event, and then, also, thank you for participating in our Asian-American/Pacific Islanders event, which was very, very powerful.

So, on this score, we just actually launched, as you may know, our—of course you know, because you were part of the event—the USAID youth policy. We do think it is very important—you can't change what you can't measure, as the old saying goes—to be in a position to have indicators that allow us to see the extent to which we are increasing our youth partnerships.

As I stressed in my comments at the event that we both participated in, I think that it is one thing to have, kind of, dedicated youth programming—which we have, but it is, you know, a very

modest amount if you look at it against the backdrop of how many young people there are in the world—but I think the more profound aspect of this is how are we integrating youth into the programming that we are doing across the board.

And so, for example, one of the commitments that I have made that Congresswoman Lee alluded to earlier with regard to our localization agenda is about, you know, ensuring that 50 percent of the programming that we do and the assistance that we provide out in the world is co-designed or evaluated, measured, et cetera, by local actors. Well, you know, we need to ensure that youth are at the table and are part of who counts as local, because there is a temptation to just go back to the well of the more traditional partners that we have worked with over time.

With regard specifically to your question about indicators—which, again, you are very, very immersed in this, so I am sure you are aware already, but we do have indicators for the number of youth trained in soft skills, life skills in U.S. programs. We have indicators around the number of laws, policies, and procedures that USAID engagement helped bring about the adoption of or the implementation of. We have indications—which we need to see those metrics go up—about youth participation in USG-funded programs, conferences, et cetera.

So those are just a few of the examples of the indicators. Happy to work with you and your team if you have other ideas about how we can get more sophisticated, again, in being better able to measure that which we intend to change.

Ms. MENG. Thank you very much.

I yield back.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

I am going to yield to Mr. Reschenthaler and then to our Full Committee chair, Chair DeLauro.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Chairwoman Lee. I appreciate it.

Administrator Power, good to see you.

Administrator, as you know, I wrote in February regarding the recent USAID award of $4.7 million to EcoHealth Alliance, which, as you know, is a nonprofit based in New York led by Peter Daszak.

EcoHealth Alliance and Dr. Daszak have a very troubling record of failing to report findings that they get from our federally funded research. They also have refused to cooperate with congressional oversight. And I would submit to you that they have collaborated with the Chinese Communist Party to obstruct an objective and thorough investigation of the origin of COVID–19.

And, just to be clear, Peter Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance conspired with the CCP to cover up the origins of the pandemic because they withheld information about the research that was being conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. At the same time, they were praising the CCP's handling of the sham World Health Organization investigation, and they were parroting inaccurate CCP propaganda talking points. And by the end of the height of the beginning of COVID, Peter Daszak was in essence a mouthpiece of the CCP.

So, with that said, I appreciate the response you gave me to the letter, which came in on the 28th of March, but the crux of my question still remains unanswered, and that question is this:

When awarding the organization EcoHealth Alliance $4.7 million, did USAID consider EcoHealth's compliance failures and refusal to cooperate with congressional oversight as well as Dr. Daszak's collaboration with the CCP?

Ms. POWER. Thank you for the question. Thank you for your engagement on this.

First, just because not everybody else might have had the benefit of reading what we sent back to you, just to stress that the EcoHealth Alliance award to which you are referring, as you know, is an award focused not at all on global public health but very much on conservation, working with the Liberians to ensure more protected lands, more conservation, training park rangers, creating economic opportunities, as they seek again to protect public lands.

And so, in terms of the process, which I think you are asking about, about how that grant came about, which of course we have looked into, USAID Liberia has had a long and productive history working with the local chapter of EcoHealth Alliance, has not had issues related to due diligence or reporting. You know, I think we have provided pretty substantial grants in the past in sub-Saharan Africa and in Liberia specifically but also on land-use alteration. As a driver of disease emergence and climate change, we have had productive relations.

So, when the due diligence was done in compliance with all Federal regulations, notwithstanding some of the inquiries and the reporting challenges that you are alluding to, again, EcoHealth Alliance, in an open and rigorous process, was chosen. And, again, those processes have a lot of integrity to them.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. So I would still argue that the money is fungible and that there are still issues with the unethical behavior of EcoHealth Alliance and Peter Daszak as well as the noncompliant behavior.

Would you consider an investigation or more oversight into EcoHealth Alliance regarding that unethical and noncompliance—those issues that they have?

Ms. POWER. Well, the issue that you are referring to, again, I believe it is an NIH grant and that the back-and-forth on reporting and so forth, you know, is something that is a little bit further, sort of, out of my domain.

What I can do is certainly assure you that we will be scrutinizing, you know, this grant—compliance, reporting, all of the aspects that we bring to bear, you know, in our oversight of grants more generally.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Administrator.

And, lastly, I just have concerns that USAID is working with legacy partners that are, frankly, inefficient and, just as EcoHealth Alliance, have questionable behavior and practices, whether it is vis-a-vis the NIH or USAID. But just focusing on USAID, according to the 2021 progress report, only 12 percent of the awards were given to new or underutilized partners. In fact, only 1 percent of sub-awards was obligated to new partners.

So, with that, instead of focusing on the ineffective legacy organizations like EcoHealth Alliance, what steps has USAID taken to work with new innovative partners that would further the mission and might be more nimble?

Ms. POWER. I really appreciate that question. Thank you. It is a big priority area for me; I know it is one, also, for the chairwoman of the committee.

I think we have made some headway. We have created, for example, something called WorkwithUSAID.org, where you now have thousands of people being able to come and figure out what it takes actually to be able to partner with USAID, which is no easy task just given some of the paperwork and administrative requirements, which have a disparate impact on new partners, as you are suggesting.

I think the localization initiative that I have launched that I alluded to speaks to this as well. When we looked at this last year, 5.6 percent of U.S. foreign assistance was going to local organizations, the vast majority going to large international organizations or U.S.-based contractors and so forth.

So I am very much on the case. I think, again, it is a lot about disparate impacts of rules and regulations that some category of organizations find it very easy to navigate or might have Pricewaterhouse or whatever as an accounting firm or a GC. And so part of the reason that we come to you often asking for operational expense increases is, A, there has been a lot of attrition at USAID over the years, but, B, we want to work with those organizations to guide them through this laborious process, because the startup costs are high, but once people have mastered that process, then they can become the new traditional partner.

But we have a lot of work to do. We did exceed our target, I think, with regard to contracting with small-business partners. That is now up to over 15 percent, which is something, but that is still 15 percent, leaving 85 percent with the larger, more traditional contracting partners.

So, happy to talk to you or your staff about more that we can do. But a lot of it is about raising awareness that we are interested in this, and you can help spread that message, as well, if you——

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Administrator.

And thank you, Chairwoman Lee, on your generosity of the time. I yield back.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Okay. Let me yield now to our chair, Rosa DeLauro.

The CHAIR. I want to thank the chair and thank the Administrator for being here today. It is great to have you before the Appropriations Committee.

Let me just ask about—with the additional Ukraine supplemental appropriations, as you know, we passed last evening, we are providing additional humanitarian aid in the form of about $5 billion for emergency assistance and agricultural development to people around the world. These are folks who are wondering where their next meal is going to come from as a result of this war.

According to a May 5th report from USAID, 5.7 million refugees have fled Ukraine to neighboring countries; 7.7 million people have been displaced across Ukraine. And the U.N. has targeted 8.7 mil-

lion people to receive humanitarian assistance in Ukraine. So far, it is estimated that we have reached 4.1 million, or nearly half, of those in need of assistance.

My questions: Will the supplemental funding for humanitarian assistance that we passed be enough to reach the additional 4.1 million who are in need of assistance? If not, what more can we do?

As the number of displaced individuals in Ukraine and across the globe continues to grow every day, how is USAID responding to address the ever-changing needs? And how is USAID providing oversight of the funding we have provided and will provide through this supplemental?

Ms. POWER. Okay. There is a lot there, Madam Chair.

And, first of all, thank you eternally for the significant contribution to meeting food needs that the supplemental that you passed yesterday offers. We are hopeful that that will move through the Senate and be accessible here shortly, given the scale of need in Ukraine and around the world.

Let me just say that, when it comes to meeting food needs in Ukraine—and this comes back a little bit to one of the prior exchanges that I had with Ranking Member Rogers—you know, this direct budget support, as well, is part of the answer when it comes to meeting the needs of people inside Ukraine.

So I met yesterday—was it yesterday? Could it have been yesterday? Yes, it was yesterday morning—with the Minister of Social Services, and last week the Minister of Health, before that with the Minister of Agriculture. We really need to be working really diligently to get Ukrainian institutions solvent, up and running.

And that is why that direct budget support—I would view that as of a piece, when it comes to meeting humanitarian needs, with that $4 billion. That would take us—you know, that would meet needs of people inside Ukraine but is also designed to cover the collateral catastrophic effects of Putin's war.

So that is one part of the answer.

I think, in terms of oversight and accountability, you know, we will be coming back to you with metrics of literally, you know, how many IDPs have had cash assistance delivered to them, you know, what percent—I can give you those now if you want. But, as we go forward with this greater scale of resource being brought on line, you know, what—and all of this data is gathered, you know, by constituent—how many young people, how many women, et cetera.

But, you know, I think that one of the biggest challenges with Putin's blockade in the south, for the world but also for, for example, Ukrainian farmers, is, how do we get the agricultural products that the Ukrainians themselves have planted, now have harvested—it is likely to be as much as 70, 80 percent of the harvest that they had planned before. They are out there with their flak jackets, their helmets. I mean, it is amazing, the bravery. But those agricultural products used to be exported and they used to earn an income by going through the Odessa port and other southern ports. Those are now blockaded.

So there is a policy component to this as well, which is figuring out how to get as much out, you know, through—it is a logistic and operational question and a policy question—through rails, through

roads, potentially up through Poland and around to the Baltic ports and elsewhere. But this also relates to the security picture, as to whether and when Ukrainian resistance is going to cause Putin to retreat fully from the reckless war that he has waged.

So, when you ask me is it enough—I will come back to your question, which is so core—the needs are colossal. That is all I can say.

For now, it is an incredibly important infusion of resources that will be used, again, by our State Department colleagues in supporting the effort to meet the needs of refugees, which European governments of course are doing an enormous amount on, contributing far more resources through their own EU systems and even to countries like Moldova that fall outside the EU. We are hopeful that they will also be able to inject more humanitarian resources into Ukraine itself, recognizing, again, how much they are spending on Ukrainians who have come out of Ukraine.

But the key to all of this is, how do we get markets up and running? How do we get agricultural goods flowing? How can the Ukrainian institutions that were showing such landmark progress, the very kind of progress that makes Putin insane, sort of return to not only the level of functionality but bringing a level of prosperity that Ukraine had not enjoyed before?

We are a long way from that, but we have to walk and chew gum at the same time, meet emergency needs and be rebuilding these systems so that they don't need humanitarian assistance. No one wants humanitarian assistance. It is the last thing on Earth any country, especially ones as proud and capable as Ukraine, would want.

The CHAIR. First of all, let me just say again, thank you. And, understand, you have heard from the chair and the rest of the members of this committee, we want to work with you. This is an unprovoked attack on a sovereign nation, and there is no reason to cause this kind of chaos and destruction and human need. And so, therefore, we want to play a central role—we all believe the United States must play a central role in leading the world on this effort.

And we also want to hear from you, and if you get us the specifics that you spoke about earlier, that would be great, and also about how we are tracking the funding and what we will do in terms of oversight.

And I thank you. I know the chair Lee asked about the COVID supplemental, but, there again, we need to know what the serious consequences are by not putting together a COVID supplemental in terms of what that means, as well, for national security.

So thank you very much, for your time and your efforts and your commitment.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the time.

Ms. LEE of California. I thank the chair.

And I will yield now to Ms. Frankel.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome again, Secretary Power. Good to see you—or, Administrator Power.

Ms. POWER. I won't tell Secretary Blinken. It is okay.

Ms. FRANKEL. That is all right. I think you should be the Secretary anyway.

Okay. I want to talk about, first of all, the violence, the sexual violence against women in Ukraine. It is so horrific, what I have been reading, that I almost can't repeat it. But gang rapes in front of their children, 11-year-old girls being raped, tongues being torn out of women's mouths—I mean, I could go on and on. It is barbaric. It is cruel.

So, of course, one of my questions is what we are doing to help those survivors.

And I just want to add, as I get on my soapbox, that this is an example of how the cruel policies of the Republicans in this Congress not to allow funding for abortions, safe abortions—the ramifications. Hopefully there are other countries that are coming to the aid of these young girls and women.

But tell us what we are able to do and what we are doing.

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much, Congresswoman.

Well, this psychosocial support is something we are working with UNICEF in particular and looking, again, for local partners, looking to see how we can support the Ukrainian health ministry, which is normally, you know, in the course of events where somebody who survives sexual violence and the psychosocial and physical trauma and effects of that would go.

And that is where, again, getting this balance right between, yes, let's fund the international organizations so there is emergency support, but let's very quickly find a way to be tracking assistance to the health ministries where young women or women of all ages—just the scale of the atrocities here—would naturally go in order to seek support.

So I talked to the Health Minister about this again last week, and Atul Gawande met with him in the region, in Poland. And, once our mission is up and running, I will be able to have, again, more specifics, specifically about how we get our support into the Health Ministry to make sure that women have a place to go in light of everything that they have suffered.

If I may just add, of course, this is part of also the documentary record, the testimony that these women have given about the war crimes and the crimes against humanity that are being committed by Putin's forces. And so the other aspect of this is, USAID is funding a consortium of around 40 organizations that are a range of everything from organizations that were already doing war-crimes documentation because of the war crimes committed in the east and in Crimea from the war that began in 2014, to new actors who are being enlisted in this cause. We have, as you know, set up a commission of inquiry through the Human Rights Council. The International Criminal Court has announced that they are opening an investigation.

But, also, again, our investments in the Ukrainian justice system here are going to be—the ones that we have made in the past but now the ones that we are making in present—will aid the Ukrainian prosecutor's office in pursuing national war-crimes cases as well, and they have shown every intention to do that.

Ms. FRANKEL. That is very good to hear.

Quick question on education. I know you agree keeping girls in school is—you know, that is one of the best ways to empower our future generation.

I noticed there was a couple-hundred-million-dollar decrease in your request. Could you just explain to me, you know, the reason for that and what efforts you are going to make to support the girls in school?

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

Well, let me just say that we are still part of a global campaign to try to press the Taliban to change their horrific decision—one, of course, that preceded the burqa decision, and so one does not have grounds for optimism, beyond the fact that, you know, donor resources that had been intended to flow through UNICEF and other educational partners are now paused, by and large, as a tool of pressure. And so that means schools generally are not accessing the resources that they would have if the Taliban had made a different choice.

But that is not your question. Your question——

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, does that explain the reduction——

Ms. POWER. No.

Ms. FRANKEL [continuing]. In the budget request?

Ms. POWER. No. No. Because I think we want to live in a—we don't bank on failure here. We are hopeful that if we get the Qataris and the Pakistanis and other governments that have more contact, more leverage, you know, with the Afghan Government, that we can prevail. I mean, again, we don't have grounds for optimism right now, but it is essential to do so.

I think the short answer, honestly, Congresswoman, is, it is still, you know, $693 million for basic ed and nearly $240 million for higher ed. You know, it is balancing among all of the colossal needs that are existing right now. You heard Ranking Member Rogers' reaction to the budget request as it was.

Given, you know, the fallout from COVID, which very much lands, of course, among young people, particularly among girls who have not yet gone back to school, we know how important these education investments are. We are just trying to ask for a sizable set of resources that we can expend, at the same time that we are meeting underfunded priorities, like climate change for example, that haven't had the resources that they have needed over many, many years.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you.

Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Now I will yield to Representative Torres.

Can you unmute?

Or, staff, could you—okay.

Mrs. TORRES. Yes, hi.

Ms. LEE of California. Got it.

Mrs. TORRES. I am sorry. Thank you so much. I have another meeting going at the same time.

Thank you so much, Chairwoman, for calling this meeting.

And I want to begin by thanking Administrator Power for your consistent commitment to holding corrupt actors accountable in the Northern Triangle and ensuring that USAID helps local communities.

Last year, we spoke about challenges to the rule of law and corruption in the Northern Triangle. Sadly, despite strong calls from

the international community and civil society, El Salvador is currently in a state of exception, which removes basic human rights. And in Guatemala the independent judiciary has been decimated, with Judge Erika Aifan recently fleeing for her life.

We cannot, and must not, continue to give hardworking U.S. taxpayers' foreign assistance to governments that misuse it to advance their own corrupt interests and act counter to our own policy goals. This is so important to me. It is the reason why I worked, you know, to ensure that the State Department updates and continues to provide Congress that list of corrupt elected officials. We must know who we are working with, and we must be very transparent about that.

So, Administrator Power, given these trends, what are the dangers of not vetting funding that goes to governments of the Northern Triangle? And, given these risks, how does USAID ensure this funding is not misused and politicized? How do we ensure that our aid is supporting those who are truly committed to the long-term reforms that they need to do in order for us to reduce the number of asylum-seekers at our southern border?

You know, these are efforts that really need to be coordinated across U.S. agencies.

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much. If I could just maybe separate out my response into two parts, the first in terms of the work that we are actually doing in the Northern Triangle countries.

Our Root Causes Strategy, as you well know—because I know dialogue with you and your office has been integral to that, along with the Collaborative Migration Strategy—you know, has in it governance and the anti-corruption cause as a central pillar.

And why is that surprising? Well, we obviously have a great interest in stemming migration and reducing the intention to migrate through our programs. I think there are administrations in years or decades past that might want to turn away from challenging corrupt actors who turn their back on the rule of law, somehow believing that we can deal with the migration challenge just through enforcement, or just through a jobs program for that matter, or a crime reduction program. We just see it all as intertwined, in the same way that you do.

So, as you know—because I know how closely you are tracking—when you get takeovers, for example, of the supreme court or of the attorney general's office by those who do not respect the independence or the integrity of the rule of law, we have been in a position to have to reroute funding away from those institutions to civil-society actors that are holding those institutions to account.

Now, that is getting more challenging as two of the countries that you—you know, that Guatemala and El Salvador now scrutinizing much more the work of NGOs, independent media, and others and really making it very, very challenging for those organizations to do their work.

So resources are one thing, but an ability to actually work and not be the equivalent of, kind of, disbarred or deemed illegal because of some new curb on NGO freedom, I mean, that is something we have to press on as well.

The second thing I wanted to say, just briefly—and I know we don't have a ton of time—is that, you know, the anti-corruption

cause generally is so close to my heart, so close to President Biden's heart. You heard this at the Democracy Summit. And we have actually launched—you know, one of the tools that corrupt government actors and wealthy individuals, corrupt individuals, are using to try to put independent media out of business, not only—I mean, globally but also very specifically in the Northern Triangle—is the lawsuit against journalists, whether a defamation lawsuit or something of that nature, when an expose has been published.

So we have created something called Reporters Mutual, which is a new defamation insurance fund that will allow those journalists that are uncovering corruption to potentially be ensured against those kinds of lawsuits. Because it really has become a go-to tool in the corrupt leader or citizen's toolkit, and we needed something to help those actors who are doing the work you are describing——

Mrs. TORRES. My time is up. I would love to come back with you. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Now I will yield to Representative Wexton.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you so much, Madam Chairwoman.

And thank you, Administrator Power, for joining us again here today.

The last time you were here with us, I asked you about the administration's plan to restore aid to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza through the Economic Support Fund.

And, unfortunately, we are seeing increasing violence in the region right now, and I would be remiss not to mention the death of a Palestinian-American journalist last night, overnight, in the occupied West Bank, Shireen Abu Akleh. And we don't know, really, the circumstances of that yet, you know, what exactly happened, but it is indicative of the increasing violence going on in the region.

So Gaza is very much still in a humanitarian crisis. And, as you know, UNRWA has announced that they may need to cease operations over a lack of financial resources. Can you talk about UNRWA's role in the region and what the impact would be if aid were again delayed, as it was last year?

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

UNRWA is actually funded, as you may know, out of the State Department PRM account, but I have seen those programs when I was U.N. Ambassador up close and just see the critical role that UNRWA plays. I mean, in some cases, it is not just that they are supplemental school systems; they are the school system for young Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

And, you know, there have been challenges with UNRWA over the years. Again, I pressed hard on that when I was in my U.N. role and again with more, sort of, jurisdiction or more day-to-day interaction with UNRWA, whether on textbooks or on, you know, in times of conflict, facilities being used in deeply problematic ways.

But the core good that those schools have done for young Palestinians, not only in giving them lifelines to economic opportunity ultimately, but, you know, when one thinks about the prospects for radicalization, to deprive kids of education, as the closure of those schools would do, surely is going to be something only the most ex-

treme elements will take advantage of. So I would definitely caution against that.

Ms. WEXTON. And can you speak a little bit about the challenges created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and how it could impact aid to the region? Because they are very dependent on food coming from Ukraine, and I would guess that that is really drying up. So can you speak a little bit about what that could do to the region?

Ms. POWER. Absolutely. I mean, again, one can go country by country, but Egypt, I believe, imports 81 percent of its wheat from Ukraine; Lebanon, 86 percent.

You know, we are talking about economies that already were suffering the effects of the COVID-induced economic slowdown; maybe just beginning, in the case of Egypt, to bring its head above water. And that, of course, is going to have profound knock-on effects for vulnerable populations and impoverished communities like those in the West Bank and Gaza.

And it is not just that. It is at the agricultural sector, with fertilizer prices going up. The estimates are, globally, as you probably know, that 40 million more people are going to be thrust into extreme poverty by virtue of Putin's invasion.

So this gets to my exchange earlier over the additional humanitarian funding that you all have been generous enough to provide in this second Ukraine supplemental, and my hope that that goes through the Senate, because we are going to need to plug the gaps.

We are also trying to do work, you know, in the regulatory space, through our more traditional agriculture programs, to try to ensure that farmers are able to produce more with less. That is very challenging to do on the fly, but those programs——

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you.

Ms. POWER [continuing]. Through Feed the Future and others——

Ms. WEXTON. Sure.

Ms. POWER [continuing]. Were in place before.

Ms. WEXTON. Well, thank you so much.

And, you know, you met with Uyghurs about a year ago, and you have been outspoken on the ongoing genocide happening in China. I want to say thank you for mentioning that in your opening remarks.

I asked Secretary Blinken when he was here recently, you know, how we can better support Uyghurs who fled persecution in China and now are at risk of being forcibly returned to China, where they would face violations of their human rights and maybe even, you know, imprisonment and death.

So how can we better support Uyghurs who have fled but now are in countries where they run the risk of being returned to China?

Ms. POWER. Well, I think this is, again, a little bit out of my lane, but I think that the refugee program that President Biden has sought to beef up is one answer there, you know, for them to have channels to resettlement, to be able to be referred by UNHCR and to be considered. So those more robust numbers that President Biden has ushered in just create more slots for more vulnerable people.

I think the core of the answer, though, is, you know, much greater awareness about the genocide. I mean, I traveled the world, and the debates, the legislation that you all have put in place on the fate of the Uighurs inside Xinjiang, you just don't hear nearly as much discussion of the plight of these individuals in Europe. So that would be a second dimension of this, just continuing to be vocal.

And then the last thing I would say in is our diplomatic engagement with any country tempted to send back a Uighur to what is almost certain imprisonment and a lifetime of detention, right? Because these people are not being allowed out of these detention facilities. I mean, this is not a, you know, you get forced labor and then you go back to your community; I mean, these are devastating means of permanently destroying Uighur life in China. So, you know, maximizing our diplomatic pressure so that those forced returns do not occur.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you so much, Administrator Power.

I will yield back with that.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Now I would yield to Mr. Price.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome, Madam Administrator. I am presiding next-door, so to speak, at the hearing for HUD Secretary Fudge. So I appreciate the chance to interject in this subcommittee, which I really value.

And I have many things that I have heard so far you say that I commend you for, especially that strong defense of UNRWA funding and also what I understand you said at the outset about increasing assistance to the Eastern Europe and Eurasia region, given what is going on in Ukraine.

I have a particular interest in Moldova, as the co-chair of the Moldova Caucus, as the Representative of North Carolina, Moldova's sister State, as chairman of the House Democracy Partnership, where we have engaged with the Moldovan Parliament. That is a strong, aspiring democracy that is very much in harm's way. And so we passed a Moldova resolution, as you know, in the House very recently, and it anticipates the kind of support for Moldova that you, I understand, promised today.

But let me turn more generally to the kind of support we give to good governance, to democracy development. I know you stressed that in your statement as well, in terms of the anti-corruption effort.

In some cases, of course, like the Millennium Challenge Corporation, we quite directly incentivize democratic development as a condition of our aid. In other situations, of course, democratic development, which we consider very much in our country's interest, still, it exists alongside other foreign-aid objectives.

So I want to raise the example of Tunisia and give you a chance to talk about Tunisia but also the problem more generally.

Tunisia is the one democratic success story, we always say, out of the Arab Spring. At HDP, we have engaged with the Tunisian Parliament in very fruitful ways. Yet, now we see a President assuming autocratic powers and shutting down that parliament and with an uncertain outcome, which we hope—and Secretary Blinken

said it a couple weeks ago—we hope and believe is subject to diplomatic leverage.

Well, part of that is your foreign aid budget. And, in the budget request, you have $45 million in economic aid, but that is nearly 50 percent less than last year. I assume there is some flexibility on that, some responsiveness to the developments on the ground.

But I would appreciate your comment on what we should learn or conclude from that Tunisia example and, also, what you would have to say more generally about the way we can use your office and your programs to bolster civil society and democratic forces around the world.

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much, Congressman.

And I hope you will indulge me just 30 seconds on Moldova, because, you know, when am I going to get the opportunity to talk about Moldova? Because it just doesn't get the attention I think that it deserves and that the incredibly brave, risk-taking President and Prime Minister, both Kennedy School grads, where I used to teach—technocrats, anti-corruption reformers, you know, women's rights champions—I mean, these are leaders that the whole world, the whole democratic world, should be rallying behind. And it is just what President Sandu is attempting in Moldova that Putin is trying to stop in Ukraine.

And, of course, the economic effects alone, never mind the geopolitical insecurity and uncertainty that a small country like Moldova feels by virtue of what is going on right next-door with, you know, Transnistria occupied already by Russian forces, we just have every interest in supporting the people of Moldova enacting their anti-corruption, their rule of law, their reform agenda.

So I would sort of link the two. Because I think, you know, on Tunisia, it was the lone bright spot around the Arab Spring. We have now seen very substantial democratic setbacks. We do not want the same thing to happen in Moldova. There are people, particularly those oligarchs backed by the Russian Federation, who would like to take advantage of this crisis to set back this democratization and integration reform agenda by President Sandu, as you know well.

On Tunisia, in terms of just quickly about the budget, I think, basically, the funding that we are continuing to do in Tunisia funds the Tunisian people, the private sector, civil society. We continue to see civil society as having a critical role—not only that diplomatic pressure that Secretary Blinken talked about, but that bottom-up pressure. A lot of that receded, as you know, in the face of some of these undemocratic actions by President Saied.

But, you know, I think we look for openings, look to be able to channel assistance, for example, to the Electoral Commission. If there is a good-faith effort, you know, to move toward free and fair elections or to reconstitute some of these really important democratic institutions, USAID would like to be in a position to be able to support those.

But it is notable that the request is lower, and it is reflective, I think, of a recognition that some of the kinds of initiatives that we were able to do with previous governments, those opportunities now don't exist in the same way because of the undemocratic actions that have been taken.

