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SECURING U.S. INTERESTS ABROAD: THE FY 2014 FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SECURING U.S. INTERESTS ABROAD: THE FY 2014 FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ed Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order.

Today we are privileged to hear from the Secretary of State, John Kerry.

Of course, Senator Kerry is from Massachusetts, and our committee mourns those lost in the terrorist attack at the Boston Marathon. Our hearts go out to the victims and to the family members who have lost loved ones.

Secretary Kerry comes to testify on his department's budget request. Needless to say, given Washington's chronic budget deficit, wasteful spending is intolerable, but even good programs must be subject to prioritization. We can't do everything.

Along those lines, it is inexcusable that the State Department has been operating for 4-plus years without a presidentially-nominated, Senate-confirmed Inspector General. This committee is committed to its responsibility for overseeing the spending and other operations in the State Department. And that is a bipartisan commitment I am pleased to join Mr. Engel in carrying out.

The threats facing our Nation, unfortunately, are mounting. Iran, North Korea, and Syria are just the ones that we read about in the headlines. The terrorist threat is, unfortunately, constant, with al-Qaeda franchises continuing to grow.

Mr. Secretary, our plate is full, and we look forward to working with you to advance our Nation's interests.

Regarding Iran, we can't be moving fast enough to increase the economic pressure on the Iranian revolutionary regime there. The ranking member and I have introduced legislation to do just that. I hope the administration would come to see the need to send nothing but the strongest signal that Iran's drive to develop nuclear weapons will be stopped. Greater economic pressure must be part of that message. The current policy is simply not working.

Likewise, with North Korea, we need to be imposing crippling financial sanctions on this increasingly belligerent regime. In 2005, the Treasury Department was allowed to counter North Korea's il-

licit activities. It countered those activities because it was discovered that North Korea was counterfeiting U.S. $100 bills, was drug-running, and was involved in weapons sales. And, frankly, that tactic dramatically curtailed North Korea's access to the foreign currency that that regime needed for its nuclear and missile programs. Those programs increasingly threaten us. We must get back to that policy.

A robust human rights policy is especially critical in the case of North Korea. The Kim regime will never be at peace with its democratic neighbors or us so long as it is at war with its own people, including running a brutal labor camp system, described as a concentration camp by those few who have come out of that system. Promoting human rights here is in keeping in American values but also presents a critical tactical tool for dealing with the regime. And, sadly, it is clear that the U.S. international broadcasting, essential in promoting human rights, is in disarray. Secretary Clinton said as much when she last appeared before the committee.

Another challenge facing us, Mr. Secretary, is seeing a successful transition in Afghanistan. The consequences of failure would be great. Our struggle against terrorism would be set back significantly. We appreciate the risks that the men and women of the State Department take. And I want to express my condolences to the family of Anne Smedinghoff, recently killed in Afghanistan along with three other Americans.

This committee and several others have been examining the events of Benghazi. We understand that the State Department has implemented many of the reforms recommended by the Accountability Review Board in order to better protect the Department's employees. That is good, since the Board found "systemic failures in leadership and management deficiencies at senior levels" under the Secretary's predecessor.

But the committee remains concerned about the Review Board's process. We have outstanding requests for information from your department, Mr. Secretary, that must be answered. These include why the four State Department employees the Board singled out for poor performance are still on the payroll. Seven months after Benghazi, the terrorists are still alive and free.

Mr. Secretary, there are great challenges for our Nation, too many challenges. The difficulty of prioritizing is compounded by our fiscal crunch. Through it all, though, I look forward to working together to ensure that America maintains its traditionally positive and essential role in the world.

I now turn to our ranking member, Mr. Engel from New York, for his statement.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And, Secretary Kerry, as the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and as a longtime supporter of yours, I would like to welcome you to the Foreign Affairs Committee today, the first time you are joining us in your new capacity.

At the outset, I would like to express my condolences on two recent tragedies: First, the death in Afghanistan of Anne Smedinghoff, a young Foreign Service Officer, who was by all accounts a rising star; and, secondly, the bombings that hit the Boston Marathon in your home State of Massachusetts.

Mr. Secretary, you are here at a time when the United States faces an increasing number of difficult and complex challenges around the world. Syria remains engulfed in a horrific civil war that has left more than 70,000 dead. Iran continues its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. And North Korea seems determined to generate a crisis that could have serious implications for our national security.

The primary purpose of today's hearing is to assess how the President's Fiscal Year 2014 international affairs budget responds to the threats and opportunities we face as a Nation. We spend just over 1 percent of our national budget on diplomacy and development, which are key components of America's national security strategy. Diplomats and aid workers strengthen alliances and prevent wars while telling America's story, and they do it on the cheap.

While I would have preferred to see higher funding levels for our diplomats, I will support the broad outline of the 2014 international affairs budget request, which cuts overall spending by about 4 percent, based in large part through our reduced presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.

However, the effects of sequestration, which I strongly opposed from the beginning, are leaving many State Department functions dangerously short of funds. The budget request includes critical funding to enhance security for our brave diplomats and development workers. We should act as soon as possible to implement the recommendations of the Accountability Review Board for Benghazi and fund the State Department's security proposal. I am also pleased that the budget request continues to provide robust funding for PEPFAR and the Global Fund, maintaining U.S. leadership in global health.

In addition, the 2014 budget increases vital humanitarian assistance to help the Syrian people, but I believe we must do more to tip the balance in favor of the Syrian opposition. I recently introduced the bipartisan Free Syria Act, which provides a comprehensive strategy to end the conflict in Syria. This includes the arming of carefully vetted members of a Syrian opposition committed to a peaceful, democratic Syria.