Mr. PRICE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Now I will yield to Mr. Espaillat.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Administrator.

First, let me start by thanking the chairwoman for her commitment. The fiscal year 2022 appropriations bill included language that directs USAID and the Department of State to help Haitian women and improve access to health resources.

Our committee has expressed that concern, Madam Administrator, about the availability of neonatal and maternal care in Haiti. As the healthcare system there has collapsed, many of the women are forced to travel across the border to the Dominican Republic to get healthcare. Thirty-two percent of the women at the hospitals, at the public hospitals, are Haitian women that come across the border. And, of course, that also places great stress on the economy in that country.

And so, what can we do? What programs are available through USAID to address these maternal issues facing Haitian women? How can this committee help leverage these programs? Can USAID utilize its resources to help build, for example, hospitals or necessary facilities for proper prenatal and maternity care for Haitian women?

That is my first question.

The second one is regarding the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. As you know, we passed the bill in the House; it is now sitting in the Senate. And that particular initiative addresses not only security but also disaster resilience. It works with the youth in Caribbean countries. It promotes criminal justice reform issues and fights against corruption.

So I wanted to know what your take is on that.

And, finally, I am deeply concerned about the cost of energy in the Caribbean and Latin American countries. As you know, the cost of energy has skyrocketed, and many of the leadership in those countries feel that it will unleash civil unrest and violence, as food and other emergency items, have really gone right through the roof and are now unavailable or unaffordable to working-class families in those countries.

So those three questions: maternal care for Haitian women; CBSI; and, of course, the cost of energy in the region.

Thank you.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Congressman. I am just taking note of all three.

So I have had numerous conversations with President Abinader of the Dominican Republic, as I am sure you have, expressing the same concern, really describing a Dominican Republican health system, particularly any hospitals near the border that, you know, have been, in his words, overrun by Haitian migrants, particularly Haitian mothers looking, as you said, for maternal healthcare.

In terms of USAID, I would say, we have definitely looked at this because of the need of those Haitian women, you know, having looked sort of geographically about whether, you know, hospitals in those areas—because I think President Abinader was stressing the

importance of building hospitals on the Haitian side of the border. I think the viability assessments of those was that that would not be the best place for those hospitals, just in terms of, like, which communities would take advantage of them.

USAID's budget for Haiti, you know, is $75 million, roughly, its development budget. And, of course, we additionally provide emergency assistance—you know, often, depending on how many humanitarian emergencies befall Haiti in a given year, you know, that number can fluctuate—but, you know, somewhere in the range of $40 million to $50 million.

I think it is the development banks, like the Inter-American Development Bank or others, that one would look to to make those kinds of sizable infrastructure investments. And it is something that we have been engaging with them on. But, to my knowledge, again, there has not been uptake, given all the competing needs in Haiti and the dwindling amount of resources from other countries besides the United States.

It is just always challenging, frankly, to be able to mobilize resources at scale, and, again, especially when it is development resources kind of pitted against humanitarian emergency support. So I don't—that is not a terribly satisfying response.

On the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, just thank you again for your leadership on that, which mirrors that of the chairwoman. You know, I think, in general, we, as an administration, are looking to see what more we can do with the Caribbean, but we end up—you know, because they are middle-income countries by and large, we, USAID, end up working regionally rather than, you know, through country missions. We have one regional mission for all of the Caribbean.

But I mentioned earlier that in my conversations with the Jamaican Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Barbados and in the run-up to the Summit of the Americas, I think you are going to see much more emphasis placed on the Caribbean.

Forgive me if this is an inaccurate impression, but my impression as a citizen is that a lot of the leadership for attention to the Caribbean has come from up here—up there, I should say, up on Capitol Hill. I think what you are now seeing in the Biden administration is a recognition of the need to be very proactive here.

It is no secret that the PRC and other actors are, you know, making substantial investments. Barbados has even done a deal under the Belt and Road Initiative. And the needs are acute.

And, finally, that is a segue to the soaring energy prices. There are no silver bullets, as we know from our own country and soaring fuel prices here. But I think, out of this crisis, working with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean broadly but all around the world to ensure that they are more energy-resilient going forward and less dependent on supply from, for example, the Russian Federation—so that is now embedded in all of our programming.

We have a big, branded, resourced initiative in sub-Saharan Africa called Power Africa, which you probably know well. We don't have anything analogous in Latin America and the Caribbean. But I think, if you actually look at the budget request for substantial new resources around climate change, a significant core of that is mitigation and helping countries transition to solar, hydro, and

other sources of renewables, which would be cheaper in the long term but also reduce their dependence, which is part of what is contributing, again, to this very, very difficult inflationary period.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Well, thank you.

Madam Chair, just let me close by saying that there is a general frustration with the access by these countries to our financial institutions and their ability to address major projects, and that is why countries like China are eating our lunch in that region.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you again.

We are going to go now to a second round, 3 minutes for each member.

So I will start out by asking a couple questions, one as it relates to Ethiopia, Administrator Power.

Of course, you know in Northern Ethiopia it is dire, including in the Tigray region. Innocent people are facing violence. Can you quickly describe the current level of access for our humanitarian assistance in the region and the status of the humanitarian ceasefire and actions that we are taking, the United States is taking, to help resolve the crisis?

And then just an overview of the Small Business Procurement Scorecard? Service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses didn't quite make it. I think that we need to know, based on your contracting goals, subcontracting goals, once again, disaggregated data on which companies are getting access to the contracts at USAID.

And thank you again for your workforce expansion initiative called the Global Development Partnership Initiative. And hopefully we will be able to see more diversity and inclusion in all of your efforts. And thank you for really revving this up. It is the first time USAID has had such a major effort for diversity and inclusion.

And if you don't get to answer all of my questions so we can get to the next member, just send them to me in writing. The record will be open.

Ms. POWER. Okay. Will do.

So I am going to eat 10 seconds just on the last question, Congressman, on the development financial institutions. We had covered that earlier in the hearing.

So I very much agree with your structural point that lower- and lower-middle-income countries—you know, the rules are such now that they are not able to access everything from DFC financing to some very important——

Ms. LEE of California. No, I was talking about American U.S. small businesses——

Ms. POWER. No, no, no, sorry, I was cheating and——

Ms. LEE of California. Oh, okay.

Ms. POWER [continuing]. Providing an answer to the prior, because he made a same point that had been made earlier. I apologize.

Ms. LEE of California. Okay.

Ms. POWER. But it was my response to your prior question, Congresswoman, where I had talked about this——

Ms. LEE of California. Okay.

Ms. POWER [continuing]. Structural problem in the Caribbean.

Anyway, in short, 500 trucks a week are needed in Tigray. A total of 200 trucks, when I last checked as of a day ago, had arrived since the truce. So that is over around a 6-week period. Not remotely enough.

The numbers now that we are hearing are that a million people will face famine-like conditions by June, 700,000 of whom are in Tigray.

So this just underscores, first of all, again, the importance of the assistance that you all have now put, the food assistance, in this Ukraine-related supplemental, but also how important it is globally for us as a government but also for all governments to be coupling generous assistance of that nature with demands of host government or armed parties for access. Because assistance without access is assistance in a warehouse. And that is not what the people of Ethiopia need or deserve.

There has been modest progress, again—if I had been here a month ago, there would have been no trucks that we would have been able to talk about—but not nearly enough to meet the food needs.

On the small businesses, small and disadvantaged businesses, I would just say that, again, I think we are doing better than—we are doing better in the real world than we are on collecting the data in the disaggregated way that you are demanding.

So I think preliminary data indicates that we awarded more than 14.5 percent of all contracting dollars to U.S. small businesses in fiscal year 2021, 5.5 percent to women-owned small businesses. And when it comes to small and disadvantaged businesses, that metric, I think we have numbers since our conversation yesterday, I think, that we can get to you.

We are trying to use the new partnership initiative, just this, again, sustained outreach to local partners, which has incentives to go to new and untraditional partners, so our missions really have incentive to go that extra mile. But, again, I know we are not seeing the numbers that you or I are seeking.

I will say also, if you can steer your networks to WorkwithUSAID.org, that is where we try to walk new partners who have never had the experience of working with USAID through the process and give them that kind of right seat/left seat——

Ms. LEE of California. Okay. We will follow up with you, Administrator Power.

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

Ms. LEE of California. And please if you can send us a written report, we would like to look at it. And we certainly want to work with you to help expand access to these opportunities for socially and disadvantaged businesses.

I will yield now to Ms. Meng.

Ms. MENG. Thank you.

And, in the interest of time, I will just briefly ask my two questions together.

Number one, I wanted to ask about Afghanistan, piggybacking off Ms. Frankel's comments about education, for example, but I am concerned also about humanitarian access. We know that there is food insecurity—hospital wards are filled with malnourished chil-

dren—and I understand, unfortunately, the delivery of humanitarian assistance has been greatly impacted by the Taliban, especially their limits on the freedom of movement of aid workers of all genders.

I just wanted to ask how USAID is working with U.S. allies and partners to urge the Taliban to allow unhindered humanitarian access to Afghanistan.

And my second question is related to COVID. USAID's Global Health Security Program has a track record of funding zoonotic surveillance and preventing the spillover of pathogens from animals to people in its ongoing effort to prevent pandemics. I wanted to ask how USAID will work with the State Department to ensure that strategic objects are within the scope of a new multi-lateral fund, specifically on preventing the spillover of pathogens from animals to people.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Congresswoman.

I don't have a ton of time, but on Afghanistan let me just say that—it probably goes without saying, but—the United States, of course, is the largest humanitarian donor to try to meet some of the needs that you have identified. And I do think it is an extremely dire situation. The U.N. appeal for Afghanistan, for a single country, is the largest ever in the history of the U.N. for any single country, for 2022.

And that is, again, another reason that it is really important that this supplemental that you passed last night go through the Senate, because that would provide additional resources for Ukraine and for countries affected by Ukraine, thereby allowing us to dedicate some of our base humanitarian funding to Afghanistan, where the need is so acute.

I think your main question, though, was less about, you know, what we are funding. I would just say that access is an issue, although, if you compare it to when Afghanistan was experiencing conflict between the Taliban and Government of Afghanistan forces, you know, humanitarian partners are able to get to more parts of the country now than before.

But we really have to push hard to ensure that women are equal beneficiaries and that women also can work at humanitarian organizations. And, as you know, that is not true in a number of provinces where the Taliban have cracked down, and that is a huge problem and a huge issue.

I think the biggest issue in terms of the kind of stunting and wasting that we are seeing of kids is, there is only so much that humanitarian assistance is going to be able to achieve. You know, fundamentally, the country needs liquidity, it needs solvency, it needs an independent and functional central bank. And the Taliban doesn't know what it is doing, doesn't know how to competently manage an economy. And that is a huge issue.

So, again, other actors within the U.N. system and other governments are trying to work on those issues. You know, we have programs that, again, try to foster small businesses, help farmers, and so forth, without providing any material benefit to the Taliban.

But, again, the core issue is that the economy is still in free fall and the Taliban is not putting the welfare of its people first and allowing those international partners who have ideas and mecha-

nisms that could be used in order to stem the pain here—they have not proven receptive to those ideas and resources in the way that they need to for the sake of their people.

But, in the meantime, again, we will continue to provide humanitarian assistance.

I don't have time to do justice to your question on pathogens, but maybe we can just follow up offline. Only to say, you know, that the work that USAID has done over the years to enhance lab capacity, to enhance surveillance capacity when it comes to hotspots where you have past or likely transmission of pathogens from animals to humans, this work is critically important. At the same time, so are the biosecurity and biosafety protocols.

And so any work that goes forward there needs to make sure it is sensitive to what you are describing, which is the importance of this work, because countries' capacities are not sufficient now, and we know there is going to be more of this as the climate changes, as these pathogens become more prolific. But we need to make sure, again, we do so in a manner where the data is managed appropriately and where biosecurity and biosafety protocols are adhered to.

Thank you.

Ms. MENG. Thanks.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Now I will yield to Ms. Frankel.

Ms. FRANKEL. Yes. Thank you again.

One day, I would love to hear your analysis of lessons learned from our involvement in Afghanistan, but you do not have enough time for that.

Let me just ask quickly: We talked a little bit about girls' education. And, look, we know that COVID really disproportionately impacted women around the world. The World Economic Forum estimates that it is going to take 267 years to close the gender gap in the economy—well, almost as long as it is going to take here probably, but, obviously, women are in a little better shape in our country.

Tell me what kinds of things that you are going to be doing in terms of improving women's economic empowerment in the world.

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much.

Well, that, as you know, is a critical pillar of President Biden's Gender Policy Council that he has created at the White House, run by Jen Klein, who I am sure you work closely with.

You know, I think that this budget request that we put forward is the first budget request, you know, that is reflective of the data that exists now, that has been amassed over the years, showing that, without women's economic empowerment, we lose, you know, hundreds of billions of dollars every year in global GDP growth. And so it is a $2.6 billion request.

And, you know, there are a lot of different dimensions to what is captured there, including girls' education, but it is also, you know, programs that would increase women and girls' representativeness in legislative bodies—something you know a lot about.

You know, for the first time, as part of President Biden's global infrastructure initiative, we have the care economy treated as a pillar of infrastructure. So this is, in a sense—the Belt and Road, you

know, does these large, bloated projects, saddling countries with great debt. We are coming out with digital infrastructure, health infrastructure, climate and clean-energy infrastructure, but also gender infrastructure.

And so I think, within that, if we got some of the numbers right on the care economy and actually saw women who would like to be part of the workforce but just can't afford to be part of the workforce because, you know, there is no normative culture of families getting access to childcare at relevant stages, you know, fundamentally we are not going to be able to overcome that barrier without making more investments in the care economy. So I am thrilled that that finally is reflected in the budget request as well.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you.

And real quick, I don't know whether there are any negotiations going on in Ukraine with Russia, but I do hope that the administration encourages the participation of women, if that ever does happen.

And, with that, I will yield back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Madam Administrator. It was good to see you again.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you, Ms. Frankel.

Now I will yield for our final questions from Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you.

Administrator Power, without the political will from the governments in the Northern Triangle, USAID must prioritize working with capable, credible civil-society partners and those committed to reform and accountability, as you well know.

As you mentioned earlier, daily there are attacks against those who are carrying out this important work, including arrests and assassinations. So many of the local staff in these countries, who risk everything to fight corruption, are in jail or obtaining asylum because they dare to speak truth to power. We need to ensure that our commitment to the rule of law and anti-corruption is not just strong words followed by an eye-roll but real commitment to the people who dedicate their lives to this work.

I am pleased with the initial work USAID is doing to carry out President Biden's Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal. Programs to engage and support civil society, from the Empowering Anti-Corruption Change Agents Program to the global Defamation Defense Fund, which you mention, are such important steps forward.

I put forward a proposal to create a fellowship to support these local people risking everything to fight corruption and for the rule of law, and I appreciate USAID's assistance to develop this proposal.

Administrator Power, can you speak a little bit more about the importance of the U.S. supporting civil society and journalists in the Northern Triangle? And how does USAID support civil-society activists and independent investigators?

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much.

Well, on all of my visits to the region, you know, that is my first port of call. I never like to meet with government officials until I have had the chance, you know, to get out and about and to hear from civil-society actors.

I mean, it is, you know, very country-specific. I will say, as you were talking, I was thinking about, you know, for Nicaragua and for Cuba, you know, we have provided relocation support—I know that is not your question; I will come to your question in a second—and support for journalists who are doing that work out of the country, who can no longer safely do it within. I do need to just look into whether or not that same kind of flexibility exists with regard to our support for independent media in the three northern Central American countries——

Mrs. TORRES. El Salvador and Mexico may really need that assistance as well.

Ms. POWER. I think that is something that we will look at and maybe we will just get back to your staff on.

I mean, again, the civil society, I would have to look at the breakdown, but, of the very substantial budget request that is coming to you for year two of President Biden's effort to deal with root causes of migration, you know, we view this as—and maybe I have said this to you before, so forgive me—but the three legs on the stool, where you have, of course, economic opportunity, of course, physical security and being free of violence, or seeing violence reduction at the very least, but the third piece of this is having a strong civil society and accountable governance.

And so, you know, I think you will see in our programs—and, again, we can give you the breakdown for how we train independent journalists——

Mrs. TORRES. I will follow up with your office. I am sorry to interrupt you. My time is up.

Ms. POWER. Oh, no problem.

Mrs. TORRES. I yield back, Madam Chair.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much.

First, let me thank our members for your very succinct and important questions.

And I want to thank Administrator Power. We are very grateful for your service but also for spending so much time with us this morning.

I think you know that we all are great supporters of USAID and its critical work for millions of people around the world. So, at this moment in our history, we recognize that you have such an enormous task ahead of you, and we want to partner with you in whatever way we can.

So I once again look forward to any responses to the questions that weren't able to be given, given our time constraint.

Ms. LEE of California. Once again, thank you again for being with us.

Having said that, I want to remind members that if you do have additional questions, go on and please submit them for the record. I believe our timeframe is within the next 7 days.

This concludes our hearing, and the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands adjourned. Thank you again.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thanks, everybody.

[Questions and answers submitted for the record follow:]

Questions for the Record Submitted to
USAID Administrator Samantha Power by
Chairwoman Barbara Lee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
May 11, 2022

Question:

International Family Planning

During his first week in office, President Biden rescinded the Global Gag Rule that had been reinstated and expanded under the previous administration, requiring non-U.S. organizations receiving U.S. global health funding to choose between receiving U.S. resources or providing comprehensive health care to their patients.

- Please describe why rescinding the Global Gag Rule is good policy and how permanently repealing it would further the effectiveness of resources to achieve our goals on health, human rights, and gender equity.
- Please describe the steps that USAID is taking to engage, communicate, and rebuild relationships with qualified partners who were cut out of our global health programs due to this policy being in place during the previous administration.

Answer:

The empowerment and protection of women and girls, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights, is a central part of U.S. foreign policy and national security under this Administration.

On January 28, 2021, President Biden issued a Presidential Memorandum on Protecting Women's Health at Home and Aboard. In doing so, the President, as part of his broader commitment to protect women's health and advance gender equality, revoked President Trump's January 23, 2017, Memorandum on the Mexico City Policy.

The revocation of the policy helps improve the lives of beneficiaries, particularly women and children, by expanding the number of eligible partners implementing U.S. health assistance and increasing access to critical health services, including HIV/AIDS care for key populations, voluntary family planning information and services, and effective tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment.

USAID is committed to engaging with organizations abroad and to expanding our local partner base, to advance gender equality and confront serious health challenges, such as unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. USAID is also looking at ways to continue to streamline our processes to make our funding more accessible.

Question:

Assistance to the Palestinian people

The Fiscal Year 2022 Omnibus included $219 million for programs in the West Bank and Gaza serving the Palestinian people, which is $34 million above the FY23 request and nearly a three-fold increase above the FY21 enacted level.

- What impact has the resumption of assistance had, so far, on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem?
- How is the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA) implementing both people-to-people and economic opportunity programs?
- How will these programs contribute to a two-state solution?

Answer:

Since resuming assistance in 2021, USAID has made direct, positive impacts in the lives of Palestinians. USAID's assistance has helped put food on the table for nearly 200,000 of the most vulnerable Palestinians; connected Gazan households to basic water services and protected structures against severe winter weather and flooding; provided grants and low-risk financing to women-owned businesses to stay afloat during the pandemic; and supported vocational and interpersonal skills to Palestinian youth to enable their future roles of contributing members of society.

For this fiscal year, USAID is implementing two activities under MEPPA, a people-to-people peacebuilding grants activity and the "Building Regional and Economic Bridges (BREB)" activity. The PPF grants activity has issued three awards to civil society organizations and will issue more on a rolling basis through the end of the fiscal year. BREB will focus on building business and trade connections between Israelis and Palestinians. All programs require that grassroots, people-to-people connections are at the center of the work. The overarching philosophy governing MEPPA implementation at USAID is that the relationships that develop between individuals engaging one another through USAID activities will change attitudes and broaden public support for a negotiated, two-state peace when political leaders are ready to come to the table to negotiate.

A viable Palestinian state requires a vibrant private sector, engaged civil society, and capable institutions. As such, it is important for USAID to continue supporting the Palestinian private sector, civil society, and other critical sectors so when the political situation allows for a permanent two-state solution, the Palestinians who currently make their communities function will be capable of stepping into that role at a national level. By supporting local Palestinian actors and directly benefiting and improving the lives of the Palestinian people, USAID's programming in WBG—both its bilateral assistance and MEPPA programming—can continue empowering economic and social conditions that facilitate a two-state solution.

In addition to this development assistance, USAID has provided nearly $30 million in humanitarian assistance since FY2021, including emergency cash, food, health, and protection assistance that supports the most vulnerable Palestinians affected by the ongoing acute food

insecurity, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the May 2021 escalation of violence in Gaza.

Question:

Locally led development

In November 2021, Administrator Power announced USAID's intention to reverse the trends of recent years and focus more on undertaking projects directly with local communities and prioritize empowering local actors to design and implement programs that improve their own communities.

- What is USAID's strategy to reach the announced targets of providing at least 25% of USAID's funds to local partners within the next four years and 50% before 2030?
- What policy changes need to occur to make it easier for USAID to work with local organizations and what are the constraints to doing so?
- What is it about USAID's latest strategy toward locally led development that will succeed when previous efforts under different Administrations have missed their goals?

Answer:

USAID's goal is to provide at least a quarter of all of our program funds directly to local partners within the course of the next four years. USAID knows that development is more effective when resources are managed closer to the communities they are meant to assist. For this reason, USAID will channel more resources directly to local organizations and businesses, while ensuring that local partnerships are designed and implemented with programmatic goals for sustainable development in mind, and not as the ends themselves. USAID will take steps to ensure that by 2030, fifty percent of our programming will place local communities in the lead to co-design a project, set priorities, drive implementation, or evaluate the impact of our programs.
Previous localization initiatives largely focused on procurement: streamlining our processes so that we could increase the number of awards we made to local actors. This is a critical component, but we recognize that we must go beyond procurement to reconsider and adjust the ways we relate to and partner with local actors in all aspects of our work, staff our missions, assess and manage risks, and measure our impact.
Making such a fundamental shift in our practices and procedures is a massive undertaking. And under the Administrator's leadership, the Agency has embarked on a whole-of-agency effort that draws on the commitment, expertise and energy of all our staff, both in Washington D.C. and the field.
In addition, our community of implementing partners and contracting agencies are supportive of this effort and are engaging with USAID as we develop metrics and definitions and new ways of working.
Our current approach to localization aims to put local voices at the center of everything USAID does, across the Program Cycle and in our convenings, policy reform dialogues and other efforts that seek to advance progress beyond our programs' reach.

Development agencies like USAID do not direct or drive change – instead, we support and catalyze local change processes. Equitable and inclusive responses to development challenges must be built upon the priorities, knowledge, lived experiences, aspirations, and expertise of the people who face them every day. To do this, USAID is shifting toward more leadership, ownership, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation by local people and institutions that represent the diversity of their communities and who possess the capability, connectedness, and credibility to propel change in their own countries and communities. At the same time, we are looking to communities and existing local partners to learn from them and ensure we are building and changing in support of their success. This includes working with the Skoll and Hilton Foundations in their efforts to support a forum for Global South civil society leaders, donors and others to come together and discuss, share best practices, and propose next steps in a power neutral setting. This also includes working with other donor countries and in multilateral fora to lead the international development community in shifting policies, practices, and funding in support of local organizations and funding mechanisms.

USAID is pursuing several policy updates that will align with a Localization agenda and support the organization change management process needed to achieve this vision. These include an updated Risk Appetite Statement to guide this new way of working and an updated Acquisition and Assistance Strategy to become more innovative in our approach. These questions will inform planning and organizational change through 2026; the launch of a new Local Capacity Strengthening Policy, which aims to improve our systems and practices to become a more more equitable partner; the release of the Strategy for Strengthening Local Evaluation Capacity; and revisions to USAID's operational policy in support of implementation of the Localization Agenda. In addition to these policy updates, USAID is developing a Localization Playbook, a clear articulation of localization good practice that integrates the best guidance from across USAID on designing and supporting locally-led development in any context.

We are thankful for the Committee's support of language in the FY22 bill that provided the Agency with the ability to address unanticipated opportunities to enhance our local partnerships. These additional flexibilities that would be useful to enable USAID to better engage local communities and partner directly with local entities in pursuit of shared development goals. One valuable flexibility would be for funds appropriated for foreign assistance programs to be able to be used, notwithstanding other directives, for capacity strengthening of organizations whose work advances the objectives of those funds. This would enable USAID missions to flexibly and strategically invest in local capacity development and local partnerships toward our various development objectives where appropriate. For any funds appropriated that are intended to support locally led partnerships, five-year or no-year funds are helpful to enable USAID to be responsive to local priorities, co-design and co-manage effectively with local actors, all of which take more time and sustained relationships than our typical two-year funding cycle allows. Working with local partners requires more staff and more time that USAID currently has available. We look forward to continued support for our Global Development Partnership Initiative that is seeking incremental increases to our direct hire work force over the next four years. We also appreciate the flexibility provided for the Centroamerica Local program to use program funds for staffing costs and request this continued flexibility to ensure sufficient staffing and oversight of an increased global portfolio of small, local awards with new and less-experienced partners.

Question:

SDGs

How will the resources requested in the President's FY2023 budget further the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

How is USAID working with UN partners to get the SDGs back on track after the COVID pandemic has caused severe backsliding in our development programs?

How can USAID better integrate the SDGs with U.S. development priorities?

Answer:

The $29.4 billion requested for USAID's fully and partially managed accounts included in the President's FY 2023 budget request would allow USAID to further build on its work to further advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The majority of USAID's development work supports the advancement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and many of our programmatic activities align with one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). USAID Missions consider host country sustainable development priorities, many of which are framed around the SDGs, in designing programs. In key sectors such as food security, health, education, gender, water and sanitation, and conflict prevention, USAID's programs support country progress toward achieving the SDGs. USAID has also integrated the SDGs in recent communications and policies such as the Vision for Health Systems Strengthening 2030 and the Global Food Security Strategy.

USAID also uses the SDGs to frame the Agency's engagement, both with partner countries, and also with the wider development community, including with United Nations (UN) partners, in an effort to align our shared support of sustained development progress. For example, in advancing USAID's overarching global health goals, we are working closely with key UN partners with the express aim of recovering the gains made towards the SDG health targets. USAID works closely with the Global COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership (CoVDP) of which both UNICEF and WHO are key members. Through our engagements with CoVDP, we are focusing attention on the need to ensure that COVID-19 response and vaccination investments help strengthen routine immunization, and address disruptions in other critical health and nutrition services. CoVDP also recognizes the importance of strengthening future preparedness by investing in local production of vaccines and other tools, as well as primary health care delivery capacities.

Question:

Operating Expenses and Staffing

For fiscal year 2023, the agency requests $111.5 million to support an additional 100 Foreign Service and 100 Civil Service positions. Can you describe the critical gaps in staffing and how these positions will be distributed?

Answer:

One of the key elements of transforming USAID's workforce is aligning the work needs with the right staffing resources. of the ways USAID is doing that is through the Global Development Partnership Initiative (GDPI). The GDPI will expand the size of the permanent Civil Service (CS) and Foreign Service (FS) workforce and strengthen the role of and opportunities for Cooperating Country Nationals/Foreign Service Nationals (CCNs/FSNs). The initiative seeks to change USAID's workforce composition and shift away from an overreliance on the use of term-limited, non-career, and often non-U.S. direct-hire (NDH) mechanisms to more permanent staffing mechanisms that are not limited in duration.

The initiative will strengthen USAID's organizational performance capacity by ensuring that the Agency is better positioned to recruit diverse candidates, recognizing the importance of the composition of the workforce in alignment with the requested staff resourcing. It is a three-year initiative set to begin in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and that was jump-started in the FY 2022 Operating Expenses (OE) appropriation generously provided by Congress. With support from Congress, USAID aims to grow the permanent FS to 2,500 and the CS to 2,250 by FY 2025. GDPI will also aim to receive congressional support for an increase of 206 CCN/FSN positions by FY 2025.

USAID's increased permanent staffing will focus on gender and inclusive development, climate change, democracy and anti-corruption efforts, a more permanent humanitarian assistance workforce, global health security, and the management and procurement functions needed to streamline the implementation of development and humanitarian assistance and support our staff more effectively.

The basis of the request for Foreign Service (FS) positions stems from USAID's newly re-established Overseas Workforce Planning Model, which uses data to capture workforce needs and identifies significant gaps in workforce supply and demand. The Overseas Workforce Planning Model identified Program Officers; Crisis, Stabilization, and Governance officers; (including positions now under the recently created Humanitarian Assistance backstop (BS-70)), and Health Officers as the top three needs across overseas Missions. Additional analyses also demonstrated a significant shortage in contracting officers.

The proposed level for Civil Service (CS) positions reflects a significant effort to shift short-term staffing fixes to more permanently fill inherently governmental functions representing long-term needs, including supervisory positions at all levels. The Civil Service staffing request for FY 2023, the first year of the GDPI initiative, is particularly focused on addressing the staffing gaps

for basic operational needs of the Agency's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) efforts; and initial critical staffing in support of the priority areas mentioned above. In future years, USAID will continue filling these needs, shifting away from contract to permanent staff positions, and increasing staffing needed to support policy priorities like climate change and anticorruption.

Question:

Operating Expenses and Staffing

USAID has committed to advancing localization and working with diverse types of partners. These partnerships and programs often require more staff and administrative resources, particularly through contracting.

How does the fiscal year 2023 request ensure that adequate resources are available to support these efforts particularly within the Office of Acquisition and Assistance?

Answer:

We believe that in order to make further progress on localization, the Agency needs additional warranted Contracting Officers (COs) and Agreement Officers (AOs). USAID's FY 2023 budget request notes USAID's existing staffing gap, including that of contracting officers, and requested resources to support increased staffing levels of 2,500 Foreign Service (FS) employees and 2,250 Civil Service (CS) employees over three years. USAID's Management Bureau's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA) remains committed to increasing localization efforts, and we continue to engage Institutional Support Contractors (ISCs) to support this initiative.

Question:

Acquisition and Assistance

What are USAID's plans to increase awards for minority-owned/women-owned and Small Disadvantaged small businesses as well as Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small businesses for both prime contracting and subcontracting in order to meet the respective target goals?

Answer:

The Agency will continue its efforts to increase prime awards to each of the socio-economic categories, including woman-owned (WOSB), small-disadvantaged (SDB), and service-disabled veteran-owned (SDVOSB) small businesses.

For the past three fiscal years, USAID has exceeded its overall small business goal as well as the SDB WOSB goals. For FY 2021, the Agency negotiated a 12.5 percent small business goal with

each of the socio-economic goals remaining at their statutory levels of 5 percent for SDBs and WOSBs and 3 percent for SDVOSB. Preliminary data for FY 2021, the most recent year for which full data is available, indicated the Agency has obligated 14.9 percent ($826M) to U.S. small businesses, with 5.6 percent ($313M) to WOSB and 7.3 percent ($408M) to SDBs. For the SDVOSB category, preliminary data indicates we have obligated approximately 0.6 percent ($33M). While we have more work to do in this area, that number reflects a minor upward trend over the last three years.

USAID/OSDBU continues to be committed to conducting outreach events to expand the number of small businesses across all socio-economic categories who want to partner with the Agency. For example, the OSDBU Director participated in three SDVOSB targeted events in May 2022, sponsored by the Veterans Institute of Procurement, the American Legion and VET-Force. We are also co-hosting an inter-agency outreach event with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on June 14, 2022, to further engage the veteran community. These events are aligned with our objective to address and reduce barriers SDVOSBs encounter during the acquisition process while working with USAID. The Agency is supporting similar events for the SDBs, which includes MOSBs.

Our USAID OSDBU team is also focused on ensuring that our current and future small business partners have an equitable opportunity to compete for Agency procurements. The USAID/ OSDBU staff review domestic solicitations exceeding the Simplified Acquisition Threshold and make recommendations on which are appropriate for small business inclusion as prime or subcontractors. USAID is also providing training to its contracting staff to ensure they are familiar with the benefits and requirements of the Agency's small business program.

Question:

Acquisition and Assistance

How is the agency holding prime contractors accountable for upholding their commitment to engage and include small businesses in subcontracting, particularly if the prime contractor has included such a commitment in its proposal submission?

Answer:

USAID's contractors, other than small businesses, are generally required (unless exempt) to subcontract to small businesses. If the requirement exists, it is noted in USAID's solicitations and offerors are required to submit a Subcontracting Plan as part of its proposal submission. The subcontracting plan describes its subcontracting goal amounts, identifies a number of responsibilities of the subcontracting point of contact, shows reporting requirements, provides a description of good faith effort, and requires a signature by the offeror that it will comply in good faith with the requirements of the subcontracting plan. There is a USG wide internet-based tool that streamlines the process of reporting on subcontracting plans and provides agencies with access to analytical data on subcontracting performance in the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS). This helps identify if and when prime contractors are failing to meet the goals outlined and address issues as they arise as quickly as possible.

If the contractor in the course of implementation fails to comply in good faith with the requirements of the subcontracting plan, this is a material breach of contract. A failure to comply with the requirements can result in the imposition of liquidated damages pursuant to 15 USC 637 (d)(4)(F). Another way to hold a contractor accountable is through a contracting officer's evaluation that describes the contractor's performance to manage and coordinate subcontracting efforts, an assessment of a contractor's performance, and the contractor's efforts to achieve the goals identified in the small business subcontracting plan. This evaluation is captured within a USG wide system, the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS).

Question:

How does the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization work to identify contracts that might be suited for small business implementers, including for minority and women-owned businesses?

How does the Agency plan to improve its tracking of which minority groups are successful and which continue to be left out?

Answer:

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization collaborates with the Office Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA) to identify small businesses with suitable capabilities during the acquisition planning phase. OSDBU provides portfolio managers for each of the Bureaus, Missions and Independent Offices to assist them in meeting their contract needs with highly qualified small businesses. This includes assistance with market research, conducting outreach, and providing small business program training. During this phase, OSDBU and M/OAA also identify potential small business set asides for women, service-disabled veterans, disadvantaged business owners, and businesses located in historically underutilized business zones.

Demographic data is not always available. Federal contractors' demographics are incomplete because the submission of the data is voluntary. USAID tracks demographics when the data is provided. We continue to collaborate with Agency planners in diversifying our partner base and focusing on reaching our small disadvantaged business goals which often captures historically underrepresented minority owned small businesses.

Question:

Please provide the latest Small Business Procurement Scorecard, that assesses such data through disaggregated demographic data, including by race, ethnicity, and gender.

Answer:

USAID's latest available procurement scorecard is attached. Federal contractors are not required to report demographic data and the Procurement Scorecard only reflects Federal contractors' socio-economic program status or certification according to the Small Business Act, 15 USC 632. A Federal contractor may voluntarily submit data concerning race, ethnicity and gender. USAID does not request the data; contractors may voluntarily provide the information through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Attachment:

USAID FY 2021 Scorecard

Question:

What reforms or policy changes is the Office of Acquisition and Assistance adopting or considering to better support new initiatives such as diversity and inclusion, localization, and diversification to new partners?

Answer:

USAID continues to work to lower barriers to entry for new and diverse partners, simplify processes for effective new partnerships, and explore how we can reduce burdensome requirements while minimizing risk and maintaining necessary controls over the award process. USAID is continually looking for opportunities to make it easier to partner with local organizations, taking into account feedback from new and local organizations. USAID now posts some solicitations in local languages and is exploring how to expand that effort globally. There is a working group exploring options to assist local partners in translating their final applications from local languages to English.

USAID is also considering lowering the barrier to entry for all new partners by mainstreaming the use of less than a full -proposal or -application and having a smaller initial submission that uses less resources. In addition, encouraging more simplified evaluation or merit review criteria to reduce the number of factors that contribute to an enormous effort needed from partners to ensure they address all criteria.

USAID is also expanding its outreach to minority owned and other categories of small business through increased engagement. In November, USAID participated in two webinars hosted by the Greater Washington Urban League and this week will host an outreach event focused on the Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) community. The latter event includes more than 60 one-on-one appointments as a means to introduce new SDVOSBs to the work of the agency. Throughout the year, USAID will continue to participate in or host events directed at each of the socio-economic categories.

USAID is reviewing its subcontracting procedures to determine if there is a more effective means to ensure our large prime contractors are meeting their proposed subcontracting goals.

We welcome a follow-up with Congress to further discuss how to lower the barriers to entry for new, local, and diverse partners.

Question:

How does the agency assess its DEIA efforts are increasing diversity with the agency? Further, how is USAID incorporating racial and ethnic equity and diversity into policy, planning, and learning?

Answer:

USAID is committed to increasing diversity, ensuring equity, improving inclusion, and expanding accessibility (DEIA) across our workplace and operations, in line with major commitments from the Biden-Harris Administration. I have prioritized DEIA since my first day in the office, when I signed USAID's new DEIA Strategic Plan, and have continued to emphasize the importance of DEIA, while also working to create a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

In March 2022, I announced the creation of a new Office of the Chief DEIA Officer (CDO), led by Chief DEIA Officer Neneh Diallo, to spearhead these efforts. In addition to overseeing implementation of our ambitious DEIA Strategic Plan, the CDO is also responsible for coordinating the Agency's response to various Executive Orders related to DEIA, as well as implementing recommendations from two equity assessments that we completed recently, one looking at our workforce and one looking at our programs. This includes managing USAID's Equity Action Plan, which includes specific commitments related to addressing barriers to advance equity facing underserved communities.

To hold ourselves accountable to these many commitments, we established a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan to measure and track our results, as well as to help address knowledge and learning gaps. Later this year, we will launch the Agency's first-ever annual DEIA Survey, which will help us establish a baseline for measuring longitudinal progress on our Agency DEIA goals, while also contributing to government-wide data collection to both inform DEIA efforts across the federal workforce, as well as to identify and address any barriers to achieving more equitable outcomes for the American people through our outward-facing policies, programs, regulations, contracting opportunities, and services.

In addition, we are working with colleagues across the Agency to incorporate DEIA into USAID's forthcoming Policy Framework, the Agency's guiding policy document, and to provide direction on how to apply diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the Program Cycle, governed by ADS 201, which provides overarching guidelines for USAID's program cycle. In

addition to the Agency Equity Action Plan, we just launched our updated Youth in Development Policy and are currently revising or developing additional policies that will advance inclusion and equity: the LGBTQI+ Policy, the Disability Policy, and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Policy. We are also increasing staff training on Inclusive Development and non-discrimination for beneficiaries, and now require all Missions, Bureaus and Independent Office to report on Advancing Racial Equity and Supporting Underserved Communities within our annual operational plans and performance plans. Reporting on this information helps USAID to track and describe how we are using foreign assistance funding. In the area of program evaluation, we are increasing our efforts to engage with local stakeholders when designing evaluations and include local experts in our external evaluation teams.

These efforts to promote inclusive development align with our Localization Agenda, which includes the expansion of partnership opportunities with a range of organizations incorporating important lessons learned from our successful Local Works program and New Partnerships Initiative (NPI). The latest round of NPI Action Plans required USAID staff to report on equity and inclusion considerations in regard to their work with new, nontraditional and local actors. In November 2021, we launched the WorkwithUSAID.org resource hub, which to date has been accessed by more than 2,300 organizations from 131 countries. We are also increasing opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses and have exceeded our U.S. small business goal for eleven consecutive fiscal years and exceeded the women-owned small business goal for the past three fiscal years. We exceeded our small- and disadvantaged- (minority) owned business goals last year and are working to replicate that success again this year.

Question:

USAID started a 2-year pilot in 2020 called the Minority-Serving Institutions Partnership. What are the future plans for this initiative and are there plans to dedicate funds to further this program?

Answer:

In October 2020, USAID launched the Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Partnership Initiative, an Agency-wide effort to build a more diverse pipeline of talent. Since the launch of the program, USAID has signed four MOUs with MSIs, with the first MOU signed in October 2021. The four MOUs are with Delaware State University, Tuskegee University, Florida International University, and Alcorn State University. We expect to sign two more MOUs, with Morehouse College and Florida A&M University, by late 2022 and are exploring additional partnerships.

To support this effort, we have established two new MSI support positions within the Office of the Chief DEIA Officer. While we continue to create, manage, and grow these partnerships, we are also developing a framework to measure, monitor and evaluate the success of these initial partnerships and the pilot program overall. Throughout implementation, we will assess the program's effectiveness and modify implementation as needed to expand and grow programmatic impact. Our analysis and evaluation will include exploring the possibility and

feasibility of adding dedicated funds to this program to further our goals of increasing MSI engagement in the field of foreign assistance and with USAID in particular. We expect to highlight some of these successes this fall in our second annual conferences for Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Questions for the Record Submitted to
USAID Administrator Samantha Power by
Chair DeLauro
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
May 11, 2022

Question:

Humanitarian Assistance to Ukraine

According to a May 5th report from USAID, 5.7 million refugees have fled Ukraine to neighboring countries, 7.7 million people have been displaced across Ukraine and the United Nations (UN) have targeted 8.7 million people to receive humanitarian assistance in Ukraine. So far, it is estimated that we have reached 4.1 million—or nearly half—of those in need of assistance. Those numbers only continue to grow.

- Having detailed metrics is vital to understanding the effectiveness of our assistance. How is USAID working to scale up its efforts in Ukraine and what is complicating those efforts? What specific efforts are being made to reach vulnerable populations such as woman, children, the elderly, and the disabled?
- How is this assistance being monitored given the limited ability for U.S. personnel to move around?
- How is humanitarian aid using Ukrainian systems and organizations to assist in delivery?

Answer:

USAID has provided long-standing support to UN and non-governmental organization (NGO) humanitarian programs via our Mission in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. Both before and in the initial weeks of the response after Russia's February 24 invasion, USAID supported the broader international humanitarian system to build their response capacity. USAID rapidly deployed several planeloads of lifesaving supplies from our warehouse in Dubai and mobilized our partners to immediately surge support. USAID has rapidly bolstered the response capacity of our humanitarian partners to deliver principled and needs-based assistance, including lifesaving food assistance to people in hard-to-reach areas inside Ukraine, as well as cash-based transfers for conflict-affected people in areas with functioning markets. This rapid scale-up supported the coordination and logistical requirements to deliver humanitarian aid in response to the fastest displacement of people since World War II. USAID continues to expand humanitarian programming in Ukraine by funding a range of sectors including life-saving food, health, nutrition, protection, water, sanitation, hygiene, and cash assistance. As of May 10, the humanitarian community, including USAID partners, have reached nearly 7 million people with humanitarian assistance.

USAID prioritizes the protection of vulnerable groups as central to our humanitarian mandate and considers Ukraine to be a protection crisis. We are deeply concerned about attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, and the significant protection needs faced by vulnerable

populations affected by conflict, including children, women, older adults, persons with disabilities, LGBQTI+ individuals, religious or ethnic minorities, and third-country nationals. USAID supports the humanitarian coordination of protection activities, which represents over 100 organizations working collaboratively to prioritize, design and implement humanitarian programming. USAID is currently supporting eight protection partners in Ukraine focusing on improved access to social services and psychosocial support for conflict-affected individuals.

Since day one, USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) has been leading the U.S. Government's humanitarian response to help assess and respond to the humanitarian needs caused by the invasion and work closely with partners to monitor efforts as overall humanitarian funding increases. Monitoring and oversight of humanitarian programming is a shared responsibility between USAID, other donors, and implementing partners. When direct monitoring is not safe or otherwise feasible, USAID utilizes alternative approaches to monitoring including enhanced utilization of partner-provided information such as geo-tagged photographs and videos, triangulation of information from other donors, virtual site visits, and third-party monitoring.

The humanitarian response supports the Government of Ukraine's (GoU) efforts to meet the basic needs of people inside Ukraine. The DART and our humanitarian partners are coordinating with the GoU at all levels from the National Coordination Platform co-led by the Vice Prime Minister to local communities. GoU requests for resources are triangulated with humanitarian actors' assessment data in order to direct humanitarian assistance to those most in need. The GoU has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with two international partners, the UN World Food Program and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to provide support on cash assistance coordination, as the scale and scope of humanitarian needs exceeds the capacity of the government to fully respond at this time. We are mindful of the need to transition from humanitarian delivery systems to Government and national actors, as their capacity allows, and in a responsible manner that ensures accountability and continuity of programming.

Local organizations in Ukraine are critical to the humanitarian response—they have established networks with local communities, understand the local dynamics, and can at times access places international organizations cannot. USAID/BHA is currently funding 44 local organizations as sub-recipients to larger partners and anticipate an increase in the number of local partners as we deliberately build the capacity of these groups to responsibly manage U.S. government contributions.

Question:

The needs of the Government of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people are immense, and the response of the United States Government has shown the indispensable role of United States global leadership. In response to this tragic situation brought on by Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the Biden-Harris Administration has requested, and the Committee has now appropriated over $50 billion for the entire U.S. government response.

With respect to USAID allocated funding, what oversight measures and safeguards are in place currently and what measures are planned to oversee assistance implemented by USAID, and how

will it be tailored to the specific types of assistance provided, such as direct budget support, economic and development aid, and humanitarian assistance?

Answers:

Over the last several years, and especially since the 'Revolution of Dignity' in 2014, USAID has helped Ukraine build greater transparency in its public institutions and systems -- progress we believe we can now build upon to safeguard the funds generously provided by Congress against potential corruption. More broadly, USAID has spent years assisting Ukraine to stand up anti-corruption institutions, in concert with our support to bolster independent media and civil society. This support has enabled Ukrainians to prevent, monitor, and counter corruption and ensure funding intended to support the needs of Ukrainians reaches Ukrainians in need.

Moving forward, it will be vital for the Government of Ukraine (GOU) to utilize the anti-corruption architecture they have in place, including resuming use of ProZorro, Ukraine's public eProcurement system, and DOZORRO, a civil society watchdog, both established with USAID support, to exercise oversight over government procurements once Ukraine begins to rebuild and recover from this war.

Direct Budget Support

USAID has so far provided direct budget support (DBS) via the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) and is likely to provide more through the World Bank's PEACE mechanism. United States DBS ensures the continued viability of the GOU. By alleviating the Ukrainian government's acute liquidity crisis, we allow Ukraine to deliver essential services and meet immediate needs created by the Kremlin's brutal war. The World Bank manages contributions to the MDTF and supervises the grants according to its policies and procedures, including its procurement, financial management, disbursement, and safeguard policies; its framework to prevent and combat fraud and corruption; and other key provisions. All donors to the MDTF, including USAID, are entitled to financial statements, audit reports, and progress reports, and may review or evaluate activities financed by the MDTF prior to its closure.

Through the PEACE mechanism, the World Bank retroactively reimburses the GOU for expenditures against defined budget categories, such as teachers' salaries or payments to IDPs. The Bank makes payment to the GOU upon verification that funding has been expended for those specific expenditure categories, thus providing donors to the mechanism with greater visibility and accountability for how funds are spent.

In addition to relying on internal control procedures within the World Bank, USAID has contracted Deloitte Consulting LLP to deploy a team to work with the Government of Ukraine Ministry of Finance on the DBS provided. Deloitte's experts are working on the review of the Ministry's existing monitoring, transparency, verification and reporting systems and procedures, identifying and strengthening gaps, and supporting reporting on DBS tranches provided by the USG to date, as well as designing a framework for the second phase of Deloitte's work. Deloitte's team will work with both the Ministry and other Government of Ukraine institutions to review controls and procedures, conduct spot checks, and report on the transparency and accountability of GOU systems controlling DBS expenditures.

Economic Support Funds and AEECA Funds

USAID continues to provide oversight of Economic Support Funds (ESF) and Assistance for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA) funding using multiple mechanisms, including via annual reporting through USAID's data included in Ukraine's performance plan and report (PPR); monitoring and evaluation of ongoing activities to ensure that they are achieving results; and continued support to the Government of Ukraine and civil society organizations to improve transparency and accountability measures.

Humanitarian Assistance

In high-risk or non-permissive environments where it is difficult for USAID staff to monitor awards in person, USAID utilizes a number of robust oversight tools. Risk management begins pre-award with an evaluation of prospective applicants to ensure that they have relevant prior experience, the necessary technical capacities, and sufficient financial and operational controls needed to achieve program objectives of and comply with appropriate U.S laws. Additionally, before each award is made, USAID completes a pre-award risk assessment to evaluate the risks posed by applicants.

USAID reviews each applicant's risk assessment and management plan to safeguard the provision of U.S. foreign assistance so that it does not result in a violation of applicable sanctions, or waste, fraud, and abuse. Applicants must specifically address how they will mitigate and manage the risks associated with the potential misuse of U.S. government resources in proposed activities, including oversight of any sub-awards they intend to make.
To monitor as close to "real time" as possible, USAID meets regularly with implementing partners and requests informal regular operational reports in addition to formal USAID reporting requirements. USAID monitors contextual changes that may impact program implementation based on information from partner organizations, United Nations agencies, coordination forums, and other sources. As the operating environment changes, USAID gathers and analyzes formal and informal data to ensure we and our partners adapt appropriately.

While USAID has longstanding experience conducting oversight of its programs in nonpermissive environments, including through the support of a full time position looking at risk management and mitigation on our Ukraine humanitarian response, expanding the number of staff at the Embassy, coupled with a substantial USAID presence in-country, will allow humanitarian and development subject-matter experts to observe projects first-hand, interview beneficiaries, and accurately triangulate various information flows to adjust programs to deliver our assistance where and to whom it is intended, and to achieve optimum impact.

Question:

How will USAID coordinate with State Department oversight with respect to funding appropriated to shared and partially managed accounts?

Answer:

USAID will apply the same approach outlined above to ensure USG oversight of shared and partially managed accounts.

Question:

What actions are you taking to ensure that the USAID's Office of Inspector General (OIG) has the access and responsiveness from USAID and the Government of Ukraine to ensure it can fulfill its statutory role and provide robust oversight of USG funds provided to Ukraine?

Answer:

USAID will cooperate fully with the OIG in its efforts to provide robust oversight of funds provided to Ukraine. For example, the USAID Ukraine Mission has already communicated with the OIG and it is actively providing information on how our programs have pivoted to respond to Russia's invasion. The Agency remains committed to transparency and openness to all requests from the OIG, whether formalized or not.

As mentioned above, for many years, USAID has supported Ukrainian government and civil society organizations to increase transparency and accountability. Our support enables Ukraine's government, society, and international partners to monitor the use of donor funds, including those provided by the USG. We anticipate that our efforts have enabled the Government of Ukraine to cooperate with the USAID OIG in a timely and effective manner.

Question for the Record Submitted to
USAID Administrator Samantha Power by
Representative Grace Meng
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
May 11, 2022

Question:

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been particularly focused on the importance of sustainable access to WASH in healthcare facilities, including access to clean drinking water, adequate sanitation and hygiene, menstrual hygiene products, their disposal, and handwashing stations. USAID staff alerted my office to the fact that currently, USAID does not track the number of healthcare facilities provided with sanitation or hygiene improvements, as a result of USAID's efforts to improve WASH in such facilities. This is particularly concerning as Congress seeks to obtain a full picture of quality health services delivered as a result of U.S. foreign assistance. Administrator Power, how is USAID working to improve these indicators such that future reporting will account for sanitation and hygiene improvements in healthcare facilities, in all cases?

Answer:

USAID recognizes WASH in healthcare facilities as a critical element of the quality of health systems and is committed to making evidence-based investment decisions in all sectors and geographies. At present, USAID currently tracks the number of health facilities gaining access to basic drinking water services as a result of USG assistance using the standard Foreign Assistance indicator HL.8.1-4. A similar standard foreign assistance indicator exists for sanitation; however, it counts the number of sanitation facilities (i.e. latrines) rather than the number of health facilities impacted (HL.8.2-4). In order to better understand USAID's direct impact on WASH in healthcare facilities, USAID has submitted proposed revisions to update the current indicator. The revised indicator is expected to be introduced for FY 2022 reporting, subject to approval by the U.S. State Department's Office of Foreign Assistance. This revision will enable USAID to capture the number of health facilities gaining access to improved sanitation through U.S. Government assistance. This revision would allow USAID to track the number of health facilities with access to basic water as a result of USG assistance and the number of health facilities with access to basic sanitation as a result of USG assistance. Additionally, the sanitation indicator would require functional hand hygiene facilities at toilets and points of care.

It is important to note that because some health facilities receive both water and sanitation access as a result of USG assistance, USAID does not combine the numbers from these indicators to avoid double counting impact. USAID uses the data from these indicators to conservatively estimate a total number of individual healthcare facilities impacted with access to water and/or sanitation as a result of USG assistance.

Question:

As we saw in the recent case of the evacuation of our allies and partners from Afghanistan, gender advisors are critical to bring a gender lens to the U.S.' work around the world. Gender advisors serve as a bridge to what is happening on the ground and are important to informing an effective foreign policy. I was glad to see additional funding was made available to USAID to put a qualified and dedicated Gender Advisor in every overseas Mission, Regional Platform, and Washington Bureau, as well as to provide additional training and technical assistance to staff to equip USAID with the technical capacity to increase the capability of women and girls to fully exercise their rights and to address gender-based violence, globally. With this additional funding, how soon will USAID be able to deploy these dedicated Gender Advisors? In cases where a Gender Advisor already exists at an overseas Mission, but serves in multiple capacities other than Gender Advisor, how much additional funding is necessary to ensure the staff that serve in the role of Gender Advisor do not wear any other hats?

Answer:

Gender Advisors bring critical expertise to achieve our foreign policy and global development goals. The FY 2023 President's Budget Request would support doubling gender-attributed activities to $2.6 billion across USAID and the State Department towards the advancement of gender equality globally. With this funding, USAID has an unprecedented opportunity to stand with and substantially improve the lives of the women and girls most impacted by gender discrimination. USAID plans to invest in increasing the number of dedicated and qualified Gender Advisors, while also training and providing technical tools and assistance to staff across USAID to help advance gender equality as a cornerstone of USAID's work.

USAID is currently assessing our staffing structure for Gender Advisors in Washington and in the field in order to identify staffing gaps and we will act on identified gaps in Fiscal Year 2023.

Question:

Administrator Power – I recently introduced the Autism Family Caregivers Act, which would create a pilot program to fund grants to local community organizations around the country to implement evidence-based caregiver skills training programs (also known as CST) for the caregivers of children with autism and other developmental delays and disabilities. This has been a successful model, implemented in over 30 countries through efforts by the World Health Organization, to provide culturally competent training to caregivers that they can use in non-clinical settings to help improve health and social outcomes for their children. In addition to the WHO, I know that USAID has also helped implement this model in Vietnam. How does USAID plan in FY23 to continue and expand upon efforts to support programs like CST for children with autism and other developmental disabilities and delays?