Mr. Secretary, I look forward to working with you to bring the Assad regime to an end and address the humanitarian crisis he created.

I believe that Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability is perhaps the foremost threat facing the United States and the world today. Over the past 4 years, President Obama has unified the international community against this threat and signed into law the strongest-ever sanctions against the regime in Tehran.

Iran has been forced to the negotiating table, but they refuse to negotiate seriously. Meanwhile, their centrifuges are spinning more efficiently than ever. I urge the administration to continue to increase the pressure on Iran and to keep all options on the table until Iran abandons its nuclear weapons program once and for all. Chairman Royce and I have introduced bipartisan legislation to increase the pressure on Iran, and I hope the administration will embrace our legislation.

I also want to congratulate President Obama on his tremendously successful trip to Israel and for fully funding aid to Israel in the budget request. I had the pleasure of traveling with the President to Israel, where he worked to strengthen the eternal bond between Israel and the United States and was received enthusiastically by the Israeli people.

Mr. Secretary, Israel has repeatedly emphasized that it seeks unconditional direct negotiations with the Palestinians, and I applaud the administration for urging the Palestinians to accept that offer. Regrettably, the Palestinians keep raising one condition after another, casting doubt on their commitment to ending the conflict with Israel.

I also want to work closely with you, Mr. Secretary, to build upon the terrific work of Secretary Clinton in supporting the Republic of Kosova. Likewise, I would like to praise the excellent efforts of EU Foreign Policy Chief Lady Catherine Ashton for leading the talks between Belgrade and Pristina. It is my understanding that Lady Ashton has again convened the parties, who are meeting as we speak.

In previous talks, Kosova negotiated in good faith with Serbia in the EU-facilitated dialogue, but Serbia walked away from the table. It is critical for Serbia and Kosova that an agreement on normalization be reached. In the end, the people of Kosova simply want to be treated fairly. Just like their Balkan neighbors, their future requires a clear path into NATO and the EU, and the five EU holdouts should finally recognize Europe's newest country.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I look forward to Secretary Kerry's testimony.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

Well, this morning we are joined by John Kerry, the 68th Secretary of State. Prior to his appointment, the Secretary served as United States Senator from Massachusetts for 28 years and chaired the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate for 4 of those years. And now he has to answer the questions.

But, Mr. Secretary, welcome. Welcome to the House.

And, without objection, the Secretary's full prepared statement will be made part of the record. Members here will have 5 days to submit statements, questions and extraneous materials for the record. And we will ask that Mr. Secretary, if you could summarize your remarks in 5 minutes, we will then follow with questions. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN F. KERRY, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I ask you just remember, what goes around comes around.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Engel, Ranking Member, thank you for your comments about Boston. It is impossible for me to express my sadness and my anger, frankly, over those terrible events. It is just hard to believe that a Patriots' Day holiday, which is normally such a time of festivity, is turned into bloody mayhem.

But I know how resilient Bostonians are, and I think a lot of you do, despite the fact that it took us 86 years to win a pennant. I

have talked this week with friends and family up there, as recently as this morning. And the granddaughter of a very, very close supporter and friend of mine through all of my political career is fighting to keep both of her legs.

You know, Boston is not going to be intimidated by this, but we are going to find out who did this. And the police work being done is extraordinary. The FBI is remarkable. There is great deal of forensic evidence, and we are hopeful that we can bring people to justice.

Turning to the business before us this morning, I do promise to remember how important the lessons are I learned during my time in Congress, which means: Keep your remarks short so we can get to the questions. And I will try to do that as fast as I can, but there are some things I want to share with you.

One of lessons that I have learned and particularly been reinforced in my early travels—and let me just say what a privilege it is to appear before this committee. I honor the Congress, having spent 28 years in it. I respect what each of you represent. And I come before you to be accountable on behalf of the administration. I look forward to our question-and-answer period.

As Senator Lindsay Graham said very eloquently, America's investment in foreign policy is national security insurance. And there really isn't anything foreign about foreign policy anymore. That has come home to me again and again. If we can make the small, smart investments up front, then I believe we avoid more costly conflicts and greater burdens down the road.

In the past few months, we have seen a number of developments that underscore the stakes for having a strong American presence in every part of the world. American engagement was essential to the rapprochement between two of our closest partners, Israel and Turkey. And that was a positive step toward stability in a volatile region of the world where we need partnerships.

The committee is more than immersed in Syria. We have contributed nearly $385 million to humanitarian relief to provide essential resources to the Syrian people, including sending flour to bakeries in Aleppo and providing food and sanitation in Atmeh, in the refugee camp. And I expect that we will talk about Syria somewhat today.

Having just returned from Seoul, Beijing, and Tokyo, where the North Korea issue took center stage, we are reminded once again that America is the guardian of global security. We should be proud of that, and we should carry that mantel. We will not turn our back on the prospect of peace, but neither are we going to hesitate to do what we need to do to defend our allies and our interests.

And all of this speaks to why this budget is not just a collection of numbers; it is an illustration of our values and our priorities. Budgets, deficits, debt—these are weighty decisions. I had the privilege of serving on the super committee and thought we could have gotten there. And I have a record of wanting to do deficit reduction.

And I know you are all grappling with these choices. We are grappling with them at the State Department. And I think our proposed budget is responsive to and reflective of our national eco-

nomic reality. As part of the budget, we are going to help cut our deficit responsibly while investing in areas that attract economic growth, create good jobs for Americans, and secure our national interests.