Answer:

The U.S. Government made a commitment to adapting approaches to a child's age and life stage with particular attention to disabilities, to increase the effectiveness of our programs. This commitment is codified in the *U.S. Government Strategy Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (2019-2023).* USAID manages the Vulnerable Children Account (approximately $21 million per year) to implement the strategy.

USAID has led on investments in child-protection systems and social services, which prioritize safe, permanent family care for children to secure the best environment for their development. USAID has focused particular attention to children with disabilities. In 2018, USAID funded the development of Family Care for Children with Disabilities: Practical Guidance for Frontline Workers in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. This guide was written for social service workers who have little or no experience working with children with disabilities and their families, and it provides easy to read information and advice on adaptive case management.

USAID is using the Vulnerable Children Account to catalyze investments in inclusive Early Childhood Development (ECD)-- in line with the Global Child Thrive Act-- in partnership with Global Health and Nutrition colleagues. USAID has supported Missions to design inclusive and integrated ECD programming. For example, USAID/Cambodia awarded an activity in 2020 valued at up to $15 million over five years, subject to the availability of funds, to promote ECD and nurturing care for all children. This program includes a component focusing on early identification of developmental delays and disability so children and their families may receive the targeted support they need. Additionally, USAID/Rwanda has a similarly focused $38 million, five-year Inclusive Nutrition and ECD activity that was awarded in 2021; it includes a caregiver skills training activity as well as a component to increase the capacity of both community health workers and the health facility workers to provide integrated health, nutrition, ECD, and rehabilitation care for people with disabilities. Finally, recognizing the limited attention often given to children with developmental disabilities, USAID's flagship inclusive nutrition and early childhood development program is providing nutrition and childcare services to children in rural communities to improve their nutritional status including children with disabilities.

USAID also supports disability-inclusive education around the world. Inclusive education is foundational to achieving all USAID Education Policy and USG Basic Education Strategy priority areas, most notably ensuring that the most marginalized children and youth, including those with disabilities, have increased access to quality education that is safe, relevant, and promotes social well-being. USAID's Center for Education's work includes a focus on disability inclusion across the education continuum, from pre-primary to higher education, and youth workforce development - and it coordinates with USAID's Inclusive Development Hub to support education in the broader disability inclusive development agenda. The bulk of this work is with our education sector colleagues in Washington and Missions to build knowledge and expertise and design programs that improve education outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. We are proud that we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of USAID's disability inclusive education activities; from 26 activities in FY 2019 to 60 activities in 38 countries in FY 2020.

Question:

Preventing future pandemics and enabling countries to respond quickly will require countries to address gaps in their health systems, which must include access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). How will you work to include WASH in the new Health Resilience Fund proposed by the Administration?

Answer:

The Health Resilience Fund (HRF) would facilitate USAID's ability to respond promptly, aggressively, and flexibly to challenging contexts and countries in crisis. To prevent the loss of development gains, HRF-funded activities would focus on strengthening key institutions and health systems processes, and ensuring countries are rebuilding in a way that leaves them more prepared for—and resilient against—crises moving forward. WASH would constitute a critical component of the health resilience strategy since it is one of the first systems to falter during an emergency and is fundamental to public health and recovery. In addition, WASH is critical to controlling the spread of infectious diseases and outbreaks.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
USAID Administrator Samantha Power by
Representative Torres
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
May 11, 2022

Question:

Restricting assistance to the governments of the Northern Triangle

I want to thank you for your consistent commitment to holding corrupt actors accountable in the Northern Triangle, and ensuring U.S. aid helps local communities. Last year, we spoke about challenges to the rule of law and corruption in the Northern Triangle. Sadly, despite strong calls from the international community and civil society, El Salvador is currently in a State of Exception (which removes people's basic human rights) and in Guatemala the independent judiciary has been decimated, with Judge Erica Aifan recently fleeing for her life. We cannot continue to give taxpayers' foreign assistance to governments that misuse it to advance their own corrupt interests and act counter to our own policy goals.

So Administrator Power, given these trends, what are the dangers of not vetting funding that goes to the governments of the Northern Triangle?

Answer:

USAID maintains robust vetting processes of our partners. Moreover, we work closely with the interagency to ensure we have a comprehensive understanding of the political and economic incentives that drive the governments of Northern Central America and we take those incentives into account in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of foreign assistance programming.

Question:

Given these risks, how does USAID ensure this funding is not misused and politicized?

Answer:

USAID prevents funding from being misused through the use of robust due diligence procedures and ongoing oversight of our grants and contracts after award. USAID coordinates our work closely with our Embassy colleagues and with the State Department to ensure programs are fully aligned with policy objectives, and to mitigate the possibility of our assistance being misused.

Question:

How do we ensure our aid is supporting those who are truly committed to long-term reform?

Answer:

We work closely with the Embassy and the interagency to support reformers and ensure we have a keen understanding of the political and economic landscape in any given country. We also engage and partner with a wide array of stakeholders through regular consultations with local civil society - including private sector and municipal associations, faith-based groups, academic institutions, advocates and activists, as well as implementing partners, philanthropic entities, and national and international companies, other donors, and other stakeholders furthers our capacity to understand and respond to dynamic circumstances. In addition to the high standards set by the Agency's procurement and vetting processes, through the *Centroamerica Local* initiative, USAID has made an ambitious commitment to increase our support for local partners which will also contribute to sustainable reform.

Question:

How are these efforts coordinated across U.S. agencies?

Answer:

USAID collaborates across U.S. agencies and departments in a variety of different ways. For example, USAID and State are collaborating with other U.S. agencies and departments on the interagency monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan for the Root Causes Strategy (RCS). The MEL plan accounts for the complexity of programs and diplomatic efforts under the RCS, the contributions of the private sector, civil society, and partner governments, as well as the dynamic operating environments USAID works in. Additionally, the MEL plan prioritizes the issues that Congress identified as drivers of irregular migration, recognizing the central importance of tackling corruption, strengthening governance, and driving private sector investment to create the conditions for Central Americans to build their futures at home rather than attempting to immigrate to the United States.

Question:

Restricting assistance to the governments of the Northern Triangle

I am deeply concerned that some countries continue to pass laws that harm their citizens, and the U.S. lacks effective ways to account for how U.S. assistance is being spent.

What is it going to take to completely cut off countries that fail to do the bare minimum to help their own citizens? What would the threshold or metrics be for that?

Answer:

USAID shares your concerns regarding the trend of increasingly harmful and restrictive laws being passed in the Northern Central America countries region.

The assistance USAID provides in the region is geared to improve the well-being of the people in the countries where we work. While USAID provides almost no direct funding to any of the governments in the region, USAID has extensive programming in all three countries in the Northern Triangle. For example, USAID supports outside actors, such as civil society organizations, to hold their governments accountable on a range of issues— including public procurement, human rights, equitable government services, and open political participation. USAID also provides humanitarian assistance, as needed, that goes directly to support people in need.

Question:

Support to civil society and independent actors

Without the political will from the governments in the Northern Triangle, USAID must prioritize working with capable, credible civil society partners, and those committed to reform and accountability. As you mentioned in the hearing, daily there are attacks against those who are carrying out this important work, including arrests and assassinations. So many of the local staff in these countries who risked everything to fight corruption are in jail or obtaining asylum because they dared to speak truth to power. We need to ensure our commitment to rule of law and anti-corruption is not just strong words, but a real commitment to the people who dedicate their lives to this work. That is why I have been so pleased with the initial work USAID has been doing to carry out President Biden's Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal. Programs to engage and support civil society, from the Empowering Anti-Corruption Change Agents Program to the global Defamation Defense Fund which you mentioned, are important steps forward. And I have put forward a proposal to create a fellowship to support these local people risking everything to fight corruption and the rule of law – and I deeply appreciate USAID's help developing that proposal.

Administrator Power, can you speak a bit more as to why the U.S. must get involved here with civil society and journalists? What is at stake?

Answer:

1. The situation in Northern Central America is fragile as governments overstep their own legal frameworks and use questionable arguments to repress citizens, stifle civil society and journalists. We are all witnessing Central America's contraction in civic space as governments enact repressive or ambiguous laws, co-opt judiciaries, criminalize expression on certain issues and pursue spurious litigation against journalists and civil society. Yet, despite such backsliding, civil society organizations continue advocating for citizens' rights and monitoring government performance. Precisely because certain governments in Northern Central America have stifled civic space, our government must step in to empower such organizations and prevent them from being silenced. Civil society provides an essential check on government abuses. The alternative would be a downward spiraling towards authoritarianism as seen in Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba where prisons are being filled and people have no option but to vote with their feet.

Question:

How does USAID support civil society activists and independent investigators?

Answer:

Alongside the State Department, USAID actively supports civil society, independent media, and others advocating for transparency and accountability. Through our Regional Human Rights and Democracy and Promoting Security and Freedom of Expression for the Media (PROSAFE) activities and existing and new bilateral programming such as Citizens Empowered in El Salvador, our support to the local Anti-Corruption Council in Honduras, and resources dedicated to strengthening human rights and conducting oversight of key judicial and electoral processes in Guatemala, USAID helps to ensure civil society entities can carry out their essential roles and serve as a building block for development and democracy. In cases where individuals and advocates face harassment, threats, and even violence, USAID provides support ranging from digital and physical security to legal and psychosocial assistance to relocation options.

Question:

And how can Congress support these efforts?

Answer:

In addition to providing critical resources, Congress can support these efforts by speaking out in the face of abuse; engaging those governments that threaten civic space as well as those that can play a more active role in defending civil society; and encouraging local stakeholders to

demonstrate their commitment to transparency and accountability, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. We appreciate your proposal to create a fellowship to fight corruption and the rule of law. We understand the Department of State is undertaking a similar effort, and we would be happy to share our understanding of the needs in the region.

Question:

Prioritizing local hires

I appreciate the steps USAID has taken to prioritize localization and sustainable change in communities in FY22.

- What impediments are there to fully utilizing local hires in all projects, including relief and recovery projects?
- What more will USAID do on this front?
- Will you commit to evaluating USAID's hiring practices and increase the percentage of local hires?

Answer:

The skills and expertise of locally hired staff are critical to the success of all USAID programs, including relief and recovery projects. The number of local staff in an USAID Mission reflects standard USAID and State Department practices USAID Mission Directors have authority to hire local staff based on the funding available for such hiring, and subject to limitations placed by the overall Embassy footprint and Embassy guidance on the prioritization of staffing increases, which are determined by the Chief of Mission.

In a number of countries, Embassy staff are returning to the office or moving for the first time into newly opened New Embassy Compounds (NECs), which have been constructed with a smaller overall Embassy staffing footprint in mind. In some cases, USAID is likely to face constraints to hiring additional staff, including local staff, stemming from the limited availability of physical workspace for additional hires. In collaboration with the Department of State, USAID is exploring alternatives to include additional space and telework flexibilities for local staff. The Department of State determines telework policy, local compensation plans, real estate property, and other key policies that enable these solutions.

USAID is committed to taking steps to empower its Cooperating Country Nationals (CCNs)—informally known as FSNs—workforce as a key component of localization. The next CCN Warrant Guidance update will remove the current cap of two CCN Administrative Warrants per Mission. A CCNPSC Administrative Warrant makes it possible for CCN staff to take on an expanded role in managing grants and contracts, thereby reducing the administrative burden on FSO contracting officers, making it easier for USAID Missions to manage acquisition and assistance (A&A) portfolios with a higher number of smaller awards to local entities, while creating new leadership and career development opportunities for CCN staff members. In addition, USAID supports professional development for CCNs through training and temporary

duty assignments (TDYs). In 2022, the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance is launching a cohort-based FSN Fellowship program, bringing 17 CCNs from around the world to DC for eight-week assignments that aim to leverage the immense institutional and subject-matter knowledge of the CCN community while offering additional exposure to the Bureau, Agency, and Interagency. The Global Health Bureau; Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, Office of Country Support (RFS/OCS); Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance, Industry Liaison Team (M/OAA/ILT) workwithusaid.org team; HCTM/Overseas Human Capital Initiatives (OHCI); Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL); Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation; and the Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget, and Performance, Policy Division (M/MPBP/POL) have also hosted about 16 virtual FSN Fellows in 2022.

Question:

What rules does USAID have in place to ensure federal contractors are not using their status for inappropriate federal lobbying or personal gain?

Answer:

U.S. law prohibits a recipient of a Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement from using appropriated funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with any covered Federal actions (See 31 U.S.C.1352). This prohibition is included in all federal contracts that exceed $150,000 through two FAR clauses: FAR 52.203-11 and FAR 52.203-12. They require any federal contractor to certify that they are not engaging in prohibited behavior and to disclose if any registrants under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 have made a lobbying contact on behalf of the offeror with respect to their contract. This requirement also extends to subcontractors.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBCOMMITTEE TO USAID Administrator Samantha Power
BY Congressman Reschenthaler
Subcommittee on State Foreign Operations and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
Wednesday, May 111, 2022

1) Ready-To-Use Therapeutic Foods:

The Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 (H.R. 7691) included $4.35 billion for USAID's International Disaster Assistance account to provide emergency food and humanitarian assistance.

Questions
Administrator Power:

1. Will USAID utilize this funding to address recent spikes in child wasting, the most severe form of acute malnutrition?
2. Does USAID plan to increase its procurement of American-made Ready-To-Use Therapeutic Foods?

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2) SAID Global Water Strategy:

Approximately 2.2 billion people lack access to safe drinking water and two billion people lack access to proper sanitation. Continued U.S. investments in safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) provide sustainable access to basic services for millions.

Questions
Administrator Power:

1. How does USAID view its performance from the 2017 U.S. Government Global Water Strategy?
2. What are USAID's objectives for the updated water strategy to increase access to WASH and help national governments strengthen their water and sanitation systems?

[Clerk's note.—The agency did not provide answers to the questions at the time of printing.]

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 MEMBERS' DAY HEARING

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LEE

Ms. LEE. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

Good afternoon, let me just welcome and thank you again for attending our virtual hearing and testifying. I also want to take a moment to recognize our newest member of our subcommittee, Congresswoman Julia Letlow. We are so glad to have you on the subcommittee, and we look forward to working with you. Hopefully we will be able to sit down and talk soon.

We have heard from many agencies of their justifications for their fiscal year 2023 budget. However, it is really important to myself and other members to hear directly from you on your priorities for the fiscal year 2023 State and foreign operations bill. I am always amazed, and I said this last year, last year we had 6,500 member requests. This year we have 6,800 member requests, so that is a lot of requests from members of Congress, bipartisan, Republicans and Democrats, but it just shows you that members are very concerned about global affairs, which I really love.

I want to welcome member testimony before this subcommittee because it really does demonstrate the value that the House puts on these important investments in building a more just, inclusive, and prosperous world. The diplomacy, development, humanitarian, and security assistance programs funded through this bill are critical to supporting the poorest and most vulnerable people, including women and children, as well as mitigating crises, such as climate change, the COVID–19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine. Now, with limited resources, I strive to write a bill and report that takes into consideration both Agency and member input. The more we can raise our collective voices about the value of these programs, the more success we will have in making sure we can secure the resources to fund them sufficiently.

Distinguished colleagues, more than ever before, with our international challenges, America faces a direct impact on the American people in terms of our global challenges, whether it is alleviating starvation, food insecurity, advancing women's empowerment, tackling global health, securing our partners in vulnerable countries from the malign influence of authoritarianism, increasing staff diversity and equity within our own agencies. That is just to name a few. These are challenges which necessitate that Congress cooperate, work together in a bipartisan manner, and lead. And though it is not always an easy path, I believe Congress has shown, at the end of the day, we can work together, especially this subcommittee, alongside the administration and our multilateral part-

ners to provide for programs that protect the American people and their security, and uplift our development and foreign policy priorities.

We have a member, Congressman Kahele, who is not able to be with us this afternoon, so without objection, I would like to ask that his testimony be added to the record.

Without objection.

[The information follows:]

Statement by U.S. Representative Kaiali'i Kahele
before the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee
on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs

May 17, 2022

Aloha Kākou!

Mahalo nui loa for inviting me to testify before the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the important work of the East-West Center think tank in Hawaii. I am asking for your support to fully fund the East West Center at $25.841 million for fiscal year 2023.

Congress established the East-West Center in 1960 as a national educational and research organization to promote U.S. – Asia Pacific relations. As a public diplomacy program, the East-West Center's primary goal seeks to improve understanding between peoples of the U.S. and the Asia-Pacific Region. Congress chose Hawai'i as the Center's hub because of its ideal and strategic location in the Pacific.

At the East-West Center, scholars and policymakers collaborate through multidisciplinary research ventures concerning political, security, economic, and social issues. The Center's educational programs and seminars prepare students and professionals of all levels to confront these pressing challenges.

The East-West Center has built a worldwide network of 65,000 alumni and more than 1,100 partner organizations. The Center supports American interests by fostering people-to-people

engagement that in turn supports U.S. policy goals, and provides constructive, visible engagement in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Every year, the State of Hawai'i and the East-West Center hosts the annual Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders. The conference provides a valuable opportunity for Pacific Islands leaders—regardless of political status and without formal intergovernmental protocol—to address shared issues, learn from each other's experiences, and develop common approaches to policy. The summit also provides opportunities for the leaders to dialogue with US officials and experts on issues such as climate change, digital connectivity and infrastructure development, and marine resources conservation.

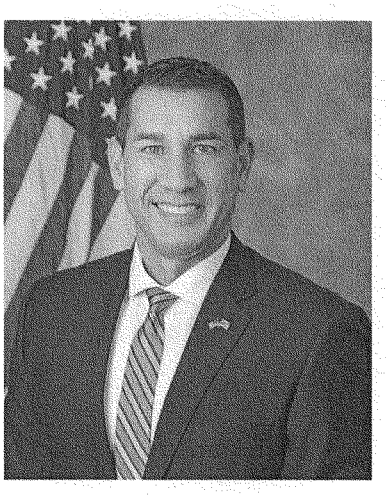
The East-West Center is the only U.S.-based research and capacity-building institution with decades of expertise and active high-level networks in the strategically critical Pacific Islands region.

Additionally, it is the only Congressionally-established U.S. institution dedicated to engagement with the Indo-Pacific region on substantive issues.

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2023 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you include $25.841 million for the East-West Center. This funding level will guarantee that the Center will have the ability to continue and strengthen its core programs in education, research, policy dialogue and the Asia Pacific cultures with partner organizations in the United States and other countries in the Asia Pacific

Region. Continued funding for the East-West Center is crucial for our nation's foreign policy and national security interests. I appreciate your attention and consideration of this request. Mahalo.

Congressman Kahele Biography



U.S. Representative Kaialiʻi (Kai) Kahele is serving his first term in Congress. He represents Hawaiʻi's 2nd Congressional District, encompassing the islands of Hawaiʻi, Maui, Kahoʻolawe, Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, Kauaʻi, Niʻihau and the rural parts of Oʻahu, including Waimanālo, Kailua, Kāneʻohe, the North Shore, and Leeward coast.

Congressman Kahele serves on two House committees, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, one of the largest committees in Congress that has jurisdiction over all modes of transportation, and the Armed Services Committee, which has jurisdiction over U.S. defense policy, including ongoing military operations.

Congressman Kahele is a combat veteran, pilot and a commissioned officer in the Hawaiʻi Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force where he continues to serve as a lieutenant colonel at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaiʻi. He served in Iraq and Afghanistan as a C-17 Globemaster III and C-130 Hercules pilot in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In addition to serving the country in Congress and the Armed Forces, Congressman Kahele is an active commercial airline pilot with Hawaiian Airlines where he flies the Airbus A330 wide-body aircraft on both domestic and international routes.

Prior to being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Kahele served in the Hawaiʻi State Senate where he represented the 1st Senatorial District, which encompasses the greater area of Hilo on the island of Hawaiʻi. During his tenure as a state senator, he served as the Majority Whip and Majority Floor Leader as well as the Chair of the Committees on Higher Education and Water and Land.

He earned a B.S. in Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where he was a member of the University's NCAA Division 1 volleyball team. He is a graduate of Hilo High School and resides on Hawai'i Island with his wife and three daughters.

Ms. LEE. I look forward to hearing your testimonies, but before I turn to our distinguished colleagues, let me yield to our ranking member, Mr. Rogers, for any opening remarks he may have. Mr. Rogers?

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER ROGERS

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you for yielding, Madam Chair. Before I begin, let me also say a word of welcome to the newest member of the subcommittee, Congresswoman Julia Letlow. We are looking forward to working with you, and I am pleased to have a full contingent on the Republican side of the aisle now, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for convening this hearing so that we may receive testimony from our colleagues on their fiscal year 2023 priorities in this bill. We have already heard from the Secretary of State and USAID administrator on details of the President's budget request for State, foreign operations, which would provide an increase of nearly $10 billion over the enacted level. As I noted in previous hearings, I believe increases of this magnitude are unrealistic and create false expectations. That said, there are many important programs in this bill, many of which have strong bipartisan support, and I am pleased we get to hear from several of them today directly from members. We thank them for their participation.

And now, I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Rogers. To our distinguished colleagues, if you could summarize your oral statement in less than 5 minutes. I want to make sure we have enough time, especially given the possibility of votes being called, and we will leave enough time to get to our questions. But your full statement will be included in the record. After your testimony, I will be calling on members based on seniority of the members who were present when the hearing was called to order, alternating between majority and minority members. And I will then recognize any remaining members in the order of their appearance. Each member is asked to keep their questions, once again, to within 5 minutes per round.

I will yield now to Chairman Jim McGovern.

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022.

WITNESS

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

OPENING STATEMENT OF MR. MCGOVERN

Mr. MCGOVERN. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers. Thanks for the opportunity to testify today, and a special thank you to the staff. Sixty-eight hundred requests, oh, my goodness, that is a lot, but in any event, we appreciate your work. To begin with, let me thank you for your focus on community-based development and how responsive you have been to many of my top concerns. And this committee, and especially the

two of you, I believe, promote the very best of U.S. values and advance America's global interests and relationships.

One of my top priorities for fiscal year 2023 is the request led by Congresswoman Sara Jacobs and myself along with Representatives Fitzpatrick, McCollum, and Kim, and we ask that you provide $1.1 billion for the maternal and child health account. This includes designating $200 million for GABI and $300 million for the nutrition account within global health programs at USAID. The request is supported by 178 bipartisan members of Congress. I strongly urge the subcommittee to substantially increase the nutrition account. While the subcommittee has provided increases to both the MCH and global health programs accounts, these increases have not been reflected in the funds dedicate to nutrition. So we all know that interventions provided to infants, including severely malnourished children, have a tremendous bang for their buck. When we see documented reductions in stunting and improvements in maternal and child health from these proven interventions, I can't understand why increases to the nutrition account are so difficult.

Our bipartisan request is to provide $300 million for the nutrition account to address the global child malnutrition and under-nutrition crisis. I also want to thank you for the thoughtful and effective designations the committee has made regarding U.S. aid to Colombia and Central America. I strongly support the attention to police reform in Colombia. Since last year, police abuses persist, and reforms have failed to advance. I would encourage you to strengthen your focus on this critical human rights and security issue.

And I would now like to just highlight a couple of new requests for your consideration in fiscal year 2023. First, I ask the committee to designate $500,000 for USIP's Colombia Program. I also support fully funding USIP at $54 million. In October of 2021, USIP opened a permanent office in Colombia. In the worsening human rights situation confronting Colombia, the USIP Colombia Program has become a critical convening space for key local and national stakeholders on a range of very sensitive issues. Its shoestring budget provides for minimal staffing and administrative costs at a time when expanding its programs could amplify its critical role as a good faith actor and mentor for peace, reconciliation, and reform inside Colombia.

I understand that this a highly unusual request to designate funds for one of USIP's many programs, but the impact of its Colombia office and staff in advancing peace building in that troubled and violent country cannot be understated, and believe that the best way to allocate such funding is to your best judgment, but I firmly believe that this is an important priority. And I know nobody in Congress wishes to see Colombia repeat the horrors of the 1990s.

Second, I ask for $1.5 million to be provided to the Bureau of Democracy, Labor, and Human Rights, to develop a comprehensive Central American protection pilot program for judicial officials, independent media, and human rights defenders who face such extreme harassment or threats that they are forced to stop working and even go into exile. I mean, we have seen a deep erosion of judicial independence in Central America, a crackdown on independent

media, and restrictions on the work of civil society. Those most affected are individuals and NGOs leading efforts to combat impunity and corruption, protect human rights, and ensure the rule of law, the very people who most share our values and vision in the region. I strongly believe it is in our interest to have a program or mechanism that ensures the safety of and provides support for these key actors so they can continue their human rights and anti-corruption work in exile.

Finally, I am asking for $10 million for peace building, reconciliation, democracy building, and food security in the Central African Republic. You know, the conflict in the Central African Republic has exacerbated religious and ethnic tensions and left 49 percent of the population food insecure. So while humanitarian assistance provides lifesaving support, there remains massive gaps in helping civilians rebuild their lives and livelihoods. These local initiatives play an essential role in breaking cycles of conflict and displacement and securing a more sustainable peace.

So thanks for allowing me time to speak on these priorities. Thank you for all that you do, and I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Great. Thank you, Chair McGovern. Thanks again for your testimony, and our members know that this is not new for you. You have been showing leadership on these issues for many, many years. And thank you also for bringing up the USIP Program to our attention. That was one of the questions I was going to ask you, but thank you very much for that.

Let me know yield to Mr. Rogers and see if you have any comments or questions.

Mr. ROGERS. I have no questions. I want to compliment the gentleman for the thoroughness of his report. I wish him luck.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Any other member have any question or comment? Ms. Frankel?

[No response.]

Ms. LEE. Okay. With that, Mr. McGovern, thank you very much.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Thank you all.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Your full testimony will be included in the record.

Mr. MCGOVERN. All the best. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I will yield now to, I believe, Ms. Escobar. I am sorry. Who was next in line, Mr. Case or Ms. Escobar?

Mr. CASE. I am happy to defer to Ms. Escobar.

Ms. LEE. Okay. We will go to Ms. Escobar since I called her. Congressman Escobar. Thank you again.

[The information follows:]

TESTIMONY OF REP. JAMES P. MCGOVERN (MA-02)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND RELATED AGENCIES
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
May 17, 2022

Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers –

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today on some of my priorities for the FY 2023 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

I want to thank you for how responsive this subcommittee has been to so many of my top concerns and its focus on advancing community-based development. I believe the subcommittee, and the two of you most especially, promote the very best of U.S. values and interests in our relationships around the world.

I would like to begin with the bipartisan request led by Representative Sarah Jacobs and myself, along with Representatives Fitzpatrick, McCollum, and Kim to provide $1.1 billion for the Maternal and Child Health account, including $290 million for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and **$300 million for the Nutrition Account within Global Health Programs at USAID.**

I strongly urge the subcommittee to substantially increase the Nutrition Account. This request is supported by 178 bipartisan Members of Congress. In the past, while the subcommittee has provided substantial increases in both the MCH account and the Global Health Programs account, these increases have not been reflected in the amount dedicated to Nutrition. We all know that the interventions provided to infants, including severely malnourished infants, toddlers, and young children, have a tremendous "bang for the buck." When we see the the reduction in stunting, and improvements in maternal and child health from these proven interventions, for the life of me, I cannot understand why increases to the USAID Nutrition account are so difficult to achieve.

Our bipartisan request is to provide $300 million to make up for past shortfalls. At a minimum, I ask the subcommittee to provide a very substantial increase to the Nutrition Account.

As I have done in the past, I have submitted several recommendations on Colombia and Central America. I want to thank the subcommittee for the thoughtful designations it has made in the past regarding our aid to these countries and regions. I strongly support the attention by this subcommittee to police reform in Colombia. Since last year, police abuses have continued to escalate, and reforms have failed to advance. I encourage you to maintain and strengthen your attention to this critical human rights and security issue.

I would like to use my remaining time simply to highlight a couple of **new requests** that I have submitted for your consideration for FY 2023.

First, staying with Colombia, I have asked the Committee to **designate $500,000 for USIP's Colombia program.** I also support fully funding USIP at $54 million. I leave the best way to allocate these funds to your best judgement.

In October 2021, USIP opened a permanent office in Colombia. In the worsening human rights situation confronting Colombia, the USIP Colombia Program has become a critical convening space for meetings with key local and national stakeholders on a range of sensitive issues in each of USIP's strategic pillars noted above. Its shoestring budget provides for minimal staffing and administrative costs at a time when expanding its programs could amplify its critical role as a good faith actor and mentor for peace, reconciliation, and reform inside Colombia.

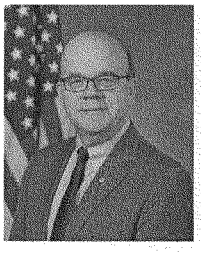
I recognize that it is a highly unusual request to designate funds for one of USIP's many programs, but the impact of its Colombia Office and staff in advancing peacebuilding in that troubled and violent country cannot be understated. I firmly believe that it merits this designated allocation. Time is of the essence to expand and strengthen this program before the peace process stalls and violence and polarization reassert themselves. I know that none of us in Congress wish to see Colombia repeat the horrors of the 1990s.

Second, I request that **$1.5 million be provided to the Bureau of Democracy, Labor, and Human Rights to develop a comprehensive regional protection program for Central American** judicial officials, independent media, and human rights defenders who face such extreme legal or administrative harassment that they are forced to stop work or even go into exile.

In recent years we have seen a deep erosion of judicial and prosecutorial independence in Central America along with a crackdown on independent media and the misuse of laws to restrict the work of civil society organizations. Those most affected by these trends are the individuals and NGOs leading the effort to combat impunity and corruption, protect human rights, and ensure rule of law – in other words, the very people and groups who most share our values and goals for the region.

I strongly believe it is in the U.S. interest to have in place a program or mechanism that ensures the safety of these key civil society and judicial actors wo that they might continue their human rights and anti-corruption work and for they and their families to receive the support required to function professionally while in exile.

Finally, I am also requesting **$10 million for peacebuilding, reconciliation, democracy-building, and food security initiatives in the Central African Republic.** In addition to countering several illegal armed actors in the CAR, conflict there has exacerbated religious and ethnic tensions and left 49% of the population food-insecure. While humanitarian assistance provides essential life-saving support, there remains massive gaps in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and livelihoods programming that could help support civilians to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. These civil society programs and initiatives can play an essential role in breaking cycles of conflict and displacement and help secure a more sustainable peace in the country.



Jim McGovern was born and raised in the Burncoat neighborhood of Worcester. The values he learned from his friends and family are the same ones he fights for every day in Congress: fairness, decency, respect for all people, and the idea that each of us has an obligation to give back to our community. Jim's parents, Walter and Mindy, own a small package store in Worcester, and his sisters are both public school teachers. He is married to Lisa Murray McGovern and they have two children, Patrick and Molly.

First elected to Congress in 1996, Jim has fought tirelessly for the people of Massachusetts and has earned the respect and trust of his colleagues – including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who named him Chairman of the powerful House Rules Committee during the 116th Congress.

He is a senior member of the House Committee on Agriculture's Subcommittee on Nutrition and Oversight. He also serves as the Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, and is the Democratic Co-Chair of the bipartisan Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission – both of which monitor, investigate and advocate on behalf of international human rights, the rule of law, and good governance.

Jim's commitment to public service began at a young age. In 7th grade, Jim volunteered on the 1972 presidential campaign of Senator George McGovern – no relation. When Jim decided to attend college at the American University in Washington, D.C. he applied for an internship in the office of Senator McGovern. He worked his way through college as an intern, earning a BA in history in 1981 before going to work in the office of Congressman Joe Moakley, a Democrat from South Boston. While working for Moakley, Jim went back to American University to earn a Master's Degree in Public Administration in 1984.

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022.

WITNESS

HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

OPENING STATEMENT OF MS. ESCOBAR

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Case. Thank you, Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers, for hosting this member day hearing. As the representative for El Paso, Texas, I am here to talk about an agency that most Americans have likely never heard of but is absolutely vital for those of who live on the southern border, the International Boundary and Water Commission, or the IBWC.

As this subcommittee knows, the overall mission of the IBWC is to oversee the application of United States-Mexico treaties, including settling differences that may arise in their application. However, the IBWC also plays a critical role in maintaining levees, dams, and other flood damage reduction activities. The United States section has been working diligently to meet the needs of communities along bodies of water like the Rio Grande, and I would like to thank the subcommittee for its steadfast leadership in increasing the Agency's funding over the past several years. However, after meeting with IBWC leadership and local stakeholders in my district, in order for IBWC to meet the needs of the moment, they need substantially higher funding beginning in fiscal year 2023. That is why I am requesting a $40 million increase for IBWC, divided evenly between the salaries and expenses and construction accounts.

At the moment, the IBWC needs more funding to address three critical areas: dredging of sediment, levee construction and repair, and replacement of heavy equipment. Because of the lack of funds, sediment has accumulated along the Rio Grande since the late 1990s, and, as a result, deferred maintenance has elevated flood risks in the vicinity of El Paso. While I have spoken with Commissioner Giner about this issue and knows she is committed to addressing it, the deferred dredging will likely cost hundreds of millions of dollars over the span of several years. And I apologize, that is Commissioner Giner. The increase I am proposing would allow IBWC to begin making a dent into the deferred dredging while also beginning to plan for yearly dredging.

With regard to levees, the role IBWC plays in their construction and repair is central to reducing flood risks for border residents. However, because work on the levees has been slow due to funding constraints, they have also played a direct role in the FEMA flood mapping process. More specifically, the draft flood maps FEMA has developed for El Paso now include large swaths of homes that would not normally be placed in these flood zones. The only reason they are in flood zones is because a nearby IBWC levee is either lacking certification or needs repairs. This places an additional financial burden on homeowners to purchase flood insurance. Getting IBWC the funds necessary to expeditiously take care of the levees will reduce flood risk and allow FEMA to properly evaluate the existing flood landscape.

The final funding priority is getting IBWC the funds needed to replace their existing heavy equipment. I was shocked to learn that some of the heavy equipment used in the El Paso area is simply not suitable workers and in dire need of upgrades. Providing more funds to the Border Heavy Equipment Program will allow IBWC to replace their existing inventory with state-of-the-art construction equipment while also protecting their workers.

In addition to a funding increase, we need to help bring IBWC into the 21st century. I am encouraged by Commissioner Giner's vision for IBWC and believe we should do what we can to support her. For example, engaging with institutions of higher education for research is something many other Federal agencies do regularly, and they benefit greatly from it. Oftentimes, this engagement allows them to find solutions to longstanding problems that they may not have been able to find otherwise. My report language request would simply encourage the IBWC to develop a strategy for engaging in research with institutions of higher education, specifically those along the southern border. This research would be limited to the purposes of their mission but I believe could yield results for the future of the IBWC.

Many thanks to the subcommittee for this opportunity and for consideration of my request. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank very much for that testimony, Congresswoman Escobar. I certainly know the area you are talking about. El Paso is my hometown, and thank you for representing us so well, and we look forward to following up and asking a couple questions. Votes have been called, though, but let me just see if Mr. Rogers has a question before I ask my final question of Ms. Escobar.

Mr. ROGERS. I have no questions, and I wish her well in this quest.

Ms. LEE. Let me just ask you about the IBWC and the last two administrations, and why they haven't asked for adequate funding. I am just curious about that. If you can just quickly tell us what is the——

Ms. ESCOBAR. Chairwoman Lee, that is a great question. We tried hard to get with the last leader of the IBWC. We were unable to secure a meeting with her after multiple attempts, but the community has long been crying out for support because the lack of the dredging, the old equipment, all of that has a direct impact on our homeowners, on our commercial property owners, who then have to buy flood insurance simply because the Federal Government is not taking care of its own property.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, and with that we have your full testimony to be included in the record.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Case. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Let me yield now to Mr. Case.

[The information follows:]

Rep. Escobar, State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Thank you, Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers, for hosting this Member Day hearing.

As the representative for El Paso, Texas, I am here to talk about an agency that most Americans have likely never heard of, but is absolutely vital for those of us who live on the southern border: the International Boundary and Water Commission, or IBWC. As this subcommittee knows, the overall mission of IBWC is to oversee the application of United States – Mexico treaties, including settling difference that may arise in their application. However, IBWC also plays a critical role in maintaining levees, dams, and other flood damage reduction activities. The United States section has been working diligently to meet the needs of communities along bodies of water like the Rio Grande and I would like to thank the subcommittee for its steadfast leadership in increasing the agency's funding over the past several years. However, after meeting with IBWC leadership and local stakeholders in my district, in order for IBWC to meet the needs of the moment, they need substantially higher

funding beginning in Fiscal Year 2023. That is why I am requesting a $40 million increase for IBWC, divided evenly between the Salaries & Expenses and Construction accounts.

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With regard to levees, the role IBWC plays in their construction and repair is central to reducing flood risks for border residents. However, because work on the levees has been slow due to funding

constraints, they have also played a direct role in the FEMA flood mapping process. More specifically, the draft flood maps FEMA has developed for El Paso now include large swaths of homes that would not normally be placed in these flood zones. The only reason they are included is because a nearby IBWC levee is either lacking certification or needs repairs. This places an additional financial burden upon homeowners to purchase flood insurance. Getting IBWC the funds necessary to expeditiously take care of the levees will reduce flood risk and allow FEMA to properly evaluate the existing flood landscape.

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In addition to a funding increase, we need to help bring IBWC into the 21st century. I am encouraged by Commissioner Gilner's vision for IBWC and believe we should do what we can to support her. For example, engaging with institutions of higher education for research is something many other federal agencies do regularly and they benefit greatly from it. Oftentimes this engagement allows them to find solutions to longstanding problems that they may not have been able to find otherwise. My report language request would simply encourage the IBWC to develop a strategy for engaging in research with institutions of higher education, specifically those along the southern border. This research would be limited to the purposes of their mission but I believe could yield results for the future of IBWC.

Thank you to the subcommittee for this opportunity and consideration of my requests.



Congresswoman Veronica Escobar, a third-generation El Pasoan, proudly represents Texas' 16th Congressional District.

She took office on January 3, 2019 as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives after making history as the first woman elected to this seat and the first of two Latinas from Texas to serve in Congress.

Congresswoman Escobar serves on the prestigious House Judiciary Committee, House Armed Services Committee, House Ethics Committee, and the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. In addition, she serves as Vice Chair of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel. She holds leadership positions on both the Democratic Women's Caucus as Vice Chair, and the Women's Working Group on Immigration Reform as Co-Chair. She is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the New Democrat Coalition, and a co-founder of the Congressional Moms Task Force on Family Separation.

In Congress, she has established herself as the voice of the border and as a national leader on gun safety, health care, and immigration, including fighting the Trump administration's inhumane and cruel policies that harm border communities. She has led legislation to address our nation's immigration challenges in a responsible and humane manner by ensuring accountability, transparency, and oversight.

On February 4, 2020, Congresswoman Escobar delivered the Spanish-language Democratic response to President Trump's State of the Union address. She gave the nationally televised speech from Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe, a community health clinic, in El Paso.

Before her election, she served on the governing body for El Paso County, first as a County Commissioner and then as County Judge. There, she fought back against those who used government for their own personal gain and worked with her colleagues to modernize and reform the organization. She also worked to make El Paso County a leader in expanding access to healthcare by working with the University Medical Center of El Paso to build primary care clinics and the El Paso Children's Hospital, the only children's hospital on the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Prior to her service with El Paso County, Congresswoman Escobar was an English teacher at the University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Community College, Communications Director for former Mayor Raymond Caballero, and the Executive Director of Community Scholars, a non-profit that taught high school students how to produce public policy reports and recommendations.

Congresswoman Escobar is a graduate of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and New York University (NYU). She and her husband, Michael, live in Central El Paso with their beloved cats. They have two grown children: Cristian Diego and Eloisa Isabel.

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022.

WITNESS

HON. ED CASE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF HAWAII

OPENING STATEMENT OF MR. CASE

Mr. CASE. Thank you so much, Chair Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, and Appropriations colleagues on this subcommittee, including Ms. Letlow. Mahalo, or thank you, for the opportunity to testify today in support of a solid fiscal year 2023 bill that fully invests in U.S. engagement throughout the Indo-Pacific, but especially the Pacific Islands.

The Pacific Islands region spans the vast expanse of ocean from Easter Island and Hawaii to the shores of New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, and Asia. The nations spread throughout these waters control a combined exclusive economic zone larger than the land mass of China and Russia combined. We share centuries, indeed millennia in the case of Hawaii and other Pacific parts of our country, of values, culture, and history with the Pacific Islands. Of course in World War II, our nation lost countless of our own on these islands and the surrounding seas, and we have been a full partner in the present and future of the Pacific in the three generations hence. In this Indo-Pacific century, our relationships throughout the Pacific are paramount.

The priorities of these nations are familiar because their fate is tied to our own in so many ways. Climate change is an existential threat for the Pacific Islands as rising sea levels have already begun to subsume their communities. Their economies have been ravaged by COVID–19, and they are increasingly forced to the frontlines of the geopolitical challenge with China. Successive nonpartisan/bipartisan administrations and Congresses have emphasized the urgent need to shift our foreign policy focus westward, but now is indeed the time to fund a coordinated U.S. Government strategy for engagement in the Pacific Islands. The President's recently released Indo-Pacific strategy speaks to the region's importance and commits to bolstering U.S. diplomatic engagement and cooperation with Pacific Island nations on mutual priorities. We must assure that this strategy is fully authorized, fully funded, and fully implemented.

There are many interrelated components, but to name just a few: the full return of the Peace Corps; bolstering efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; supporting training and scholarships for Pacific Islanders to study in the United States, especially through proven institutions such as the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii; increasing attache, consular, and embassy presence; and providing support for climate resilience projects, civil society, and trade development. Each initiative that we fully authorize, fund, and implement sends a clear message to the Pacific Islands that we stand with them in the face of mutual challenges, and that the United States is a neighbor and partner that they can count on to continue to share our common aspirations for a regional order, free of coercion and fully respectful of democracy, human rights, and the sovereignty of all nations.

In 2019, I co-founded the bipartisan Pacific Islands Caucus to increase awareness of the importance of the Pacific Islands within Congress. We have worked to ensure that the Pacific Islands are not overlooked in our approach to the Indo-Pacific. We have produced legislation, like the Blue Pacific Act, to ensure we include the region in our strategy for Indo-Pacific engagement. In fact, the United States Innovation and Competition Act and the America COMPETES Act contain provisions from the Blue Pacific Act, which, if funded, would be truly transformative for our approach to this region. The Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018 provides many of the authorizations needed to fund the Indo-Pacific and Pacific Islands related provisions of USICA and COMPETES.

However, this is only possible with specific carveouts and designations for the Pacific Islands in the educational and cultural exchange, international disaster assistance, development assistance, and global health programming accounts. Without funding to support strategic engagement in the Pacific, it becomes too easy for administrative inertia or diversion to stall our best intentions. I urge you to craft a fiscal year 2023 State and foreign operations appropriations bill that supports a comprehensive whole-of-government approach to U.S. engagement in the Pacific Islands.

We have made progress through renewed diplomatic and other efforts to engage Pacific leaders, including Secretary Blinken's and Congress' own travels in the region. However, without funding to support specific initiatives, visits alone and promises made will ring hollow. Now is the time to ensure that our foreign policy budget reflects the importance of our ties to the Pacific Islands and our support for a secure and stable Indo-Pacific, committed to an order based on mutual respect, cooperation, and freedom.

Thank you so much for considering my thoughts and my request.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Congressman Case. We certainly do need to do more with the Pacific Islands, and I appreciate your leadership on this. And thank you for introducing the Blue Pacific Act to really give a roadmap on how we strengthen our engagement in the Pacific Islands.

I will yield now to Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me thank Mr. Case for his interest in the Indo-Pacific. It is impressive bipartisan consensus has emerged not only to the importance of the Indo-Pacific region, to American national interests. One critical, but often neglected, area of competition with China is among the Pacific island countries that Mr. Case knows so well. What additional areas of economic, diplomatic, or cultural engagement would you emphasize if resources allow?

Mr. CASE. Thank you so much, Ranking Member, and I appreciate very much your support. And, to your point, we need look no further than the recent agreement between the Solomon Islands and China, for if we ever needed it, some kind of a warning shot as to the fork in the road we face with the Pacific Islands, it is right now. I would say to your question, I was just in the Pacific Islands on a bipartisan congressional delegation just a few weeks ago, and I want to emphasize one area where I think it is critical for us to assist, and that is maritime security.

The Pacific Islands depend on the enforcement of their rights in their exclusive economic zones. As you know, China is busy trying to rewrite the law on exclusive economic zones in the South China Sea and elsewhere, and these countries are subject to many, many threats and many, many initiatives to essentially erode their rights and give access to other countries to their EEZs. This is a matter of survival for them. And so maritime security is a particular area that they particularly need assistance with, and that they particularly welcome, by the way. It is an area where, for example, our Coast Guard is involved in almost all the Pacific Islands. In fact, I think it is all of the Pacific Islands in one way or the other, even islands that, you know, are a little skittish about the participation of our other armed services. Trade is going to be another very, very critical area, but the areas within the jurisdiction of this subcommittee and others all are going to be critical to whether we actually do boost our reengagement in the Pacific Islands.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you very much.

Ms. LEE. Are there any additional questions?

[No response.]

Ms. LEE. If not, thank you, again, Congressman Case. Thank you for yielding to Ms. Escobar out of order, and thank you for your testimony. We will be sure to include it in the record.

Mr. CASE. Thank you very much.

Ms. LEE. Now I would like to yield to Congresswoman Garcia. We still have probably about 300 members who haven't voted, but we are trying to move so that we can complete this, but if not, we will come back after votes.

I will yield now to Ms. Garcia.

[The information follows:]

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WATER, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE UNITED STATES

U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations
Member Day Testimony

May 17, 2022

Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of this Subcommittee:

Mahalo, or thank you, for the opportunity to testify today in support of a Fiscal Year 2023 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that fully invests in U.S. engagement throughout the Indo-Pacific, but especially the Pacific Islands.

The Pacific Islands region spans the vast expanse of ocean from Easter Island and Hawai'i to the shores New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia and Asia. The nations spread throughout these waters control a combined exclusive economic zone larger than the entire continental United States. We share centuries, if not millennia, of values, culture and history with the Pacific Islands. In World War II, our nation lost countless of our own on these islands and the surrounding seas. We have been a full partner in the present and future of the Pacific in the three generations hence. In this Indo-Pacific century, our relationships throughout the Pacific are paramount.

The priorities of these nations are familiar because their fate is tied to our own in many ways. Climate change is an existential threat for the Pacific Islands, as rising sea levels have already begun to subsume their communities. Their economies have been ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they are increasingly forced to the frontlines of the geopolitical challenge of China.

Successive administrations and Congresses have emphasized the urgent need to shift our foreign policy focus westwards. But now is indeed the time to fund a coordinated U.S. government strategy for engagement in the Pacific Islands. The President's recently released Indo-Pacific Strategy speaks to the region's importance and commits to bolstering U.S. diplomatic engagement and cooperating with Pacific Island nations on mutual priorities.

We must assure that this strategy is fully authorized, funded and implemented. There are many inter-related components, to include as just a few: the full return of the Peace Corps; bolstering

efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; supporting trainings and scholarships for Pacific Islanders to study in the United States, especially through proven institutions such as the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawai'i; increasing our attaché, consular and embassy presence; and providing support for climate resilience projects, civil society, and trade development.

Each initiative that we fully authorize, fund and implement sends a clear message to the Pacific Islands that we stand with them in the face of mutual challenges, and that the United States is a neighbor and partner to all those who share common aspirations for a regional order free of coercion and fully respectful of democracy, human rights and the sovereignty of all nations.

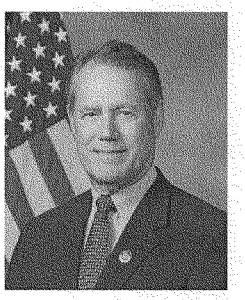
In 2019, I co-founded the bipartisan Pacific Islands Caucus to increase awareness of the importance of the Pacific Islands within the Congress. We have worked to ensure that the Pacific Islands are not overlooked in our approach to the Indo-Pacific, and we have produced legislation like the BLUE Pacific Act to ensure we include the region in our strategy for Indo-Pacific engagement. The United States Innovation and Competition Act and the America COMPETES Act contain provisions from the BLUE Pacific Act which. if funded, would be transformative for our approach to the region.

The Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018 provides many of the authorizations needed to fund the Indo-Pacific and Pacific Islands related provisions of United States Innovation and Competition Act and the America COMPETES Act. However, this is only possible with specific carveouts for the Pacific Islands in the educational and cultural exchange, international disaster assistance, development assistance and global health programming accounts. Without funding to support strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific, it becomes too easy for administrative inertia to stall our best intentions.

I urge you to craft a Fiscal Year 2023 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that supports a comprehensive, whole of government approach to U.S. engagement in the Pacific Islands. We have made progress through renewed diplomatic and other efforts to engage Pacific leaders, including Secretary Blinken's and Congress' own travels to the region. However, without funding to support specific initiatives, visits alone and promises made will ring hollow.

Now is the time to ensure that our foreign policy budget reflects the importance of our ties to the Pacific Islands and our support for a secure and stable Indo-Pacific, committed to an order based on mutual respect, cooperation and freedom. Mahalo for listening, and I look forward to working with you on our Committee and otherwise to fully realize our goals.

CONGRESSMAN
ED CASE
Hawai'i • District 1



U.S. Representative Ed Case proudly represents Hawaii's First Congressional District (O'ahu from Makapu'u through Central Honolulu and Leeward to Mililani, Waipahu, Ewa, Kapolei and Ko Olina).

Congressman Case previously represented Hawaii's Second Congressional District (Windward O'ahu, North Shore, Central O'ahu, Wai'anae, Neighbor Islands, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands) from 2002 to 2007. He also served as Hawai'i State Representative from 1994 to 2002 in various positions including Majority Leader.

Ed Case was born and raised in Hilo. His great grandparents on his father's side emigrated to Hawai'i in 1896 from Kansas and his family has lived on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island over the generations since. His mother was born and raised in Missouri and met his father in Boston where she was attending college and he was attending law school.

Ed attended Waiakea-Kai and Keaukaha Elementary Schools in Hilo before graduating from Hawai'i Preparatory Academy in Kamuela. He went on to graduate from Williams College in Massachusetts before working on Capitol Hill for three years as legislative assistant to U.S. Representative/Senator Spark Matsunaga of Hawai'i.

Following this first of three DC tours, Congressman Case graduated from University of California/Hastings College of Law in San Francisco before returning to Hawai'i to serve initially as law clerk to Hawai'i Supreme Court Chief Justice William Richardson. He then joined the Honolulu-based law firm of Carlsmith Ball, Hawaii's oldest, where for two decades he practiced litigation, property, transactional, business and government law and rose from associate to partner and managing partner.

Following his initial service as U.S. Representative, Case practiced law for seven years with the Honolulu firm of Bays Lung Rose & Holma, where he also served as managing attorney. He then served for five years as Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer of Outrigger Enterprises Group, one of Hawaii's oldest hotel and resort companies with properties throughout Hawai'i and the Pacific-Asia-Indian Ocean region.

Case is married to Audrey (Nakamura), a sansei (third generation from Japan) whose Hawai'i roots are in Honolulu and Kona. Audrey was Ed's Hawai'i Prep classmate and worked for four decades as a flight attendant with Pan American and United. They have four children, a daughter-in law and two grandchildren.

In his spare time ... Ed enjoys hiking and other outdoor and water activities, especially sailing and bodysurfing. Ed and Audrey also enjoy travel and family activities with a renewed emphasis on babysitting.

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022.

WITNESS

HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

OPENING STATEMENT OF MS. GARCIA

Ms. GARCIA. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I will need less than 5 minutes. And I am proxying for about 3 or 4 people, so I do need to get to the floor just like everybody else, so I appreciate your consideration. And thank you to Ranking Member Rogers and all the committee members for having me here today to share my fiscal year 2023 priorities for the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

I am proud to represent Texas' 29th Congressional District. This includes parts of Houston, South Houston, Pasadena, Jacinto City, and Galena Park. I am a strong advocate for the LGBTQ community in my community and abroad. Unfortunately, at least 68 countries have lost or criminalize same-sex sexual relations between consenting adults, and at least nine countries have laws criminalizing forms of gender expression that target trans people. This is unacceptable. Nobody should be discriminated against or denied their human rights just for being who they are.

As a defender of human rights for LGBTQ people around the world, I am proud to sign and support Representative Cicilline's fiscal year 2023 appropriations request letter to support funding for LGBTQI-plus individuals globally. Specifically, this letter requests $30 million for the Global Equality Fund at the State Department and $30 million for the Equal Rights and Action Fund at USAID, which are funded through this HAP committee. As members of Congress, we should be committed to the pursuit of global equality for all, no matter what you look like, where you are from, or who you love, and that is why this request urges appropriators to invest in LGBTQI-plus rights around the world.

U.S. foreign assistance programs at the State Department and USAID have been vital in supporting LGBTQI-plus people and are embedded in broader initiatives that support democracy, human rights, and economic development. Funding these programs will allow the United States to restore its leadership in this area and support our global citizens. Coincidentally, today is also International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, which was founded to draw attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTQI-plus people around the world. In honor of today's international day, I ask for your strong consideration of these funding requests.

I appreciate all the members' time today, and I would be happy to answer questions should you have any. Madam Chair, with that, I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Representative Garcia. The LGBTQ-plus-I community has been largely marginalized and subject to discrimination and violence for simply wanting basic human dignity, so you for calling this to our attention.

I will yield now to Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Madam Chair, I have no questions.

Ms. LEE. Any additional questions?

[No response.]

Ms. LEE. If not, thank you very much for being with us today. Your full testimony will be included in the record, and we will proceed accordingly. Thank you, Ms. Garcia.

Ms. GARCIA. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I will see you on the floor.

Ms. LEE. Thank you for bringing this to us.

I will now yield to, Representative Radewagen. Am I pronouncing your name correctly? Please——

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Yes.

Ms. LEE. Thank you for being with us. Please proceed.