Our 2014 budget request represents a 6-percent reduction from 2012 funding levels. And we have examined our request—and the reason we mention 2012 is 2013 was a CR, as all of you know. We have examined our request with a clear determination to improve efficiency and economize where possible. We have implemented reforms that reduce costs without jeopardizing vital contributions. And I think we deliver the maximum bang for the minimal expenditure of our citizens' dollars—about one single penny for our national security and global interests out of every single dollar.

Now, let me give you a couple of examples of the kind of high-impact, low-cost work that we are doing to try to make the world safer.

With just over $3.5 million, the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations made key investments leading up to the recent elections in Kenya, and I know that that helped to prevent a repeat of the violence that we saw 5 years ago. It also provided the accountability that allowed Odinga to concede without instilling violence.

Our antiterrorism assistance funding has helped the lives of hundreds of people in places like Pakistan, India, Lebanon, by training local law enforcement to detect and neutralize explosive devices and help us interdict plots before they come to our shores.

Our 2014 budget request maintains our commitments to advancing peace, security, and stability in places where all three can be very scarce commodities.

I have already traveled three times as Secretary to the Middle East and North Africa, a region struggling to respond to its citizens' growing expectations for dignity and opportunity. The very values that we have been promoting they are trying to embrace. Leaders there are making difficult decisions, and the United States cannot make those decisions for them, but we can do a lot to be a partner for all those on the side of freedom and democracy.

To that end, the budget includes a request for $580 million for the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund so that we can help give reformers the tools and resources they need to make the right decisions on behalf of their citizens. And this fund also allows us to say to people in the region, if you are willing to take on the deep-rooted challenges of democracy and throw off the yoke of dictatorship, we are here for you.

When we look at the threats that emanate from failed and potentially failing states, I think it is important that we learn the lessons of the past. The U.S. homeland will not be secure if violent extremists are bent on attacking us and they can find a safe haven in places like the Sahel or the Maghreb.

The threats that we are dealing with in that part of the world range from al-Qaeda rebels to narcotraffickers. And this budget sets aside $8.6 billion for our security for counterterrorism law enforcement assistance. I ask you, every member, just compare that $8.6 billion to the more than $1 trillion we have spent fighting in

Iraq and Afghanistan, and I think you will agree that it is both pennywise and pound-wise.

The simple fact is the United States cannot be strong at home if we are not strong in the world, in today's world. This is particularly true when it comes to our domestic economic renewal. We need to, I think, be more visible, engaged, and strong in certain places, particularly to stoke our economic engines with the trade and business opportunities that are available all across this planet.

And that is why the President is committed to successfully completing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We want to tap the growing markets of the Asia-Pacific, which are vital to economic recovery. And I might point out, most of the growth in the world that is in the double digits or high single digits is in those parts of the world.

I know you will agree with me on the value of investing in our relationship with Asia because many of you, including the chairman, the ranking member, Representative Salmon, and Representative Marino, have traveled to that region recently. In fact, you were there on the very day that I assumed these responsibilities.

When it comes to shoring up our economic health and protecting our national security, I believe our development work is one of our strongest assets. And so let me be clear: Development is not charity; it is an investment. And I believe it is an investment and President Obama believes it is an investment in a strong world and a strong America.

Eleven of our top 15 trading partners were once beneficiaries of U.S. foreign assistance. You just can't afford to pull back from what that lesson tells us. South Korea, that I was just in, 15 years ago was an aid recipient. Today it is giving aid around the world.

That doesn't mean we can't work in better, more efficient ways, but let me highlight just a few of the reforms that we have undertaken.

U.S. food aid, for instance. By giving ourselves the flexibility to choose the most appropriate and efficient type of food assistance, we are going to reach an estimated 2 million to 4 million more people every year with the very same discretionary funding. At the same time, we are going to save approximately $500 million in mandatory funding over the next decade, which we can use to reduce the deficit.

American growers and producers will still play a major role in this food assistance. Over half of the funding we are requesting for emergency food aid must be used for the purchase and shipping of U.S. commodities overseas. But by giving us the ability to modernize, including the flexibility to also procure food aid in developing countries closer to the crisis areas, not only do we feed more people, but we get food to malnourished people 11 to 14 weeks faster.

So here is the bottom line: This change allows us to do more, to help more people lift themselves out the hunger at a rapid pace without spending more money. I think that is a great deal for the American taxpayer.

The final area I want to mention is how this budget cares for our most valuable resource, and that is the personnel, the men and

women of the State Department and USAID who are on the front lines.

We have requested $4.4 billion to fortify our worldwide security protection and improve our overseas infrastructure. Two-point-two billion dollars of this is set aside for constructing secure diplomatic facilities. And this is part of our commitment to implement in full the recommendations of the ARB so that we can obviously mitigate the risk of future tragedies.

This has been a hard year for the State Department family, a family that knows exactly how risky the work that we signed up for can be in a dangerous world. Chairman, you both mentioned, Mr. Ranking Member, the situation of the loss of Anne Smedinghoff. She is being laid to rest right now, while I am here. And I visited with her family in Chicago on the way back from Seoul, and we will have a memorial service for her at the State Department on the 2nd or 3rd of May.

I met her on my last visit. Earlier in the week, you know, I sat with her parents, and we swapped stories about her enthusiasm, her energy, her vitality. She really wanted to make a difference in the lives of people she had never met, and she was.

So Anne and Ambassador Stevens are really cut from the same cloth, and that is, frankly, what made them such outstanding Americans as well as members of the State Department family. As Secretary, my job is to make sure we protect these people. Frankly, it is all of our job. I think you know that. We cannot do it by retreating from the world.