[The information follows:]

Congresswoman Sylvia R. Garcia (TX-29)

State, Foreign Ops Subcommittee Appropriations Remarks

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, and committee members, for having me here today to share my Fiscal Year 2023 priorities for the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs. I am proud to represent Texas' 29th Congressional District, which includes Houston, South Houston, Pasadena, Jacinto City, and Galena Park. And I am a proud member of the Congressional Equality Caucus. I am a strong advocate for the LGBTQIA+ community--in my community and abroad. Unfortunately, at least 68 countries have laws that criminalize same-sex sexual relations between consenting adults and at least nine countries have laws criminalizing forms of gender expression that target transgender people. This is unacceptable. Nobody should be discriminated against--or denied their human rights--just for being themselves. As a defender of human rights for LGTBTQIA+ people around the world, I am proud to sign and support Rep. Cicilline's FY23 Appropriations request letter to support funding programs for LGBTQIA+ individuals globally. Specifically, this letter requests $30 million for the Global Equality Fund at the State Department and $30 million for the Equal Rights in Action Fund at USAID, which are funded through this subcommittee. As Members of Congress, we should be committed to the pursuit of global equality. Equality for all. No matter what you look like, where you're from or who you love. And that is why this request urges appropriators to invest in LGBTQIA+ rights around the world. U.S. foreign assistance programs at the State Department and USAID have been vital in supporting LGBTQI+ people and are embedded in broader initiatives that support democracy, human rights and economic development. Funding these programs will allow the United States to restore its leadership in this area and support our global citizens. Coincidentally, today is also the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), which was founded to draw attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTQI+ people around the world. In honor of today's International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, I ask for your strong consideration of these funding requests. I appreciate your time today, members. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you again, and I yield back.



Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia was sworn in to represent Texas Congressional District 29 on January 3, 2019. She became the first Hispanic member of the Houston Congressional Delegation and one of the first two Latinas to represent the State of Texas in the U.S. Congress. She serves on the House Judiciary, Financial Services, and the Armed Services Committees.

Sylvia R. Garcia was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in November 2018, becoming the first Latina ever to represent the Texas 29th Congressional district.

Sylvia is a native of Palito Blanco, a South Texas farming community The eighth of ten children, Congresswoman Garcia saw her parents struggle to raise her and her siblings. Congresswoman Garcia's parents taught her that with hard work and a good education she could accomplish anything. As a result of these lessons, Congresswoman Garcia dedicated herself to success at school. She earned a scholarship to Texas Woman's University in Denton, where she graduated with a degree in social work and political science. Congresswoman Garcia then received her Doctor of Jurisprudence from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in Houston, working several jobs to pay for her tuition. Just as her parents believed in her future, Congresswoman Garcia believes the children of Texas can do anything. Garcia has dedicated her life to her community and to public service. As a social worker and legal aid lawyer early in her professional career, she protected our community's most vulnerable, old and young, and ensured no one was forgotten.

Sylvia continued her public service career by serving as Director and Presiding Judge of the Houston Municipal System for an unprecedented five terms under two mayors. In 1998, she was elected City Controller, the second-highest elected official in Houston city government and its chief financial officer. She quickly earned a reputation as the taxpayers' watchdog, fighting to protect the pocketbooks of working families and ensuring the City was transparent and accountable.

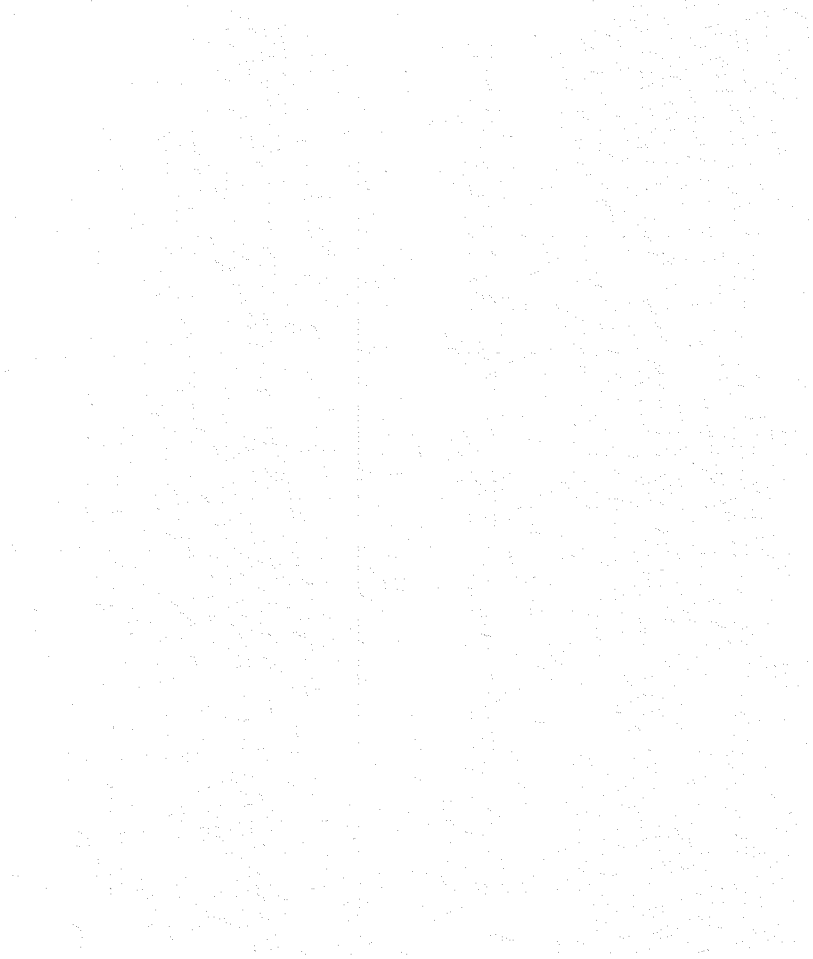
After two terms as Controller, Sylvia was elected to the Harris County Commissioner's Court. The first Hispanic and first woman to be elected in her own right to the office, she continued her advocacy for working families and made certain Harris County took care of its most defenseless, all while making certain Harris County led the way for new jobs and economic development.

Sylvia was sworn into the Texas State Senate on March 11, 2013, representing Senate District 6. She became the seventh woman and the third Hispanic woman to serve in the upper chambers after winning a special runoff election for the seat of the late Senator Mario Gallegos.

In 2018, Sylvia decided to take her fight to Washington. She ran to represent her community, country, and family in Congress. On Jan 3, 2019, she was sworn in to represent Texas Congressional District 29. She became the first Hispanic member of the Houston Congressional Delegation and one of the first two Latinas to represent the State of Texas in the U.S. Congress.

Sylvia serves on the House Judiciary and House Financial Services Committees. During her first year in Congress, she played a critical role in the impeachment investigation against President Donald Trump. On January 15, 2020, she was selected as one of seven impeachment managers

tasked with making the case to the American people and the Senate for the removal of Donald Trump as President of the United States. She is the first Hispanic and one of the first three women to ever serve as an impeachment manager in a presidential impeachment trial.



TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022.

WITNESS

HON. AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN, A DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM AMERICAN SAMOA

OPENING STATEMENT OF MRS. RADEWAGEN

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Thank you, Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers, for the opportunity to testify today on the need of an increase of U.S. investment in the Pacific Island region in the fiscal year 2023 appropriations bill.

The United States is a Pacific Island nation. We have been a Pacific Island nation for over 100 years. However, since the end of the Cold War, we have forgotten our commitments to the region. Unfortunately, in that time, new challenges have arisen in the region. China is increasingly making their presence felt in neighboring Samoa. They have invested in building a dual-use airport less than 80 miles from American Samoa, but it is not just Samoa that China is influencing. Just earlier this year, China signed a security agreement with the Solomon Islands, but did not do so transparently. Active U.S. involvement can prevent other small Pacific Island States from being taken advantage of by China.

However, China does not represent the existential threat to the Pacific like climate change does. Rising sea levels threaten to completely cover some islands in the near future. Every small Pacific Island country says that climate change is their biggest national security concern, and it is not just climate change that is threatening Pacific Island countries. COVID–19 has completely isolated Pacific Island countries, many of whom don't have the resources in case of a major outbreak. We as the United States have the ability to counteract the threats of China, climate change, and COVID in the SFOPs appropriations bill. We need a unified, whole-of-government Indo-Pacific strategy that addresses the concerns of our neighbors in the region. And I believe, like Congressman Case, that thorough engagement is critical.

I humbly ask that the committee increase funding of accounts and programs that engage the U.S. in the Pacific. Such programs include development assistance, diplomatic programs, international disaster assistance, education, and cultural exchange programs. These accounts fund programs that allow the United States to develop bonds with government officials and civil society of Pacific Island countries. One of which I am passionate about is the Young Pacific Leaders Program, which strengthens bonds of the Pacific's future leaders with young leaders in the United States. These bonds are important for future generations. Another which I care about is education scholarships for Pacific Island students. China is greatly out-competing us on this front. They are providing education to young Pacific Islander students who then go on to work in the governments of Pacific Island countries. We can compete. We have the best universities in the world, and we can provide that education with scholarships to Pacific Island students.

For the United States to maintain and deepen its relationships in the region, we must put real resources towards our diplomatic

presence, partnerships for development, and engagement with civil society.

Thank you for your time and for consideration of the needs of the people of the Indo-Pacific region. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much for your testimony, and as I said earlier, we must acknowledge that we need to do more with the Pacific Islands. And I also recognize the existential threat that small islands face, especially with climate change and many of the other issues you laid out. So thank you very much for bringing this to our attention.

I will yield now to Mr. Rogers if he has a question.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. I noted earlier the bipartisan consensus on the importance of the Indo-Pacific region to American national interests. China's apparent military inroads in the Solomon Islands shows us the dangers of taking our eyes off the ball. While we have strong historical relationships with many of these countries dating back to World War II, it is critical we do not take them for granted. In your view, Mrs. Radewagen, has the State Department and USAID been paying enough attention to the region?

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Well, the short answer is no. They have been, but they need to pay much more attention because we are losing these areas, and China is all over these areas like a cheap suit, Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you very much. I yield.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I yield now to Representative Espaillat.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Representative Radewagen. The problem is sometimes they make expensive suits, too, and they sell them. They peddle them not just in the Indo-Pacific Islands. It is in the Caribbean. And so, for example, island nations' abilities to have disaster resilience as they stand in the pathway of hurricanes is very costly. And often China and others come in with financing for important disaster resilience projects in the Caribbean as well as the energy issue in the Caribbean, which continues to be a major problem. The cost of energy, as it is here in the United States as well, has gone through the roof, and, of course, that has impacted the cost of food and other emergency items.

And so we must lead in providing financing. China provides 1 percent interest loans to those island nations and other countries, and, of course, they have no other choice but to go there to address some of these very urgent needs. You have, for example, maternal healthcare in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. We have spoken about that in this committee last time around about providing funding to address the maternal care costs of Haitian women in Haiti and the DR, as well as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, which is one that addresses security in the region. It reduces corruption in the region. It strengthens the ability, again, to respond to natural disasters.

So I know that island nations are often facing these very difficult choices when it comes to natural disasters and the environment. So, Representative Radewagen, I want to know what kind of initiatives you are putting in the other part of the world to address this that require our intervention? Are there any particular projects

that you may have that I think that are worthy in the Indo-Pacific Islands?

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Well, the short answer would be, of course, climate change and COVID issues. Those are important not only in the Pacific region, but in your region as well, the Caribbean.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. If there are no additional questions, let me thank you for being with us today, and once again calling our attention to the importance of the Indo-Pacific region, and for your testimony. It will be included in the record, and we look forward to working with you. Thank you again.

I will now yield to Representative Malinowski. I believe we still have time. A hundred and thirty-three members have not voted yet, so we will be able to get through your testimony. Representative Malinowski, thank you for being here.

[The information follows:]

Rep. Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (American Samoa- AT LARGE)
Member Day Testimony for FY 23 to the
Appropriations State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee

Thank you, Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers, for the opportunity to testify today on the need of an increase of U.S. investment in the Pacific Island region in the FY2023 appropriations bill.

The United States is a Pacific Island nation. We have been a Pacific Island nation for over a hundred years. However, since the end of the Cold War we have forgotten our commitments to the region.

Unfortunately, in that time new challenges have arisen in the region. China is increasingly making their presence felt – in neighboring Samoa they've invested in building a dual use airport – less than 80 miles from American Samoa!

But it's not just Samoa that China is influencing, just earlier this year, China signed a security agreement with the Solomon Islands – but not did do so transparently. Active U.S. involvement can prevent other small Pacific Island states from being taken advantage of by China.

However, China does not represent the existential threat to the Pacific like climate change does. Rising sea levels threaten to completely cover some islands in the near future. Every small Pacific Island country says that climate change is their biggest national security concern.

And it's not just climate change that is threatening Pacific Island countries – COVID-19 has completely isolated many Pacific Island countries, whom don't have the resources incase of a major outbreak.

We, as the United States, have the ability to counter act the threats of China, climate change, and COVID in the SFOPs appropriations bill. We need a unified whole of government Indo-Pacific strategy that addresses the concerns of our neighbors in the region.

I humbly ask that the committee increase funding of accounts and programs that engage the U.S. in the Pacific.

Such programs include Development Assistance, Diplomatic Programs, International Disaster Assistance, Education and Cultural Exchange Programs.

These accounts fund programs that allow the United States to develop bonds with government officials and civil society of Pacific Island countries. One of which I'm passionate about is the

Young Pacific Leaders program which strengthens bonds of the Pacific's future leaders with young leaders in the United States. These bonds are important for future generations.

Another which I care about, is education scholarships for Pacific Island students – China is greatly out competing us on this front. They are providing education to young Pacific Islander students, who then go on to work in the governments of Pacific Island countries. We can compete! We have the best universities in the world, and we can provide that education with scholarships to Pacific Island students.

For the United States to maintain and deepen its relationships in the region, we must put real resources towards our diplomatic presence, partnerships for development, and engagement with civil society.

Thank you for your time and for consideration of the needs of the people of the Pacific.

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Congresswoman Aumua Amata

Congressional Bio

AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN (AUMUA AMATA), Republican, was elected as American Samoa's third Member of Congress on November 4, 2014. She is the first woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives from American Samoa, the first Republican woman of Samoan descent in Congress and the highest elected Asian-Pacific Republican officeholder.

Committee Assignments

Congresswoman Amata serves on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in a senior role as Vice Ranking Member of the full Committee, as well as two of its Subcommittees: The Subcommittee on Health, her top choice of assignments for the Veterans of American Samoa, along with the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

She also serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and two of its Subcommittees: the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife, her top choice for the islands of American Samoa, along with the Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States.

In her capacity on these committees, she legislates, conducts oversight of laws and Departments in the Administration, and proposes policies and programs. She is active on issues of health, education, welfare, political status, and all economic and social programs concerning the U.S. Territories: American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), along with the Freely Associated States (FAS) of Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Federated States of Micronesia (RMI), in addition to overseeing policies affecting the 562 Federally recognized Indian Tribes in the United States.

Bipartisan Legislative Efforts

In a major bipartisan achievement, Congresswoman Aumua Amata Radewagen has consistently ranked highly among all members of Congress in sponsoring and co-sponsoring bills with those

of the opposite party, according to an index that examines bipartisanship in Congress. The Bipartisan Index, developed by Georgetown University and the Lugar Center, tracks how frequently a Member sponsors and co-sponsors bipartisan bills, and ranked the Congresswoman 28th among all the Members of the 115th Congress (out of 441 Districts), although she is top 15 of those remaining in Congress for the ongoing 116th Congress.

In 2017, the Congresswoman introduced, then Congress passed and President Trump signed into law, her legislation naming the American Samoa Veterans Clinic in honor of her predecessor, the late Congressman Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, and Vice President Mike Pence accepted her invitation to preside over the designation ceremony in a historic visit to American Samoa.

In late 2017, she was effective in having the American Samoa Economic Development Credit (ASEDC) passed as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, a provision which fosters economic growth and investment as well as stabilizes employment for the nearly 3,000 workers in the American Samoa tuna industry workforce.

In early 2018, the Congresswoman was successful in passing the content and key provisions of her bill, H. R. 385, as part of larger legislation, the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act (S. 2155). The measure will protect local American Samoan banking customers from unreasonable delays in check deposits and transfers, making these banking services timely and equitable with people throughout the rest of the U.S.

Aumua Amata Background

Amata is the fourth of 13 children to the late Governor and Mrs. Peter Tali Coleman. Her father Governor Coleman was the first person of Samoan descent to be appointed Governor of American Samoa and later became the territory's first popularly elected governor. A member of the Republican Party, he was the only U.S. governor whose service spanned five decades (1956–1961, 1978–1985 and 1989–1993) and one of the longest-serving governors of any jurisdiction in American history.

Prior to being a Member of Congress, the Congresswoman served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives Majority Leadership Staff for eight years, including Conference scheduling director and supervised the database created to reach out to Asian Pacific and other minority aspirants for congressional staff positions. She also served as scheduling director to U.S. Rep. Philip Crane (R-IL), the dean of the House Republican Conference at the time of his retirement. Earlier in her career, she served at the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. She also was the first executive assistant to the first delegate-at-large to Washington from American Samoa.

Aumua Amata also has been involved in promoting democracy and fighting for women's and minorities rights since the beginning of her career and helping build democratic institutions abroad. As a trainer since 1992, she has participated in missions to Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan and Morocco for the International Republican Institute and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. She has conducted training in Washington for Iraqi,

Congolese and Uyghur women leaders. Other international work has included participation in several Pacific regional conferences.

In 2003 she became the first and only Pacific Islander ever chosen as "Outstanding Woman of the Year" by the National Association of Professional Asian American Women (NAPAW). In 2008, she received the International Leadership Foundation's Visionary Award and in 2013 was presented the "Inspirational Speaker" Award at the Ninth Annual Samoan Athletes Heart of Champions Ceremony in La Mesa, California.

A founding member of the American Samoa Society, other affiliations over the years have included the Guam Society of America and the Hawaii State Society as well as the Women's Foreign Policy Group in Washington and the Independent Women's Forum. She also belongs to the Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association.

A 25-year cancer survivor, Amata has served as spokesperson for the Samoan Women's Health Project to promote cancer awareness and bring mammography to the territory, has been liaison to the National Breast Cancer Coalition since 1993, and has volunteered with the hospital Women's Auxiliary. She also is a member of the board of Field House 100 American Samoa, a non-profit organization devoted to finding athletic scholarship opportunities in the states for talented high school athletes in American Samoa.

Education and Personal

The Congresswoman holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Guam, with additional studies at Loyola-Marymount and George Mason Universities. In 2018, she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by her alma mater, the University of Guam, and in 2017, named among the University's Distinguished Alumni. In 2018, she also was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Virginia University of Science and Technology.

She is married to Fred Radewagen, and they have three grown children and two grandchildren.

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022.

WITNESS

HON. TOM MALINOWSKI, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

OPENING STATEMENT OF MR. MALINOWSKI

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so much. Thanks, Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers. I wanted to come here today just, first and foremost, to thank you both for your bipartisan support for an America that shows up around the world, an American that leads. Many of us in Congress have ambitious ideas about what America should be doing around the world—supporting our allies, standing up for our values, standing down adversaries, whether Russia in Ukraine or China in the Asia-Pacific—and yet not all of our colleagues recognize the importance of actually resourcing the State Department to be able to do the things that we demand that they do, which, as you all know, they do with less than 1 percent of the Federal budget.

I also wanted to thank you both for putting up with me and all of our colleagues who come at you with letters and requests, helping us move the needle on dozens of issues that are important to us around the world. In particular, I know how much work has gone to recently bicameral negotiations on trying to elevate human rights as a factor in U.S. military aid in the Middle East and other parts of the world. I can tell you as a former senior State Department official, the State Department frequently is proud of itself for how it uses tools that Congress imposed upon it against its will, whether it is the Leahy law that affects how we do military assistance and training around the world, or the Magnitsky Human Rights Act, which allows for sanctions against human rights abusers. All these things were opposed by State Departments under both Democratic and Republican administrations, and they are now incredibly proud of how they work with us to actually use these tools, and it is something to keep in mind as we conduct our oversight.

I am also here to draw your attention to a letter that I led with 20 colleagues requesting a bump-up to the budget for the State Department officers that oversee arms transfers around the world. Security assistance is one of the most visible and defining elements of our relationships with a lot of countries around the world, from Colombia, to Niger, to Egypt. The scale of our military aid often dwarfs our economic assistance, and it sometimes generates a perception that the United States is the guarantor of the regimes of those countries. Sometimes it associates us with abuses committed by their security forces. And as arms transfers overseas loom, the personnel support at the State Department overseeing those transfers has stagnated. By our calculations, the State Department has to sign off on the human rights risks associated with weapons export licenses every 5 minutes, one sign-off every 5 minutes, and that is only with a handful of staff.

So we urge your committee, myself and a number of other colleagues, to consider providing a boost to the State Department resourcing that would help to make up the difference between what

they have budgeted and what we are actually asking them to do, to enforce the laws that we put into place. So I hope you are you are able to consider that as you look to next year's bill.

And then finally, I know we have had many conversations about the urgent importance of making sure America does her part to fight the COVID epidemic in countries that can't always afford to do so on their own. I think all of us approach our role as stewards of our foreign affairs with a spirit of generosity. We may be personally moved by the humanitarian elements of this challenge, helping developing countries defeat this disease, but there is also a very, very significant national interest. I talk about this all the time in my district, and I say I would much rather beat this pandemic in Africa than have to beat it again in New Jersey. The worst thing that could happen is another variant that shuts down the American economy again, and we can either fight it for a few billion dollars around the world or a few trillion dollars in America. And I know that members of this subcommittee agree with that, and we will continue to work together to try to make it happen.

Thank you so much. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much. Let me just say how much we appreciate your advocacy on all of these issues and your strong advocacy. And I have long been concerned about our human rights concerns and issues taking a backseat in our security assistance policies. And hopefully we will have a revised policy that requires stringent human rights reviews prior, mind you, to the approval of arms sales. So thank you for raising also the issue of COVID because what affects one affects all, and we are going to hopefully get this done sooner or later, but keep fighting hard. We appreciate it.

I will yield to Mr. Rogers now.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for your testimony. We look forward to working with you. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Espaillat, I see your hand up. That may have been for a prior question?

[No response.]

Ms. LEE. If not, let me just say, Mr. Malinowski, your full testimony will be submitted for the record, and we will seriously consider the proposals you presented to us today, and thank you for being with us.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you. Let's go vote.

Ms. LEE. Yes. So let me thank our colleagues for taking time to come and testify, but also for all of you who are still with us on this subcommittee for hanging in there. We are going to, of course, keep the record open for, I think, 7 days so we can receive testimony and submit it for the record.

[The information follows:]

TOM MALINOWSKI
7TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

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Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
May 17, 2022

Testimony of Rep. Tom Malinowski

Chair Lee, Ranking Member Rogers,

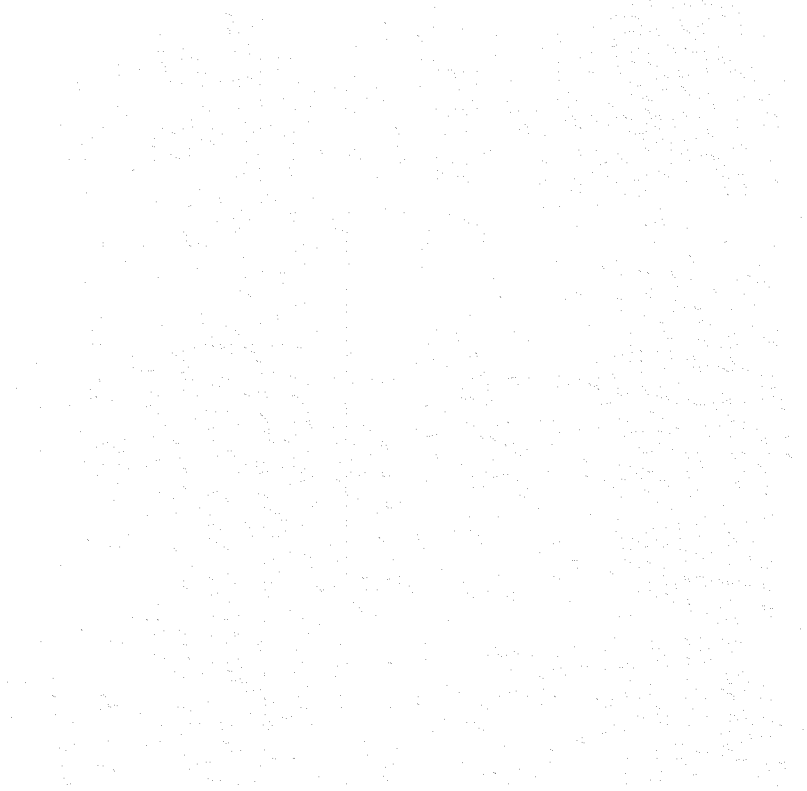
I wanted to come today to first and foremost thank you both for your bipartisan support of an America that is present around the world and *shows up*—an America that *leads* global efforts to care for the most vulnerable, hungry, and persecuted. America's support for Ukraine's brave fighters and vulnerable civilians is just one example of our generosity that is backed by this committee.

I also wanted to thank you and your staff for putting up with the many requests and letters from myself and colleagues—and helping us move the needle on dozens of files. In particular, I know how much work has gone into bicameral negotiations on elevating human rights as a factor in US military aid appropriations for the Middle East. I appreciate your committee's willingness to question the status quo and aid policies like these that have been on autopilot for years. US security interests and priorities are constantly shifting, so it's appropriate that our foreign affairs budget reflect the same rapid evolutions.

I am also here to draw your attention to a letter I lead with 20 colleagues requesting a bump to the budget for the State Department offices overseeing arms transfers. Security aid constitutes one of the most visible and defining elements of US relations with many countries around the world. From Colombia, to Niger, to Egypt, the scale of our military aid in many countries has sometimes generated perceptions that the United States serves as a *guarantor* for regimes and associates us with abuses by their security forces. However, as US arms transfers overseas have boomed, the personnel support infrastructure overseeing these transfers has stagnated. By our calculations, the State Department has to sign off on the human rights risks associated with a weapons export license every five minutes. And that's with only a handful of staff.

So I am urging your committee to consider providing an overdue boost to State Department resourcing that would help to make up the difference between what they have budgeted and what we're asking them to do. Congressional oversight of arm sales is so robust precisely because we know these decisions can have tangible impact on the lives of citizens in recipient countries—from contributing to abuses, to empowering repressive regimes, or to fueling corruption. It is for these reasons that State Department personnel must be properly resourced to execute these programs in line with America's values, responsibilities, and interests.

Thanks for looking at that request and thanks again for working so hard to balance what I know are many competing interests and perspectives on US assistance abroad. Best of luck with this year's bill and I will separately look forward to continuing to engage with your committee on bipartisan efforts to fund the fight against COVID-19 overseas. We can't afford the economic disruptions from future variants coming from abroad so we must come together to find a way to fund distribution and vaccination overseas.



Ms. LEE. This concludes today's hearing. Ms. Letlow, they don't move this quickly all of the time, but really happy you were able to be with us today.

This concludes our hearing. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands adjourned. I want to thank all the staff for helping us get through this.

Written Testimony for the Record Submitted by Members of Congress

SFOPS Appropriations Subcommittee Member Day Hearing
May 17, 2022

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

Congressman Jim Costa (CA-16)

Thank you, Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers for holding this hearing and giving members an opportunity to highlight priorities within the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee bill for Fiscal Year 2023. While there are a broad range of issues that demand our attention, I would like to highlight the importance of supporting aid to Armenia. As someone who had the privilege of growing up with the Armenian community and has since visited the country several times, I know firsthand how critical this funding is.