We stand for optimism. We stand for opportunity. We stand for equality. And we stand in opposition to all those who would replace hope with hate, who replace peace with violence and war. That is what we believe, that is when America is at its best, and those are the values of the State Department and the USAID that I intend to defend every single day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I went a little over.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kerry follows:]

SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
WASHINGTON, DC
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2013

Thank you Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel.

Before I begin, I want to express my grief and anger over the terrible events that struck my home city of Boston earlier this week. I know just how resilient Bostonians are, and I've talked this week with friends and family still wrestling with what happened to children and loved ones. But Boston will not be intimidated by cowardly acts of wanton destruction. As President Obama said on Monday, we will not rest until we have gotten to the bottom of these bombings and the perpetrators have been brought to justice.

Turning to the business of the budget...I promise to remember the most important lessons I learned during my time in Congress. First, keep your remarks short so we can get to the questions.

And second, a lesson which has hit home particularly during my travels as Secretary: there really is no longer anything foreign about foreign policy.

As Senator Lindsey Graham has said very eloquently, America's investment in foreign policy is "national security insurance." He's right. If we can make the small smart investments up front, we can avoid much more costly conflicts and burdens down the road.

In the past few months, we have seen several developments that underscore the stakes for having a strong American presence in every part of the world. American engagement was essential to the rapprochement between two of our close partners, Israel and Turkey—a positive step toward stability in a volatile region of the world.

This committee is well aware of the ongoing crisis in Syria. We have contributed nearly $385 million in humanitarian relief to provide essential resources to the Syrian people, including sending flour to bakeries in Aleppo and providing food and sanitation in Atmeh refugee camp. I expect we will have the chance to discuss Syria at length today.

Having just returned from Seoul, Beijing, and Tokyo where the North Korea nuclear issue took center stage, we are reminded once again that America is the guardian of global security. We will not turn our back on the prospect of peace, but neither will we hesitate to do what is needed to defend our allies and interests.

All this speaks to why this budget isn't just a collection of numbers; it's an illustration of our values and priorities. Budgets, deficits, debt—these are weighty decisions, and I know each of you is grappling with them carefully.

We are grappling with them at the State Department too, and I think our proposed budget is responsive to and reflective of our national economic reality. As part of the President's budget,

it will help cut our deficit responsibly while investing in areas that attract economic growth, create good jobs for American workers, and secure our national interests.

Our 2014 budget request represents a six percent reduction from 2012 funding levels. We have examined our request with a steely-eyed determination to improve efficiency and economize wherever possible. We have implemented reforms that reduce costs without jeopardizing vital contributions. This budget delivers maximum bang for the minimal possible taxpayer buck–actually, for about one single penny out of the taxpayer dollar.

Let me give you a few examples of the kind of high-impact, low-cost work we do every day to make the world safer. With just over $3.5 million, the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations made key investments leading up to the recent elections in Kenya that helped prevent a repeat of the violence we saw five years ago.

Our anti-terrorism assistance funding has helped save the lives of hundreds of people in places like Pakistan, India, and Lebanon by training local law enforcement to detect and neutralize explosive devices.

Our 2014 budget request maintains our commitments to advancing peace, security, and stability in places where all three can be scarce commodities. I've already traveled three times as Secretary to the Middle East and North Africa—a region struggling to respond to its citizens' growing expectations for dignity and opportunity. Leaders there are making difficult decisions, and the United States cannot make those decisions for them, but we can do more to be a partner for all those on the side of freedom and democracy.

To that end, this budget includes a request for $580 million for the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund so that we can help give reformers the tools and resources they need to make the right decisions on behalf of their citizens. This fund allows us to say to people in the region: "If you're willing to take on the deep-rooted challenges and make the tough choices, we are here for you."

When we look at the threats that emanate from failed and potentially failing states, we must heed the lessons of our past. The U.S. homeland will not be secure if violent extremists bent on attacking us find a safe haven in places like the Sahel or the Maghreb. The threats we're dealing with in that part of the world range from al-Qaeda rebels to narcotraffickers. This budget sets aside $8.6 billion for our security, counterterrorism, and law-enforcement assistance. Compare that $8.6 billion to the more than $1 trillion we have spent fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan and I think you'll agree this is both a penny and pound-wise investment.

The simple fact is, the United States cannot be strong at home if we're not strong in the world. This is particularly true when it comes to our domestic economic renewal.

We need to do <u>more</u> to get out there and stoke our economic engines with the trade and business opportunities available in other countries. That's why the President is committed to successfully completing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We want to tap the growing markets of the Asia Pacific, which are vital to

American economic recovery. And I know you agree with me on the value of investing in our relationship with Asia, because many of you, including Chairman Royce, Representative Engel, Representative Salmon, and Representative Marino have traveled to the region recently. You were there on the day I became Secretary, in fact.

When it comes to shoring up our economic health and protecting our national security, our development work is one of our strongest assets. Let me be clear: development is not charity. It's an investment in a strong America and a free world. Eleven of our top 15 trading partners were once beneficiaries of U.S. foreign assistance. We can't afford to pull back. But that doesn't mean we won't work in better, smarter ways.

Let me highlight the reforms we are making with this budget to one of our most visible forms of assistance: U.S. Food Aid. By giving ourselves the flexibility to choose the most appropriate and efficient type of food assistance, the U.S. government will reach an estimated 2-4 million more people every year with the same discretionary funding. At the same time, we will save approximately $500 million in mandatory funding over the next decade, which we will use to reduce the deficit.

American growers and producers will still play a major role in our food assistance. Over half the funding we are requesting for emergency food aid must be used for the purchase and shipping of U.S. commodities overseas. But by giving us the ability to modernize, including the flexibility to also procure food aid in developing countries closer to crisis areas, not only can we feed more people, we can get food to malnourished people 11-14 weeks faster. Here's the bottom line: this change allows us to do more to help more people lift themselves out of hunger and poverty without spending any more money. That's a great deal for the American taxpayer.

The final area I want to mention is how this budget cares for our most valuable resource: the brave men and women of the State Department and USAID. We have requested $4.4 billion to fortify our worldwide security protection and improve our overseas infrastructure. $2.2 billion of this is set aside for constructing secure diplomatic facilities. This is part of our commitment to implement in full the recommendations of the independent Accountability Review Board so that we can mitigate the risk of future tragedies like the one we suffered last year in Benghazi.

This has been a hard year for our State Department family...a family that knows how risky the work we signed up for can be in a very dangerous world. Just two weeks ago in Afghanistan we lost a bright, committed Foreign Service officer—Anne Smedinghoff. I met her on my last visit, and earlier this week, I sat with her parents. She was just 25 years old. She wanted to make a difference in the lives of people she had never met, and she was willing to take risks to do it.

Anne and Ambassador Chris Stevens really were cut from the same cloth. That's what made them such outstanding members of the State Department family, and such outstanding Americans.

As Secretary, my most important job is to protect the men and women under my watch so they can carry out their national security mission. But we cannot do it by retreating from the world.

We stand for optimism and opportunity and equality. And we stand in opposition to all those who would replace hope with hate. That's what we believe—and those are the values the State Department and USAID defend every day. Thank you.

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Chairman ROYCE. Let me raise a couple of issues.

This committee has been frustrated in obtaining documents and other information from the Department concerning the Benghazi terrorist attacks. Of course, our investigation predates your tenure, so I am hopeful we will be able to resolve this as you get your team in place so that we can move forward on this important issue.

I would also like to call your attention to the State Department's Inspector General's Office. This is the key independent office looking at waste and fraud. Mr. Secretary, as of today, there has been no permanent State Department Inspector General for over 5 years. This includes President Obama's entire first term. The committee raised this issue in a bipartisan letter sent to you in February, and we would like to see an immediate appointment to this position.

On North Korea, you know my views on this, but the United States, past administrations, have tried to offer North Korea aid—we have offered over $1 billion—or sanctions relief for nuclear commitments. Administrations from both parties have been embarrassed when the regime tore up those agreements. Former Secretary of Defense Gates was fond of saying, "I am tired of buying the same horse twice." My concern is that the administration may be thinking of doing just that.

And I would just ask, how is this different, this approach to North Korea, from the past attempts to offer aid in exchange for a change in policy which never came?

Secretary KERRY. Great questions all, and all deserve a straight answer, and I will give it to you.

On the IG, you are absolutely correct. We are trying to fill a number of positions right now, the IG among them. The greatest difficulty I am finding, now that I am on the other side of the fence, is, frankly, the vetting process. And I have some folks that I selected way back in February when I first came in, and we are now in April and I am still waiting for the vetting to move. I have talked to the White House. They are totally on board. They are trying to get it moved.

So I hope that within a very short span of time you are going to see these slots filled. They need to be, and that is just the bottom line. It is important, and I commit to you we will.

Chairman ROYCE. I think this is the longest gap that we have had in the history of this position. So if you could talk to the President about this in short order, we would very much appreciate it.

Secretary KERRY. I don't need to talk to the President. We are going to get this done.

Chairman ROYCE. Okay.

Secretary KERRY. We know it. And we are trying to get the right people. Matching person to task and also clearing all the other hurdles is, I am finding, not as easy as one always thinks. But we will get it done.

On the subject of Benghazi, look, I was on the other side of the podium, the dais, just a short time ago when that was a big issue. And we held hearings in the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate, and we wanted materials, and we got a lot.

In fairness, I think the administration has testified 8 times, has briefed 20 times. Secretary Clinton spent 5 hours answering ques-

tions before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Twenty-five thousand documents have already been turned over. Video of the actual event has been made available to members to see. If you haven't seen it, I urge you to see it because it is enormously helpful in understanding the flow of events and what happened. And the people who were involved have all been interviewed, and not only interviewed but those FBI interviews were made part of the record and, in an unprecedented way, have been made available to the Congress in order to read, verbatim, those testimonies.

So if you have additional questions or you think there is some document that somehow you need, I will work with you to try to get it and see if we can provide that to you. But——

Chairman ROYCE. I have to just disagree for a minute. Instead of handing over copies of the documents and records that we have requested, as has always been customary practice in the past, the Department has insisted that the committee staff sift through thousands of pages of materials in a room in which they are monitored by the Department. And they can't remove any or make electronic copies of those documents.

Mr. Secretary, these are unclassified documents that relate to the critical issue of Embassy security. And the Department is literally spending thousands of taxpayers' dollars a week to slow the progress of the committee's review.

So this has resulted in a great deal of wasted time and money. I think it runs contrary to the administration's promise of increased transparency. And I hope you will reconsider the Department's position on this issue.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I didn't know there was a position that does what you are describing.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. There is certainly no position by me to delay anything, and I was not aware that—now, if there is anything that is appropriate to turn over—what I want to check, Mr. Chairman, is what is the historical precedent with respect to investigative document, FBI document, which we don't control. I just want to find out what the story is on that.

I will work with you. And you will have me up here again, and if I haven't worked with you, I am sure I will know about it. So I promise you, we will work together to try to do that.

On North Korea, let me just make it clear, I have no desire as Secretary of State and the President has no desire to do the same horse trade or go down the old road. And I just came from Beijing and from discussions there, where I articulated as strongly as I can that we are not going to go down the same road, that the policy of Russia, the policy of China, the policy of South Korea and Japan and the United States, all of us, is denuclearization.