I am proud to have cosigned Chairman Pallone's appropriations letter to Chairwoman Barbara Lee and Ranking Member Hal Rogers which outlines the most pressing funding requests for the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh. First, I would like to highlight the importance of robust funding to Artsakh, and urge the inclusion of not less than $50,000,000 for UXO clearance, humanitarian assistance, and resettlement support.

I also urge the inclusion of $100 million for security, economic, and governance assistance for Armenia. Supporting the Department of State and USAID's Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia, and the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, respectively, is vital.

Lastly, I would like to urge a prohibition on U.S. Military Aid to Azerbaijan, and note my profound ongoing concern for Armenian Prisoners of War and captured civilians. It's my strong

conviction that all US security assistance programs, including those for which funding is proposed for the upcoming fiscal year, must not be supporting the Government of Azerbaijan.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice these important funding priorities, and I appreciate your consideration.



Rep. Jim Costa

Steve Cohen, Tennessee Ninth District

Thank you for the opportunity to present my top priority for the Fiscal Year 2023 State and Foreign Operations bill. I appreciate your consideration of the following priority focused on global polio eradication. Thank you for your ongoing support of funding for the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Polio Eradication Initiative. I request the consideration of $165 million for this program in FY23.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is one of the largest, most successful, public-private health initiatives ever created. As a result of this global effort, nearly three billion children have been immunized, 20 million have been spared disability, and over 900,000 polio-related deaths have been averted. In addition, more than 1.5 million childhood deaths have been prevented, thanks to the systematic administration of Vitamin A during polio campaigns.

Global polio incidence has been reduced by more than 99 percent and wild poliovirus incidence was reduced by a further 96 percent in 2021 as compared to 2020. However, outbreaks of circulating vaccine derived polio represent an ongoing challenge. These outbreaks are made possible due to under-immunized communities; and these have increased following COVID-19 health service disruptions.

This funding will enable USAID to intensify active subnational and community-based surveillance to detect and investigate cases in 25 countries and 5 regions by expanding environmental surveillance and increasing the number of surveillance medical officers and community-based surveillance officers, particularly in high-risk areas. It would also support high-quality immunization campaigns - including outbreak response immunization campaigns in high risk and remote areas - by supporting targeted, evidence-based innovations to overcome

barriers, building community demand and addressing vaccine hesitancy, and strengthening in-country capacity in order to interrupt polio transmission globally.

This issue is of particular importance to me because I suffered from polio as a child just as vaccines were starting to be administered. My father was a doctor responsible for giving the polio vaccine to second-grade students when my older brother was in second grade. He vaccinated my brother and brought a vaccine home to give to me, but he decided not to give me the vaccine because he was not supposed to give it outside of the second-grade test group. Four or five months later, I came down with polio, and I continue to experience the long-term effects to this day. Being vaccinated against polio just a little earlier would have made a big difference in my life.

Until the world is polio-free, all children, even those in the United States, remain at risk. Continued U.S. leadership is essential to ensuring we capitalize on the historic opportunity to rid the world of polio once and for all. To continue this tremendous progress, I respectfully request your continued support for the polio eradication efforts of the USAID in the FY2023 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

CONGRESSMAN JOHN GARAMENDI (D-CA)
SFOPS Member Day
May 17, 2022

Peace Corps Appropriations Request

Chairwoman Lee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before the subcommittee today. I am here today to request that you provide $450 million for the Peace Corps, in the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act for FY23. This $39.5 million increase in funding from FY22 would allow the Peace Corps to complete its resumption of pre-pandemic operations and enable it to fulfill its longstanding goal of deploying 10,000 volunteers worldwide.

Like successive generations of young Americans, my wife Patti and I answered President John F. Kennedy's call and served in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia from 1966-1968. Since the establishment of the Peace Corps' in 1961, more than 240,000 American volunteers have served in 142 countries around the world. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were nearly 8,000 Peace Corps volunteers serving in 61 countries. Today, Peace Corps volunteers are beginning to return to their crucial work as conditions in their respective countries allow.

However, for seven consecutive years, Congress has failed to provide new meaningful resources for the Peace Corps. Now more than ever, Congress must support the Peace Corps' mission with additional funding and realize President Kennedy's vision of generations of young Americans, ready to serve their nation and make the world a better place.

As co-chair of the Congressional Peace Corps Caucus, I am proud to continue working in support of the Peace Corps' mission, its volunteers, and the indelible impact their service has on the lives of needy people the world over. I hope to work with you, Ranking Member Rogers, and other Members of the Subcommittee to advance the priorities of the Peace Corps Congress.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2022.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

WITNESS

LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD, U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN LEE

Ms. LEE. Good morning.

I would like to call now to order the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. Thank you all for participating in this morning's hearing about the fiscal 2023 budget request for the United Nations.

Before we begin, as this is a hybrid meeting hearing, we must address a few housekeeping matters.

For the members joining virtually, once you start speaking, there is a slight delay before you are displayed on main screen. Speaking into the microphone activates the camera displaying the speaker on the main screen. Do not stop your remarks if you do not immediately see the screen switch. If the screen does not change after seconds, please make sure you are not muted.

To minimize background noise and ensure the correct speaker is being displayed, we ask that you remain on mute unless you have sought recognition. Myself or staff, we have designated may mute participants' microphones when they are not under recognition to eliminate inadvertent background noise.

Members who are virtual are responsible for muting and unmuting themselves. If I notice, when you are recognized, that you have not unmuted yourself, I will ask the staff to send you a request to unmute yourself. Please then accept that request so you are no longer muted.

I remind all members and witnesses that the 5–minute clock still applies. If there is a technology issue, we will move to the next member until the issue is resolved, and you will retain the balance of your time.

Finally, House rules require me to remind you that we have set up an email address to which members can send anything they wish in writing at any of our hearings or markups. That email address has been provided in advance to your staff.

So welcome again, Madam Ambassador, and good morning.

This is our hearing with our Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield. We are going to discuss the administration's fiscal 2023 request supporting the United States diplomatic engagement at the United Nations, its specialized agencies and programs, and U.N. peacekeeping activities.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, on behalf of myself and my colleagues, I want to thank you for joining us today and for bringing your many decades of experience in development and diplomacy to such a critically important post at such a critical time.

The United Nations is an invaluable and irreplaceable platform for fostering diplomacy and international peace. I have been privileged to serve as the United States Congressional Representative to the U.N. General Assembly on the Democratic side on five different occasions, so I've seen first—hand the importance of the issues debated in New York and how much is at stake without U.N. engagement.

After a historic global pandemic that has devastated health systems, crippled economies, reignited racial and ethnic divisions, and tragically claimed the lives of over 15 million people—the role and the mission of the United Nations are as essential now as they were when the United Nations was first created after the aftermath of World War II.

That is why I am very pleased to see that the administration's Fiscal 2023 request fully funds or provides the necessary increases in the U.N.-related accounts, including our assessed and voluntary contributions to U.N. organizations and U.N. peacekeeping missions.

The request includes funds to begin paying down our unpaid debts for peacekeeping that have accumulated over the last 5 years, and have now reached over $1 billion, which is, a staggering amount. This subcommittee has long recognized the vital role U.N. peacekeepers play in conflict zones and the benefits that we gain with burden-sharing with other countries through U.N. peacekeeping missions.

We simply cannot continue to tout these multilateral partnerships while, at the same time, maintain arbitrary caps on our contributions and rack up millions of dollars in arrears, leaving other countries to foot the bill. Not paying our dues weakens our ability to lead on a host of international issues, and it cedes ground to our strategic competitors.

Speaking of ceding ground, I am deeply concerned that we will not achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030 now that the COVID–19 pandemic has caused tremendous backsliding. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, I am eager to hear about your conversations with U.N. partners on how we get the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) back on track and how the fiscal 2023 resources will help.

I also hope you will update our subcommittee on the U.N.'s response to the devastating invasion of Ukraine, as well as the U.N.'s ongoing global response to COVID–19, especially in terms of vaccine distribution, rebuilding health systems, and addressing the second-order impacts, including rising rates of gender-based violence, illiteracy, malnutrition, and job loss, all of which have disproportionately affected women around the world.

Secretary Blinken said during his first major speech as Secretary of State that—and I quote—"We are always better off at the table, not outside the room."

I could not agree more, which is why I fully supported the administration rejoining the Paris Agreement, the World Health Or-

ganization, and the U.N. Human Rights Council. As chairwoman, I also fully support the United States playing a leadership role through our contributions to organizations like UNRWA and UNFPA, both of which were needlessly cut off during the previous administration in order to score domestic political points at the expense of millions of people who depend on these institutions.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have consistently advocated for the strongest possible partnerships between the United States and the United Nations. I encourage my colleagues to think carefully about calls for America to unilaterally cede the field at these international bodies to governments which work against our values. We may not always agree with other nations on every issue, but we must always have a venue where we can hear from other countries and be heard ourselves. America is not always perfect, nor are we a consistent voice for human rights, but we can and we have been vocal and persuasive. We need to keep making the case for human rights and human dignity.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, I want to thank you once again for your leadership, your devotion to diplomacy, and for your testimony today.

Before we hear from you, let me turn to my colleague, Ranking Member Rogers, for his opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER ROGERS

Mr. ROGERS. Welcome, Ambassador.

I am glad that we were able to be here face to face to receive your testimony and discuss the Fiscal Year 2023 budget request for the U.N. and other international organizations.

You are serving at an extraordinary time that highlights both the many flaws and weaknesses of the United Nations, but the important lifesaving work of some of its organizations, such as the U.N. Children's Fund and the World Food Program. These and other international organizations perform many valuable tasks that often have bipartisan support.

This good work, however, is often overshadowed by the U.N.'s long-standing weaknesses, including on matters of war and peace. In particular, Russia's unprovoked assault on Ukraine has highlighted, yet again, the inability of the Security Council to be meaningful in addressing wars of aggression. They are simply not there.

Perhaps Moscow's brazen challenge to international peace and security will prompt a rethinking of our international institutions and how we can make the U.N. and related mechanisms more responsive to the demands of our time. Any such efforts could start by addressing the U.N.'s chronic problems of bureaucratic red tape, inefficiency, and lack of transparency and accountability.

There could not be a more glaring example of these problems than the recent scandal at the U.N. Office for Project Services, which, according to press accounts, engaged in several bizarre insider deals that may cost the organization tens of millions of dollars. At a time when there is increased scrutiny of U.S. foreign aid here at home, stories like this, at best, feed the sentiment that tax dollars are being wasted and, at worst, are used to work against our own interests.

While the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. for Management and Reform has called for a comprehensive review of that agency, a broader review of U.N. agencies and practices has long been in order. For example, the World Health Organization received criticism from around the world for its failed response to the coronavirus pandemic. Many eminent experts called on the WHO to take action on transparency and desperately needed reforms. I hope you can update us on the recent World Health Assembly and whether any meaningful reforms were addressed.

Similarly, while the Secretary General has sought to strengthen peacekeeping operations, it is unclear whether these efforts have improved overall performance and accountability of these important but complex and increasingly expensive undertakings that seem to continue in perpetuity.

Then, there is the U.N. Human Rights Council, of which the United States returned as a member late last year. The good news is that, in light of its war crimes in Ukraine, the General Assembly voted to suspend Russia from the Council. The bad news is that, despite a commitment by the administration to address a long and sordid history of anti-Israel bias there, the Council is moving in the wrong direction, continuing these efforts through an expensive and deeply biased commission of inquiry investigating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Instead of unjustly targeting Israel, the Council would be better advised to investigate Communist China's ongoing genocide against Uyghur Muslims in China's Xinjiang Province.

Unfortunately, the 6–day visit of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights to China has widely been seen as a failure and roundly criticized for not only undermining her credibility, but the overall credibility of the U.N. on human rights. The list goes on.

What is required are meaningful reforms which address the issues I have mentioned while making better use of scarce taxpayer resources to advance the causes that we support. To that end, I should note that the $4.5 billion requested for fiscal year 2023 for the U.N. and other international organizations is an increase of nearly $1 billion over the current level. In the absence of meaningful reforms across these institutions, such increases cannot be justified.

I look forward to working with you and the chair to identify a common ground for funding that is in our national interests and advances reforms to increase transparency and efficacy.

Before I close, Madam Chair, I want to address the nuclear threats from Iran and North Korea. I understand that Iran may have reached the point at which it could develop a nuclear weapon in a matter of weeks. I hope you can speak to us on this issue, including whether the International Atomic Energy Agency would be in any position to verify a nuclear agreement with Iran, assuming that such an agreement is still within reach and a goal of the administration.

Likewise, not only is the IAEA deeply concerned about ongoing nuclear weapons development in North Korea, which expelled the Agency in 2009, but Pyongyang has also continued to aggressively develop its ballistic missile program in violation of U.N. sanctions. I would also appreciate an update of our efforts in the Security

Council to enact further penalties on North Korea in response to these developments.

Ambassador, thank you for being here with us today. Thank you for your long-standing service to the country and for your hard work, especially in exceptionally challenging times, to advance America's interests at the U.N. Thank you for your service.

I yield.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Rogers.

Now, I will ask our witness, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, to make her opening statement and again, thank you very much for being here. We will include your full written statement in the record.

You will be recognized now for 5 minutes to summarize your opening statement, so please proceed.

OPENING STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFIELD

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. I thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning to everyone.

Let me thank all of you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the subcommittee, for having me here today.

I deeply appreciate the subcommittee's bipartisan support of our work at the United Nations and other international institutions. With your support from day one, this administration has fully re-engaged across multilateral institutions to advance U.S. interests and address global challenges.

We have not shied away from pushing for comprehensive reforms to make these institutions more transparent and accountable to U.S. taxpayers. And, along with our allies and partners, we have tackled a range of challenges head-on, including public health threats, climate change, conflicts, and humanitarian crises around the world.

In just over a year and a half at the U.N., I have met with senior representatives from nearly every member state. I have been able to strengthen long-standing relationships, and forge new ones. And so, when crises have emerged, we have been ready.

Before President Putin carried out his further invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. went to the Security Council to expose Russia's plans to the world. And, after he launched this unprovoked, unlawful, and brutal war, we mobilized over 140 member states to condemn Moscow's action, and it was a unified and historic vote, bigger than anyone could have expected.

We then led efforts to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council, and we are continuing to use every tool at our disposal to hold Russia's forces accountable.

This multilateral strategy is effective, not just in supporting Ukraine, but across the board. Our multilateral engagements help lead to truces, however fragile, in Ethiopia and Yemen, and have allowed for the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance. And the U.N., in partnership with the G7, has helped us respond to the recent spike in global food insecurity, another consequence of Russia's war of aggression.

Just last month at the U.N., Secretary Blinken hosted the Global Food Security Call to Action ministerial, where we rallied the world to respond to this worsening crisis. Over 80 countries have

aligned with our roadmap to combat global food insecurity, which calls for increased humanitarian assistance and in-kind food donations, among other actions.

On nearly every issue and conflict, our multilateral engagement is delivering concrete outcomes for the U.S. And helping advance our values around the world. But let me be crystal clear. China and Russia are working day and night to drive an alternative authoritarian agenda at the U.N. and other multilateral institutions, and they are putting significant resources and personnel behind their efforts.

Right now at the U.N., to paraphrase President Biden, we are in a fight for the soul of the world.

It would be a grave mistake to cede the U.N. and other multilateral fora to China, which is why the President's budget asks for the resources and authorities needed to assert U.S. leadership.

Currently, our failure to live up to our financial obligations at the U.N. give our adversaries an easy talking point, one they hit us with again and again. We need to be able to pay our bills in full and on time, and this will bolster our credibility and our leadership.

The President's budget also asks for additional support for U.N. peace-building efforts, a worthwhile investment that helps prevent costly conflicts before they erupt, and it asks for authority and funding to enable U.S. leadership and organizations like UNESCO.

In the absence of U.S. leadership, China and others have been more assertive at UNESCO, seeking to shape international consensus on issues like emerging technologies and artificial intelligence in ways hostile to democratic values. We need a seat at the table when international standards and best practices are being set so that we can advance our values.

Finally, we have a series of personnel requests in this budget, including much-needed increases in housing allowances for foreign service officers in New York and investments that will allow more young and diverse Americans to serve at the United Nations. These are modest budget requests, but they speak to a larger priority. We need to attract and retain the best and the brightest if we are going to continue to be successful. And, with the support of this subcommittee, we will continue to be successful in leading the world the American way.

And, with that, I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

[The information follows:]

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield
United States Ambassador to the United Nations
Fiscal year 2023 Budget Request for the United Nations (UN)
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
June 8, 2022

Thank you, Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, and members of the Subcommittee, for having me today.

I deeply appreciate this Subcommittee's bipartisan support of our work at the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.

With your support, from Day One, this Administration has fully re-engaged across multilateral institutions to advance U.S. interests, address global challenges, and bolster the rules-based international order.

We have not shied away from pushing for comprehensive reforms to make these institutions more transparent, efficient, and accountable to U.S. taxpayers.

And, along with our allies and partners, we have tackled a range of challenges head-on -- including public health threats, climate change, and conflicts and humanitarian crises around the world.

In just over a year and a half at the UN, I've met with senior representatives from nearly every Member State. I've been able to strengthen longstanding relationships and forge new ones. And I know my counterparts at other international institutions have done the same.

And so, when crises have emerged, we have been ready.

Before President Putin carried out his further invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. went to the Security Council to expose Russia's plans to the world. And after he launched this unprovoked, unlawful, and brutal war, we mobilized over 140 Member States to condemn Moscow's actions. It was a unified and historic vote -- bigger than anyone expected.

We then led the effort to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council. And we're continuing to use every tool at our disposal to hold Russia's forces accountable.

This multilateral strategy is effective not just in supporting Ukraine -- but across the board. Our multilateral engagements helped lead to truces -- however fragile -- in Ethiopia and Yemen that have allowed for the delivery of urgently-needed humanitarian assistance.

And they've helped us respond to the recent spike in global food insecurity -- another consequence of Russia's war of aggression. Just last month at the UN, Secretary Blinken hosted a Global Food Security Call to Action ministerial where we rallied the world to respond to this worsening crisis.

Over 80 countries have aligned with our roadmap to combat global food insecurity, which calls for increased humanitarian assistance and in-kind food donations, among other actions. And in May, we also hosted an Open Debate on the links between armed conflict and food security.

The UN, in partnership with the G7, has been essential to our work to address global food insecurity, which threatens vulnerable populations around the world -- especially in the Middle East and Africa.

On nearly every issue and conflict, our multilateral engagement is delivering concrete outcomes for the U.S. and helping advance our values around the world.

But let me also be crystal clear: China and Russia are working day and night to drive an alternative, authoritarian agenda at the UN and other multilateral institutions. And they are putting significant resources and personnel behind these efforts.

Right now, at the UN, to paraphrase President Biden, we are in a fight for the soul of the world.

It would be a grave mistake to cede the UN and other multilateral fora to China -- which is why the President's budget asks for the resources and authorities needed to assert multilateral leadership and demonstrate that democracies can deliver.

Currently, our failure to live up to our financial obligations at the UN gives our adversaries an easy talking point -- one they hit us with again and again. And it's gaining traction -- we're hearing it now from our friends, too.

We need to be able to pay our bills in full and on time. This will bolster U.S. credibility and leadership and help us rally countries to our causes.

The President's budget also asks for additional support for UN peacebuilding efforts -- a worthwhile investment that helps prevent costly conflicts before they erupt.

And it asks for authority and funding to enable U.S. leadership in organizations like UNESCO, an institution that goes beyond the famous heritage sites and takes actions that affect our security, educational, and commercial interests. In the absence of U.S. leadership, China and others have been more assertive at UNESCO, seeking to shape international consensus on issues like emerging technology and artificial intelligence in ways hostile to democratic norms.

We need a seat at the table when international standards and best practices are being set so we can advance our values.

Finally, we have a series of personnel requests in this budget, including much-needed increases in housing allowances for Foreign Service Officers in New York -- and investments that will allow more young and diverse Americans to serve at the UN.

On the whole, these are modest budget requests. But they speak to a larger priority: we need to attract -- and retain -- the best and brightest if we're going to continue to be successful leaders at the UN and in multilateral fora around the world.

And with the support of this Subcommittee, we will continue to be successful -- at promoting peace, providing humanitarian aid, addressing global challenges, and leading the world -- the American way.

With that, I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield



Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield was nominated by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations as well as the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations on January 20, 2021. She was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on February 23, 2021, and sworn in on February 24, 2021 by the Vice President of the United States of America.

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, a career diplomat, returned to public service after retiring from a 35-year career with the U.S. Foreign Service in 2017. From 2013 to 2017 she served as the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, where she led the bureau focused on the development and management of U.S. policy toward sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to this appointment, she served as Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources (2012-2013), leading a team in charge of the State Department's 70,000-strong workforce.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's distinguished Foreign Service career includes an ambassadorship to Liberia (2008-2012), and postings in Switzerland (at the United States Mission to the United Nations, Geneva), Pakistan, Kenya, The Gambia, Nigeria, and Jamaica. In Washington, she served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of African Affairs (2006-2008), and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (2004-2006).

After retiring from the U.S. State Department in 2017, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield led the Africa Practice at Albright Stonebridge Group, a strategic commercial diplomacy firm chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. She was also the inaugural Distinguished Resident Fellow in African Studies at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University from fall 2017 to spring 2019.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield was the 2017 recipient of University of Minnesota Hubert Humphrey Public Leadership Award, the 2015 recipient of the Bishop John T. Walker Distinguished Humanitarian Service Award and the 2000 recipient of the Warren Christopher Award for Outstanding Achievement in Global Affairs. She holds a bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University and a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin, where she also did work towards a doctorate. She received an honorary Doctor of Law degree from the University of Wisconsin in May 2018 and an honorary Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Liberia in May 2012.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Madam Ambassador.

We will now proceed in the standard 5-minute rounds, alternating sides, recognizing members in order of seniority as they joined, or were seated at the beginning of the hearing.

I am asking everyone to be mindful of your time and allow the witnesses to answer within your 5-minute turn. I know the Ambassador has a hard stop at 11:30.

We probably will only have one round of questions, so I will try to summarize my questions, several of them. They all have to do with the impact of U.S. engagement at the United Nations.

As I said in my opening statement, it is critical that we have a seat at the table, and as you said, not just to have our voice heard, but to shape the very issues being debated.

With this in mind, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, from your experience over the last year and a half. What have we been able to accomplish since rejoining the U.N. Human Rights Council and paying our human rights-related arrears?

Secondly, how has the United Nations played a role in ending COVID–19 pandemic and in trying to get the SDGs back on track?

Thirdly and lastly, what key reforms have we been able to advance by our presence, or by our presence under your leadership, especially those focused on holding offenders accountable for sexual abuse committed by peacekeeping forces? And, of course, if you would like to reference Ukraine and Poland and the refugee crisis, please feel free to do so.

Thank you.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you, Madam Chair, for that question. I will try to do my best with all of it. Thank you.

Let me just start with how we have engaged to shape how the U.N. responds to crises.

I have made a concerted effort, as I noted in my statement, to engage with every single member of the Council. There are 183 member states. I have already reached out to more than 130 with one-on-one meetings, one, to share with them what our priorities are, but also to encourage them to support us as we try to make the U.N. into a more responsive organization.

And I think those efforts have paid off. They paid off when we took the condemnation of Russia to the General Assembly, and we got 141 states to support that effort. It paid off significantly when we voted to remove or suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council.

In the Human Rights Council, we were able to get a commission of inquiry set up to review the situation in Russia.

And we have been able to bring about some key reforms across the U.N. that relates to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. We engaged in all of those meetings. Congressman Rogers talked about the work of my MR ambassador, who has been working aggressively in the Fifth Committee to ensure that the—the U.N. is more transparent and more responsive to our needs.

On the issue of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, we had an extraordinary meeting of the Security Council this week where we talked about the sexual abuse of women in conflict. And Ukraine, of course, loomed large in all of that, the fact that Russian soldiers have been committing acts of violence and sexual abuse against

women and children in Ukraine. And we were able to expose that very significantly in the Council.

In the U.N. peacekeeping operations, we have also been very, very aggressively engaged in holding countries accountable when their soldiers commit abuses against civilians, and we have been involved in having some of those peacekeeping operations—soldiers' countries removed from operations because they are not holding their soldiers accountable.

I will admit that there is a lot more work to do, but we are working aggressively to make sure that our voice is heard at the table, and that we push back against any action that goes against the core values that we stand for at the United Nations.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. Ambassador, I have 36 seconds left. Could you just mention Ukraine and the United Nations gearing up to address the refugee crisis——

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. So more than——

Ms. LEE [continuing]. In Ukraine?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you very much, Representative.

More than 13, million Ukrainians have been impacted by this unprovoked war. And, while the U.N. was a bit slow to action, I will note that this has only been 100 days, and, in that 100 days, they have galvanized their staff and ramped up their operations to provide humanitarian assistance, to provide protection assistance to—those who have been impacted by this war, most of them women and children.

I visited Romania and Moldova, met with U.N. officials. I expressed our concerns that we felt that—and many of you felt that they were not rising to the challenge. They heard us loudly and clearly. They have put the staff in place, and we are seeing that they have improved and are aggressively supporting those who have been impacted.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much for clarifying that. I was in Poland probably a month ago, and learned just that, and I really think that they are doing a great job in helping with this crisis. So thank you again.

I will yield now to our ranking member, Mr. Rogers.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you.

Mr. ROGERS. President Zelenskyy of Ukraine has criticized the U.N. peace and security architecture, arguing that the goals set in 1945 during the creation of a global international security organization, have not been achieved. It is impossible to achieve them without reforms, he says, and he is right.

Russia's barbarous invasion and slaughter of Ukrainians has energized decades-old demands by supporters of international justice and peace that the world's governments repair long-acknowledged weaknesses in the world's institutions for preventing and sanctioning wars of aggression. And we are in the midst of perhaps one of the worst in history in the world in Ukraine, and yet, the U.N. security operations sits idle, unable to speak.

Central to the system is the U.N. Security Council. Its rules, written after World War II, provide for five victors in that war—Britain, China, France, Russia, and the U.S.—the power, each of them, to veto any proposed U.N. action. In addition to the five per-

manent members, 10 other seats have not—have no veto power and are rotated among other U.N. member countries.

Since 1946, the permanent five that I have mentioned have used their veto power 262 times, in many cases, to block challenges to their own actions, including military force. Human rights defenders note that the use of or threat of veto repeatedly has obstructed U.N. action to halt these mass atrocities.

It was Russia's veto of a Security Council resolution in February that prevented the U.N. from taking concrete steps against it, such as globally binding economic sanctions. Ukraine and its allies managed a moral victory by gathering a rare consensus of 141 nations to condemn Russia's attack with only four countries joining Russia in opposing the declaration, and yet, they vetoed it.

What do we need to do, Madam Ambassador, to correct this incredible fix that we are in at the U.N.?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. I thank you for that question.

And it is a tough question, but I think it goes without saying that we are working aggressively to address some of those shortcomings. And as I have said many times in the Security Council and elsewhere, Russia's veto can't stop us from exposing their actions. And the 141 votes against Russia in the General Assembly, they couldn't veto. It was a very strong condemnation of their actions.

They are isolated in the Security Council. They feel it. I would not want to be sitting in the Russian PR's chair right now as he sat and listened to every single member of the Security Council condemn him. Even those countries that are supporting him with their vote condemn the actions that they have taken.