The single country that has the greatest ability to be able to impact that is China. And so we had that discussion, and we agreed in the very next days now to engage in an ongoing process by which we work out exactly how we are going to proceed so that it is different. That is our goal, and I can assure you I want to reach it.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Martin Dempsey, will be traveling to China in the next days. We will have another—Deputy Sec-

retary Burns will be going in about 2 weeks. We are going to keep the pressure on this in order to try to make this outcome different.

Chairman ROYCE. In the past, in 2005, as I indicated, we did find a way to incentivize those financial institutions that were assisting North Korea by giving them access to the hard currency. Frankly, what we did was freeze those accounts by giving those banks a choice between doing business with the United States or business with North Korea.

At the same time, we could tackle the illicit shipments on the high seas, as we have done before, with the Proliferation Security Initiative. We could ratchet up the radio broadcasts into the country. We could make a strong stand, as I am sure we will, on North Korean human rights abuses, letting the regime know that they are on notice, that they will be held to account. We could take them to the International Criminal Court.

These types of steps, especially in relation to the activities we have seen out of North Korea—I think it is time we pursue something that is capable of cutting off the access to hard currency on the part of the regime.

But we thank you——

Secretary KERRY. Those are all options, Mr. Chairman, and there are many others. And we are going to explore every single option. The one commitment I make to you is, it is very clear to me that nothing short of a change is going to get us where we need to go. We cannot repeat the same.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

We go to Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, again, Mr. Secretary, welcome.

I had the honor a few weeks ago of accompanying the President on his trip to Israel. The Israelis have repeatedly said that they are willing to negotiate with the Palestinians face-to-face, across a table, with no preconditions. That is how the situation in Northern Ireland was taken care of; that is what you do when you really want to end a conflict. Unfortunately, the Palestinians have refused. This past week, Prime Minister Fayyad, one of the most moderate of the Palestinians, resigned.

I am wondering if you can give us your assessment about what is going on in the Middle East and what we are doing to back the Israelis in their, you know, legitimate quest to say, we want to negotiate, no preconditions.

Also, with Iran, it is clear to me that Iran is buying time as their nuclear program advances. The recent P5-Plus-1 talks seem to have failed, and talks are delayed now until the Iranian elections in June and Ramadan, which starts in early August. So when do we say, enough is enough? And what are the administration's plans for moving forward?

And on Syria, the State Department and USAID have worked hard to address the humanitarian catastrophe, but I don't believe that this civil war can be won with only humanitarian assistance and diplomacy.

Do you believe, Mr. Secretary, that the United States will have any type of influence in the post-Assad Syria if we don't provide

certain elements of a Syrian opposition with the weapons necessary to defend themselves and force Assad from power?

So I would like you to answer those questions.

Secretary KERRY. All six of them in 3 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. We will give you extra time.

Secretary KERRY. Congressman Engel, I am going to start with your last question, and I am going to work backwards.

On Syria, we are working very, very closely with the Syrian opposition, with the Syrian military coalition, and with our core partners, as well as with the standard groups, G8, et cetera. I was just at a G8 meeting. We met with the Syrian opposition at that meeting. And I am flying to Istanbul for a Saturday meeting with all of the core group members and more of the Syrian opposition, because we are trying to get everybody on the same page here.

The fact is that some people are providing weapons, and they have chosen to do that. Others are apparently about to decide to, some of our friends. And others have chosen a different path of providing different kinds of assistance.

The point is, the opposition, I believe, is making headway on the ground. I believe Assad's days are numbered. I am not going to get into the game of months or how long. I am convinced that he is going to go; the question is when and how.

Obviously, there are dangers of extremists who are finding some funding and engaged in the battle. And we want to try to separate them, if that is possible. We also want to make certain that the people we are working with are committed to pluralism, diversity, to a democratic process, to all Syrians being represented, including the Alawi, the Ismaili, the Druze, the Christians, so forth. There have to be a series of guarantees.

So we are trying to proceed carefully to make sure that we are not contributing to a worse mess but that we are actually finding a constructive path forward.

The most important thing about Syria I want to leave with everybody is this: There is a communique that was issued in Geneva last year, which the Russians signed on to and the international community signed on to, that calls for a transitional government chosen by mutual consent from both sides, which obviously does not include Assad because he will not be consented to, which then provides for this opportunity for a peaceful transition that maintains the institutions of the state. That is a critical goal here.

So we are trying to proceed thoughtfully and carefully. And I think this meeting this weekend is going to be a very important one in terms of determining what options might be available on the road ahead.

On the Middle East, you can tell from my early travels and my engagements that we are committed to trying to find out what is possible. I am not going to come here today and lay out to you a schedule or define the process, because we are in the process of working that out with the critical parties.

But in my meetings on both sides, I have found a seriousness of purpose, a commitment to explore how we actually get to a negotiation. And we all have some homework to do. We are doing that homework. And I ask you simply give us a little bit of time here.

But I can guarantee you that I am committed to this because I believe the window for a two-state solution is shutting. I think we have some period of time, in 1–1½ to 2 years, or it is over. And everybody I have talked to in the region and all of the supporters globally who care about the peace—and I have been struck in my travels, incidentally, by how many people everywhere raise this subject and want to us move forward on a peace effort—they are all worried about the timing here.

So there is an urgency to this, in my mind. And I intend, on behalf of the President's instructions, to honor that urgency and see what we can do to move forward.

With respect to Iran, I would just say to you very simply, we are in the closest communication possible with Israel, our friends and others concerned about this. We are discussing the clock, the time frame, on Iran's enrichment and on the nature of the threat. I think we are in sync.

And the President has made his policy crystal-clear: No option is off the table, and Iran will not get a nuclear weapon. That is the policy. I reaffirm it today. And we are going to continue to leave the door to diplomacy open, but we understand there is a clock.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Chairwoman Emeritus Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member.

And welcome, Mr. Secretary. It is always a pleasure to see you.

Mr. Secretary, days ago, the Venezuelan people faced impediments to a free and fair election due to the destructive and corrupt policies of Chavista loyalists. The CNE has stated that it will not allow a recount in Venezuela in an open and transparent manner. The U.S. must not, therefore, recognize these election results until a full and transparent recount and audit are conducted.

Will you pledge here today that the United States will refuse to recognize the accreditation and swearing-in of Nicolas Maduro? I will ask for your answer at the end.

And does the lack of a coherent response from our State Department legitimize the Maduro regime?

Mr. Secretary, here is a list of the voting irregularities cited by the opposition in Venezuela, for your review. And, as we know, Venezuela's largest supporter has been the Castro regime, as both continue to use oppressive tactics against their people.

Yet, by cutting U.S. democracy funds for Cuba, this administration is undermining the opposition and our efforts to help true democratic reform on the island. Due to this proposed cut, civil society leaders may not be able to advance their democratic cause. And as our Nation continues to face economic woes, the policy of the United States must be to be to good stewards of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

When I chaired this committee, I placed holds on the assistance to the Palestinian Authority. Fayyad's resignation casts a greater shadow on the future makeup of the P.A., and it opens the door for renewed reconciliation efforts between Fatah and Hamas. So if the P.A. is committed to the peace process, then why does the administration see the need to use U.S. taxpayer dollars to entice the P.A.

to go back to the negotiation table? We cannot even guarantee that these funds will not end up being funneled to Hamas.

And the administration is also requesting $580 million for a Middle East and North Africa fund. What specific benchmarks can ensure greater accountability and transparency in these funds? And who will oversee the implementation of this money?

Mr. Secretary, lastly, I have two questions for a written reply, to allow the Camp Liberty residents in Iraq to go back to Camp Ashraf. The double-layered T walls that were protecting the camp were removed, and now the residents are vulnerable to armed attacks, as they were on February 9th, when eight residents were killed. Will the U.S. ask the Iraqi Government to adequately protect the residents in Camp Liberty?

Another question for a written response highlights Greece's importance to the United States and asks for your help in urging Turkey to allow the Christian church seminary in Halki to reopen.

So, Mr. Secretary, on Venezuela, will the U.S. recognize Maduro as the President in spite of no recount?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I can't give you a yes-or-no answer on that because we think there ought to be a recount. I don't know whether it is going to happen in the next days. They are talking about having an inauguration on Friday. Obviously, if there are huge irregularities, we are going to have serious questions about the viability of that government. But that evaluation has to be made, and I haven't made it yet. So I can assure you——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Will you be sending someone to the swearing-in ceremony, a U.S. delegation?

Secretary KERRY. If it is under contested circumstances, I would be very doubtful of that. There is certainly no plan to. But I need to find out—you know, we have to take a look at what is going to flow here.

Originally, Maduro also said there ought to be a recount. And then——

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And now the CNE has said no recount.

Secretary KERRY. Correct. Now the CNE has stepped in and said no. I am not sure that is over yet. The OAS has asked for a recount, others have. So let's see where we come out on that.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Was the Camp Ashraf a written?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. That is for written, but if you would care to comment——

Secretary KERRY. Oh. Well, I will just tell you very quickly, I met with Prime Minister Maliki a few days ago. This concern about what is happening there at Camp Liberty was very much on our minds, in terms of security.

We are working with them now in terms of trying to interview. We have actually run into some problems with that. There was an Albanian offer to take some people; that was turned down. So we are working through a complicated situation. We will give you a full written answer on that.

With respect to the Mideast—well, let me leave the Mideast, North Africa to last.

On the Palestinian Authority, look, I have to tell you, there is no way any of that money is going to Hamas. There is no relationship

right now between the P.A. and Hamas. In fact, there is still a pretty vigorous competition going on, and I don't anticipate a reconciliation in the next days or weeks, frankly.

One of the things we need to do, Madam Chairwoman, is strengthen the P.A. You know, somebody here has to tell me who is going to take the place of either Salam Fayyad—and now that is up for grabs—or Abu Mazen. And it seems to me that for Israel, for us, for the world, that not strengthening the P.A. is to work against our own interests.

Admiral Bushong, who is there now, is doing an extraordinary job following up on what General Dayton started a number of years ago to help build the security capacity in the West Bank. Last year, the entire year, not one Israeli was killed from an incident from the West Bank.

So we need to recognize, even as there are difficulties, a lot is happening. Their economy is actually growing at a relatively decent rate. There is a level of cooperation which is growing and capacity that is growing. So we want to continue that, and I think that to not invest would be remarkably shortsighted, particularly given where we are now.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has agreed in the last days to engage in a new initiative in terms of the economy, not as an alternative, not as a substitute—I want to emphasize this—to the political track, but in addition to, because he believes that you need to advance the economic strength.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time.

Chairman ROYCE. We will go now to Mr. Brad Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your continuing service to our Nation. Condolences on what has happened in your home State and to several of the State Department employees who work under your leadership.

I just have too many questions, so this may be a relaxing 5 minutes in that, for the most part, I hope you will respond for the record.