Also, you will be glad to hear, we cosponsored a resolution with the country of Liechtenstein that calls for Security Council members who use their veto to come before the General Assembly and explain to the world why they vetoed actions that would stand in the way of peace and security. And Russia and China were called before the General Assembly yesterday because they had vetoed a DPRK resolution condemning and calling for actions on DPRK.

So we are looking at what reforms might be put in place over the coming years. We support reforms that will help this organization——

Mr. ROGERS. Well——

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD [continuing]. Work better.

Mr. ROGERS. Right now, the world opinion, unlike anything in the past, is so strong against Russia and what they are doing in Ukraine. It is a great opportunity for us to seize on that unpopularity that they have and point out how weak the U.N. is because of these rules. But there is a moment in time—and it is now—where we can really make a case against Russia and the U.N. to change those rules.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Sir, I agree with you, and we do see this as the moment to start to do that. And we are starting to have discussions on what kinds of reforms we can move forward that will limit the possibilities of a country like Russia who sits on the Security Council, sitting in the seat that they really have diminished in terms of peace and security.

So this is something that we greatly support and we will be working to address over the coming year.

Mr. ROGERS. Godspeed.

Ms. LEE. I now yield to Ms. Meng from New York.

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Thank you, Ambassador, for your testimony here today.

Today, there are 2.4 billion young people, ages 10 to 29, in the world, the largest youth population in our history. In countries facing conflict, it will be young people who will bear the burden of sustaining peace over generations, leading society from reconciliation to prosperity.

In 2015, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 2250 recognizing the essential role of young people in preventing and resolving conflicts and in sustaining peace. This inspired my bill, the Youth, Peace, and Security Act, to ensure that the U.S. promotes the inclusive and meaningful participation of youth in mediation and negotiation processes that prevent, mitigate, or resolve conflict overseas.

Ambassador, how will you ensure the U.S. adheres to the goals outlined in Resolution 2250, specifically to give youth a greater voice in decisionmaking at the local, national, regional and international levels, and to establish mechanisms that would enable youth to participate meaningfully in peace processes?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you so much for that question, and thank you for the bill that you supported on this.

This is an important area for the U.N., but equally important for the United States. As you know, I served as the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs in the Obama administration, and one of our key programs was the Young African Leaders Initiative where we have brought thousands of young Africans to the table to talk about their—their plans for the future of their country and for their continent.

I will be meeting with a group of young people in—in L.A. this week as well from Latin America to, again, hear from them what they are doing.

We at the U.N. have ensured that we bring young people to speak to us at the United Nations. We have had civil society—youth civil society groups come before us to speak, and we absolutely are committed to supporting Resolution 2250. It is an important resolution when we look at the fact that, in Africa, the median age is 19, and many young people don't have hope because of the lack of opportunity.

So we do have to do more in that area, and I am committed to doing that.

Ms. MENG. Thank you so much.

Events from Afghanistan to Haiti show increasing insecurity for women. And, since the outbreak of COVID–19, violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified. We need a global collective effort to stop it.

Both the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and U.N. Women have played an important role as the only global grant-making mechanisms exclusively dedicated to eradicating this scourge. Nevertheless, the Biden administration's

request for U.S. contributions to both important U.N. entities remain flat for fiscal year 2023.

I have requested that our contributions to both entities be significantly increased in my submissions to our chair and ranking member for fiscal year 2023.

Ambassador, can you please provide some additional context as to the administration's decision not to increase its contributions to these entities for fiscal year 2023, and how can the U.S. ensure our partners that we are committed to addressing an increase in violence against women?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you so much for that question.

And let me just start by saying that the administration is absolutely committed to women, peace, and security, to fighting against violence against women and sexual exploitation that we are seeing, including happening right now, this day, in Ukraine.

The administration has to balance its budget request, and occasionally, in this balancing act of trying to prioritize everything, we don't always have the ability to ask for all the support that we need. But I thank you for your efforts, and know that, even though the budget request is not the same, our commitment has not decreased. And we are also encouraging other countries to contribute to these efforts. So, where the U.S. is not there in terms of funding, other countries hopefully will step in.

Ms. MENG. Okay. Thank you.

I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Now I will yield to Mr. Diaz-Balart.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman.

Ambassador, good to see you in person.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. And let me also thank you for your willingness to serve this great country of ours.

I want to refer to something the ranking member touched on. In your statement, you talked about our multilateral engagement delivering concrete outcomes for the U.S. and helping advance our values around the world. But the ranking member mentioned the Human Rights Council.

The Human Rights Council has had a unique fixation against Israel forever. And on May 2021, again, initiated yet another anti-Israeli inquiry, one that the administration has said it deeply regrets.

So the question is: Do you think that, being there, you will be able to change that attitude? So far, obviously it has not worked. And, if not, why continue to legitimize an organization that has a unique, anti-Semitic attitude towards Israel? That is question number 1.

Number two is: I don't have to tell you—you know very well—that some of the world's worst human rights violators are part of that Council, whether it is the PRC, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela. I can go on and on and on.

And so, I am pleased that Russia was tossed out after, a pretty obvious, horrific act of historic proportions.

Are you working with other colleagues to toss out the most egregious human rights violators in that group? If not, why not? And, if so—you may not be able to talk necessarily publicly about some of those efforts, but, I would like to maybe later follow up with you as to what those efforts are, because, I know that—I am sure that you would agree that having Cuba, Venezuela, China, others, really becomes a sad joke.

And to me, it is very difficult to be part of an organization that doesn't even take itself seriously. The question with the Israel situation is: Why legitimatize an organization if it continues, as it evidently is doing, particularly the case of Israel, continue to target a clear demonstration of anti-Semitism.

So those are my two questions thank you. Good to see you, Ambassador.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Good. Thank you so much, and thank you for both of those questions.

First, on the unfair targeting of Israel in the Human Rights Council. We have made clear over and over again that we will stand with Israel. We will fight against any of those efforts. This most recent commission of inquiry on the situation in Israel in the West Bank, we oppose that effort, and we have made clear our opposition to this commission of inquiry. It was established when we were not on the Council.

I can't say that if we would have been sitting on the Council, that we would have been able to block it, but we certainly would have been able to block and push back on this open-ended mandate that they were given.

And we worked very, very hard in the Fifth Committee to cut the budget. We cut it by about 25 percent, and we will be working with other member states to do that over the course of—over the course of this year.

And, in terms of the other members of the Council, we can't agree with you more. We are sitting at the table with some pretty unsavory countries and unsavory people. But we know, if we leave them to that table by themselves, they will take everything, and we have to make sure that we are sitting there to push back on them and push back on their efforts.

What we are doing, Congressman, is trying to work with other countries to get countries that are supporters of human rights to stand up and run for seats on the Council. Sometimes those countries are a little bit reticent about stepping up, and they won't step up if we are not there. So what I have heard from the good countries on the Council is, Thank God you are back. We couldn't handle this without you. We need you at the table.

So not only do they need us at the table, but we need to make sure that we bring others like them to the table so that we can push the unsavory people that you mentioned off—away from the table.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I am out of time. Thank you, Madam.

Ms. LEE. Now, I will yield to Ms. Frankel, who is on virtually. Good morning, Ms. Frankel.

Ms. FRANKEL. Yeah. Hi. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Madam Ambassador, for being in front of us today.

So first thing I want to ask you about is UNFPA and U.N. Women. I think I share the belief of many that, when women succeed, the world succeeds, and that, when women have access to full healthcare, to education, when they are free from violence, have economic opportunities, when they are at the table when important decisions are made, that their communities are much more peaceful and prosperous, and that means the world is, too.

So I am going to support these two organizations. You have had some funding requests for UNFPA. Could you tell us how the United States is working with these organizations and what you see are the highlights of what they are doing?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Both of these organizations, U.N. Women and UNFPA, provide extraordinary support to women in terms of protection of their rights, protections of their health, and providing support to women. We had a briefing this week, I mentioned earlier, on Ukraine and the impact of violence against women, and that these women not only need our voices when these attacks happen; they actually need our support. They need our support for medical assistance; they need our support for psychosocial assistance; they need our support for protection. And both of these organizations have stepped up to provide that support.

So we have engaged very closely with both the leadership of UNFPA and the leadership of U.N. Women to ensure that they provide the support that women across the world expect and need from them in order to not just live, but to survive. It is an issue of survival for many of these women.

When I look at the situation in Afghanistan, where women are being constantly—their rights are constantly being taken away and restricted by the Taliban, they know that the world is stemming and pushing back against the Taliban to ensure that we do everything possible to support them.

We are engaging with them——

Ms. FRANKEL. Madam?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Yes, ma'am?

Ms. FRANKEL. Yeah. Listen, look, I just want to make sure—I want to go on to one more item if I can——

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Uh-huh.

Ms. FRANKEL [continuing]. Because I want to just thank my friend, Mario Diaz-Balart, for raising the issue of the U.N. Human Rights Council, and I agree with him strongly their targeting of Israel. And I want to also convey my expectation that the United States repel that in every way possible.

I also want to ask you about the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and ask you specifically about their textbooks, which continue to contain anti-Israel and anti-Semitic content.

Are we able to do anything about that?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. That is one of the most important issues on our agenda in our engagements with UNRWA. I visited the region late last year, and I met with the UNRWA leadership, raised our concerns about these issues.

The textbooks are actually printed by the Palestinian Authority, and I raised it directly with the Palestinian Authority when I met

with them and told them that this was really a redline for all of us.

They hear your voices on this. They hear our voices on this. UNRWA has indicated that they have put inserts in all the books countering all of this misinformation and the anti-Semitic comments in the books. We want those books removed, at least the references in those books removed. And we have made that very clear to the Palestinian Authority, and they have committed to us that they would remove them.

I have not seen that happen yet, but we will not stop until we see action taken on this.

I will say and stress that UNRWA does provide other services that are important for the humanitarian assistance for Palestinians, and we have said to—even to the Israeli Government that it is important that UNRWA continues to provide that support to people who are in need. But they—we will be watching what they do on these textbooks and other—there are other issues of management that we are working with them very closely on, and have monitored their work in the coming year.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you. I understand that.

I yield back. Thank you, Madam——

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Now I will yield to Mr. Reschenthaler.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate it.

Madam Ambassador, thanks for being here today, and thanks for all your hard work.

I would like to focus on the World Health Organization to start off. The World Health Organization was founded—and I am quoting directly—quote, "to give everyone everywhere an equal chance to live a healthy life," end quote.

Great goal and mission. But I think it is irrefutable that that mission has morphed into kowtowing to Communist China, parroting the talking points that are given to it by the CCP. And, if you look at the beginning of the pandemic, the World Health Organization went out of its way to help the CCP cover up the true origins of this virus.

Most recently, despite overwhelming international support, you had the World Health Organization deny Taiwan observer status in this year's annual assembly due to pressure obviously from Communist China. And just a quick shout-out to Taiwan. They are the first nation—their scientists were the first ones to correctly identify it as human-to-human transmission, not this conspiracy theory that the CCP and the World Health Organization were parroting, that this was a zoonotic disease that transmitted obviously from animals to humans.

So, Madam Ambassador, do you oppose the World Health Organization's decision to deny Taiwan observer status?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Absolutely, categorically. We have raised our concerns with the World Health Organization, and at the World Health Assembly that Taiwan was not allowed to participate. We think they should be allowed to participate. We think they add value. And we will keep pushing for that in the future until it happens.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thanks for those efforts.

And what about the—just a malign influence that the CCP has over the World Health Organization, because I still think the World Health Organization has a valid mission purpose if we can just stop the influence from Communist China? Do you have any comments on that?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. I do. And thank you for raising that.

We need to push back on the Chinese malign efforts in the World Health Organization. That is one of the reasons we wanted to make sure that we were back at the table. And we have been a leading voice in that organization calling for reform in the organization, but also pushing back against the influence that the Chinese have had, particularly as it relates recently to the origins of COVID. And we are pressing the Chinese Government itself and CCP to respond to the WHO request on the origins issue.

I agree with you, sir. The World Health Organization does have an important role to play. We need to be there and be a leading voice in pushing for the reforms to allow them to improve on their current performance.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

And I just wanted to continue speaking about China. As you know, Michelle Bachelet, who is the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, recently visited Communist China. And as you know, Communist China is actively involved in what I will describe egregious human rights violations—the oppression of Hong Kong, which should, by international law, be a free and independent city state, part of the British Commonwealth; the religious persecution in Tibet; the ongoing genocide in the Xinjiang Province.

But after this visit, which Beijing highly restricted, the Commissioner refused to condemn the genocide of the Uyghur Muslims.

Ambassador, after witnessing the U.N.'s just utter indifference to this genocide and to the other egregious actions from Tibet to Hong Kong to elsewhere, what are we doing to hold China accountable and push back on these human rights and political violations?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. First, Congressman, we strongly and publicly oppose the High Commissioner's visit to China. We knew that it would not be unfettered. We knew that she could not come out of that visit with a transparent report that would provide us all of the evidence of the genocide that we know is taking place in China.

For our part, we regularly expose this in the Security Council. We have held a number of meetings with our British colleagues and others to call out the Chinese on this issue. I regularly meet with Uyghurs whose family members have been held unfairly by the Chinese Government and have raised those concerns directly with the Chinese Government myself. And we will keep pushing on these efforts.

We saw the report that the High Commissioner put out. None of us—the U.S. as well as others—none of us were satisfied with that report. We have called for her to issue the report that was done previously that we know outlines the concerns that we have all raised.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

And thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

I will yield now to Ms. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you, Chairwoman Lee.

Ambassador, I am really happy to see you here today. I have been watching your work trying to rebuild U.S. engagement with the U.N. after, you know, the failed Trump administration policy of defunding those very important programs. So thank you for your tireless effort, and thank you to your staff for working so hard to, once again, rebuild the trust of our country with the world.

Today, I want to hear more from you about what the Biden administration is doing in leveraging U.N. resources and expertise to address the migrant crisis in Central America. As you know, too many Central America—Central Americans are forced to flee their countries. We have over half a million asylum seekers and refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras specifically right now.

I support the administration's goals in Central America to help stem the tide of migrants to the U.S. by ensuring that they have opportunities in their own home country and can see a future for themselves. These are, you know, young people that should have a bright future for themselves in their own countries if given the opportunity to have education and access to resources.

So to do so, we must remain committed to fighting corruption in the region. We cannot allow taxpayers funding to support or sustain the corrupt actors that are there today.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees works with the seven governments leading the comprehensive regional protection and solutions framework, which is working toward innovative solutions to the displacement crisis in Central America.

So what is the Biden administration doing to ensure these efforts help local communities and are not diverted to corrupt actors, and what can Congress do—what more can we do to help in that?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you so much for that question.

As you know, the Vice President has been leading our efforts on this front. And, very early in that process, she reached out to me to ask that I ensure that I bring together the U.N. agencies and NGOs and donors together to look at how we can better address these issues.

So I pulled together all of the U.N. agencies in New York last year for a comprehensive discussion on the situation in—in Latin America as it relates to the migrants. I brought together donors. There was an appeal made to donors—other donors. As you know, the U.S. is certainly the largest contributor, and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration has made a significant contribution to UNHCR's efforts in the seven nations. But we are pushing for other countries to engage on this as well.

Mrs. TORRES. Yes. The issue that I see—and, you know, dealing in our own communities with, you know, trying to create good jobs to our local cities is no one wants to invest in a community that is plagued with corruption or high crime.

So, you know, I am very skeptical of how we can succeed and move forward if we are not directly calling out and addressing, you know, the issues or, at the very least, protecting. And protecting

might mean that we have to pull out and pull back our investment in the region.

The U.N. has a long history of trying to support the rule of law and anticorruption efforts in Central America by providing leadership for them to set up institutions to investigate public corruption. I know that.

How can the Biden administration engage on these issues with the U.N. to make sure that our seven—our partners, you know, are also focusing with us on that anticorruption agenda?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Well, certainly the U.N. couldn't do it without the support of the United States. So as I noted earlier, we are a huge funder, but I will be leaving here today to go to the Summit of Americas where we are bringing the democracies together to talk about the importance of democracy, and even call out some of those countries where we see issues of corruption and human rights violation. And that is a huge step forward, and we have seen some progress. Ecuador is an amazing——

Mrs. TORRES. Yes.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD [continuing]. Example of progress in that area.

Mrs. TORRES. Great progress. Thank you and I yield back, Madam Chair.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I will yield now to Ms. Letlow.

Ms. LETLOW. Thank you, Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers. I am incredibly honored to be joining all of you today as the newest member of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, and I look forward to working with you and other members of the committee.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, it is great to see a fellow Louisianan in this committee room today, and I look forward to working with you and the administration to provide the best possible oversight and stewardship of the United Nations mission budget.

We are in the middle of a global food insecurity crisis, which has been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As you know, the Fifth District of Louisiana has numerous farmers who are ready to produce and provide food assistance during international crises.

In our home State, we are used to quickly providing food assistance in the face of natural disasters. How do you see American agriculture being able to help with this crisis?

Specifically, how will you advocate to the U.N. that American agriculture is ready to provide food assistance to countries in dire need at a time when many developing countries depend on Ukrainian food supply that has been decimated during this invasion?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you so much, Representative, and it is great to see you here and also great to be with someone from the great State of Louisiana, and I do look forward to working with you.

You may know that one of my highest priorities at the U.N. has been to work on food insecurity. I held, during my presidency last year, a signature event focusing on food insecurity in conflict.

And just last month, during our presidency, we hosted a ministerial on food insecurity with particular attention on the impact of Ukraine on food insecurity.

And then we held in—as our presidency, a signature event, bringing together about 40 countries to talk about how to address these issues and what we can do in our countries.

So I am very, very proud that Louisiana is an agricultural State, one in which we can look for opportunities for farmers from Louisiana, and elsewhere in the United States, to start to work to fill in the gap.

We have also brought private sector, and I know that private sector companies working out of Louisiana have been engaged in some of these discussions to see how we can support American farmers, making a contribution.

And I will certainly look forward to visiting with you and talking with some of those farmers when I am next in Louisiana.

Ms. LETLOW. Thank you so much. I would like to go back to an issue that I know many of us have concerns about on this committee. The U.N. Human Rights Council has had a disproportionate and biased focus on Israel, including their Commission of Inquiry that we spoke about today.

Now that this administration has reengaged the U.S.' involvement with this council, what are we specifically doing to address this injustice against our ally Israel, and what action should be taken to stop bias in other U.N. organizations against Israel?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you. And that is one of my highest priorities. I talked about it during my hearing. I met with the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations just yesterday to talk about some of these issues, including our concerns about the Commission of Inquiry.

So we are working hand in hand with the Israeli Government, as well as other partners who agree with us about the unfair targeting of Israel, particularly in the Human Rights Council, but even in the Security Council, where we have a meeting on Israel every single month focused on the Palestinians.

And it is something that we disagree with, it is something we are fighting against, and I think at the Human Rights Council, you will begin to see that our presence will make a difference, and in the Security Council, I am pushing aggressively against this unfair targeting.

Ms. LETLOW. Sure. One last question. This administration has requested in its budget to fund the U.N. Population Fund at $56 million. Many of my colleagues and I have grave concerns that this fund continually promotes abortion services across the globe.

The majority of Americans agree that our taxpayer dollars should not be funding abortion. Even more Americans agree that we should not be funding abortion overseas.

Why does this administration continue to push for American taxpayer dollars to fund a radical, anti-life agenda overseas?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you so much for that question, and I will respond by saying, the UNFPA provides really important support to women who have been the victims of violence. We provide support for reproductive health.

I was talking to a woman who told me she had seven children, and her own health was impacted, and that the UNFPA provided her with the important support. So the main goal is not to provide for abortion. It is to provide for reproductive health support, and even psychological support for women who have been the victims of violence.

And we think it is important that we be at the table, that we provide support to women for these kinds of services.

Ms. LETLOW. Thank you so much for your responses. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I yield now to Mr. Espaillat.

Excuse me, Mr. Espaillat. I believe it is Ms. Wexton, and then we will come back to you.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Ambassador Greenfield for being with us today. I have been following the recent visit to China by Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, just as Mr. Reschenthaler brought up.

And as you are likely aware, there were some concerns, leading up to the trip, that COVID restrictions would be used as a cover to limit access and that the PRC would use this visit as propaganda to support its narrative that everything is fine in Xinjiang, in Hong Kong, and in Tibet.

It looks like that is exactly what happened. From what I have read in the press coverage, the High Commissioner, her team, did not get unfettered access. There were government officials with them everywhere that they went.

And constituents of mine, who have family in Xinjiang, indicated that their family members were not allowed to leave their homes during the visit. In her visit with President Xi, she was quoted by state media praising China for, quote, "protecting human rights."

Now, she later issued a statement, saying that that wasn't true, that she never said that, but that is what the PRC, you know, indicated in their press release—in their coverage of it, and that is obviously very concerning.

During the news conference, she assured everyone that the internment camps, that house over 1 million Uyghurs, had been dismantled, quote/unquote, saying that she had been assured that that was happening, despite the mountains of evidence to the contrary, including recent satellite images showing that, in fact, they are accelerating the building of these and that they are actually rapidly expanding.

And when describing the PRC's brutal campaign against Uyghurs, the High Commissioner used PRC-approved terms like counterterrorism and deradicalization, and referred to the internment or concentration camps as VETCs, or vocational educational training centers, which is a slap in the face to those who have been victims of these camps and the people who have family who have been the victims of these camps.

The whole thing, frankly, reads like a hostage video, except I am not convinced that she actually doesn't believe it, you know. That is very concerning to me and I believe it is very concerning to you.

What is your takeaway, your observations of the visit, and do you think it was performed according to standards that are acceptable?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Let me answer your last question first. No, it was not. And we made clear before she took the trip our opposition to her taking such a trip.

We also made clear that we did not believe that she would get unfettered, unhindered access to the areas where she could do a transparent assessment.

So we discouraged her from making the trip, and including our engagement with her, we engaged with the Secretary General as well to express our concerns. Other countries also expressed their concerns to the High Commissioner about her trip.

And we are disappointed with the kinds of public statements that she made when she returned, and I think that the families of Uyghurs who have experienced the atrocities that are being committed in this region feel very——

Ms. WEXTON. Betrayed.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD [continuing]. Aggrieved by what they saw from her trip.

Ms. WEXTON. So the OHCHR has been working on a long-delayed report with regard to Xinjiang, and do you know if this is going to change the date of their report, or do you have any idea when it will be coming out?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. We have been asking——

Ms. WEXTON. And do you have concerns that this visit is going to change the tenor of this report?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. That remains to be seen. We know that the report was drafted. We asked for the report to be released. We asked early for the report to be released, and we have expressed our disappointment that the report was not released earlier, and will wait to see how it has changed by her visit.

But I think if the report is significantly changed by the visit, it will diminish the importance of this report for dealing with the situation.

Ms. WEXTON. It will also fail to accurately reflect the brutality and the——

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Yeah.

Ms. WEXTON [continuing]. Atrocities that are taking place as we speak.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. I agree fully with you.

Ms. WEXTON. Thank you, Madam Ambassador. I will yield back with that.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I will yield now to Mr. Espaillat.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Ambassador, for your comments today.

Some breaking news recently, actually minutes ago, revealed that 600 Ukrainians are in torture chambers and under inhumane conditions, being held by Russia, that they are, in fact, victims of torture in the Kherson region of that country. Most of them are either journalists or pro-Ukrainian activists.

And just this week, you declared at the U.N. Security Council, that there are credible reports of atrocities committed by Russia's forces against civilians in Ukraine, including horrific accounts of sexual violence.

Last March, I, along with Representative Cicilline, introduced H.R. 964 in the House, condemning Russia, Russia's unlawful war

of aggression in Ukraine, and urging the global community to hold Russia accountable for war crimes, to hold Vladimir Putin accountable for war crimes.

What do you propose that we do collectively, both Congress and you at the U.N., to really hold Russia accountable? As we heard today, they are holding currently 600 Ukrainians in torture chambers.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. I am not surprised by that news. It is horrific. We are hearing every single day of atrocities that are being committed by Russian soldiers in Ukraine, and every single day it gets worse and worse.

And we have called the Russians out. They certainly use their disinformation machinery to push back against us, and we have to be on guard every day to stand up to that disinformation campaign.

They would have us believe that the Ukrainians themselves are doing this to themselves despite the fact that we know that that is not the case.

We have called these war crimes. We called it war crimes very early on, and we do believe strongly that they need to be held accountable.

Some of the things that we might do to support holding them accountable is—and we are doing some of those already—providing support to the Ukrainian prosecutor's office, to gather documentation and evidence to use against the Russians, supporting the efforts of the International Court of Justice that also called for accountability by the Russians and the ICC, which we are not a member of, but definitely support them getting the evidence that they need to hold the Russians accountable.

And we are holding them accountable every single day by their isolation, that we are ensuring that they feel, in the Security Council and around the world, kicking them off the Human Rights Council.

They have also been kicked off a number of other U.N. agencies and bodies as well, and that is our message to the Russians, that we will not treat them as if it is business as usual after they have committed the kinds of atrocities they have committed in Ukraine.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Real quickly, you mentioned that you will be going to the Summit of the Americas. I will be part of a delegation that travels there as well. There was a concern with China's incursion in the hemisphere, and the fact that we, as a Nation, the United States fails to deliver to Latin America and Caribbean countries in significant ways and that, frankly, they are eating our lunch.

And unless we go with something in our hands to that summit, we will be embarrassed once again. What do you propose that we do?

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. You know, the summit is a start of renewing our push with our partners in Latin America. I will tell you that in New York, I hear every day from Caribbean and Latin American colleagues, they don't want to partner with China.

But many of them feel they have no choice but to partner with China because we have not been there for them. So we do, Congressman, have to ramp up our engagement with these countries.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. I mean, it has been decades since the U.S. has had a major program, a major initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean. And so, we are in a bad place. They don't want to partner with China, but they are forced to.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. And I agree with you, and I think Congress has a role to play in supporting our efforts and our request for assistance, but also in giving us advice on how you think we might better engage.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. Okay. Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, first of all, we are grateful for your dedication to diplomacy and for representing America on the world stage and for your time this morning.

I think you have heard and seen that all of our subcommittee members are committed, regardless of party, to global peace and security, and we appreciate your leadership.

We don't have time for another round, so I will close by just following up with Mr. Espaillat's point. I, too, will be participating in the Summit of the Americas. I was also with President Obama in Panama.

And once again, here we are with the same issues, I would just add Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, where the United States has been missing in action, quite frankly.

And so at some point, I would like to have a roundtable or a discussion with you and members of our subcommittee about what you think the path forward is to, I say, repair the damage of the past.

Mr. Rogers, would you like to have any closing remarks?

Mr. ROGERS. Well, we appreciate your being here with us today and generous with your time and your opinion. We thank you for your service to the country.

I was going to ask you about Iran and what is going on there, because we now hear that they are nearing nuclear bomb capability. But, nevertheless, good luck in your work, Godspeed in your service.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Madam Ambassador. Let me just also say, your testimony today will really help inform us as we craft our fiscal year 2023 appropriations bill, and we appreciate your being here.

Members will have 7 days to submit questions for the record, and we are confident we will receive responses because Members really are very serious about this work. Your being here today really validates and verifies that America is back, America is engaging in the world, and with your leadership, we know that we are going to achieve the goals of peace and security. Thank you again, Madam Ambassador.

Ambassador THOMAS-GREENFIELD. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. This concludes today's hearing. The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs stands adjourned.

[Questions and answers submitted for the record follow:]