There is probably no more important country than Pakistan and nothing more important than our public outreach to the Pakistani people. Yet we are broadcasting only in Urdu. This committee voted overwhelmingly, unanimously, that we should spend $1.5 million broadcasting in the Sindhi language. And I hope that the Voice of America will broadcast in the several major languages of Pakistan, even though there are elements of the Pakistani Government who have a phobia for the use of any language other than Urdu. You wouldn't dream of trying to sell a product here, at least in my city of Los Angeles, broadcasting only in one language.

We have 37 partners who are visa waiver countries. Some 74 Members of this House have cosponsored the bill I introduced with Congressman Poe. Similar bills have gotten—and we introduced that bill last year. Now this year in the Senate, both Barbara Boxer and Senator Wyden have bills that have significant support.

Now, not every country can be a visa waiver country, but Israel meets the numerical test better than Hungary, Lithuania, and Latvia, who were made visa waiver countries a few years ago. And there are practical problems; there are practical problems in every-

thing. But every country in Europe, and our Canadian neighbors to the north, have worked these out and have given visa waiver status to Israel. I hope that when Israelis want to see Mickey Mouse, they come to Disneyland or Disney World and not Euro Disney. Those shekels could be useful here.

As to Iran, I want to commend the administration for the sanctions already imposed, but we have not sanctioned shipping companies that continue to service ports operated by the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps. We have not sanctioned the exchanges houses, currency dealers, and precious-metal dealers that are helping Iran evade sanctions. And I hope that you would instruct your staff to focus on those sanctions.

Likewise, we have issued an exemption to Chinese financial institutions doing transactions with the Central Bank of Iran, citing a "reduction in Chinese purchases of Iranian oil." I hope would you furnish for the record what significant reductions there have been in Chinese purchases of Iranian oil and also furnish the statistics with regard to India and Turkey.

I want to add my voice to that of Ileana Ros-Lehtinen when it comes to the MEK residents of Camp Hurriya and the importance of us using our efforts with Iraq to make sure that they comply with international law and restore the protective barriers that had been there.

I hope that you would condemn Azerbaijan's threats to shoot down civilian airliners that fly into the Nagorno-Karabakh Airport and Turkey's blockade of Armenia.

My last question probably does deserve an oral response, but it is a premature and unfair question because matters need to be analyzed. And that is, do you see any parallels between what happened in Boston and international terrorist incidents that have happened in the past, whether those incidents actually occurred or whether they were nipped in the bud? I realize it is premature, but given your role as heading our foreign policy operation, do you see anything that has happened abroad that might be parallel to what we have seen in Boston?

Secretary KERRY. Well, you know, Congressman, I am not going to speculate. I have no evidence, and it would be inappropriate for me just to cross any line here on that. Terror is terror. You know, a bomb going off in a mass of people is a bomb going off in a mass of people. And whether it is homegrown or foreign, we just don't know yet. And so I am not going to contribute to any speculation on that.

You know, Europe has had its share of, you know, bombs on trains—Madrid, London—buses, you know, in Bulgaria. That was Hezbollah.

Mr. SHERMAN. Uh-huh.

Secretary KERRY. But it is inappropriate for me to go into that territory. If you don't mind, I just——

Mr. SHERMAN. I fully understand.

Secretary KERRY. Let the people do their jobs and the forensic work, and we will see where we are.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We will go now to Chris Smith, Africa and Human Rights Subcommittee chair.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

First of all, let me begin by thanking you for raising your voice on behalf of Iranian Pastor Saeed Abedini. We all appreciate that. I hope it makes a difference, and I hope you will continue to do so.

Four questions, Mr. Secretary.

Within the last 2 years alone, I have chaired three congressional hearings on the systematic abduction of Coptic Christian teenage girls, and even of young mothers, who are then forced to marry Muslim men, Egyptian men, and are forced to renounce their Christian faith. There was a piece in today's Inter Press Service news agency that more than 500 Christian girls have been abducted in the last 2 years, according to the Association of Victims of Abduction and Enforced Disappearance, average age 13 to 17.

I have raised this with our Ambassador, Ambassador Patterson. As a matter of fact, 1 year after I gave her—and Frank Wolf actually physically put in her hands, the information about what is going on, by Skype she talked to our committee. I asked her about it. She said she had not gotten around to it.

I ask you, I appeal to you, to raise this issue with President Morsi. I doubt that you have because you probably have not been briefed. But it is a horrible human trafficking issue, and I do hope you will raise it.

Secondly, Chen Guangcheng has testified at three of my four hearings on his case, twice by phone and last week in person, right where you sit. Chen, as we all know, is unimaginably brave, a human rights defender who exposed the hideous practice of forced abortion in China, defended women in a class action suit. And for that, he and his wife were tortured with unbelievable methods. And now his nephew, Chen Kegui, has become his proxy and is himself being tortured.

He appeals strongly to you, to me, to the President, and all of us in Congress, to raise his nephew's case and that of the other Chens, but also to ask for information specifically about his case, which he has been unable to get from the Department.

You know, the issue of forced abortion and sex-selection abortion is so horrific. China is missing tens of millions of little girls who have been picked out and killed by sex-selection abortion. A woman named Mara Hvistendahl has written a book, and points out there are over 160 million females missing from Asia's population, more than the entire population of women and girls in the United States of America. It is terrible, it is destabilizing, it is a crime against women. Chen paid the price for that; now his nephew is.

Thirdly, on October 5, 2011, you wrote an excellent letter to Secretary Clinton asking that Jacob Ostreicher be assisted in Bolivia. I have been down there twice. I visited him in Palmasola Prison, and I also visited him again with Nydia Velazquez in his hospital room. He is very, very sick. He has never been charged with anything. Eighteen months in a terrible prison. He is, like I said, sick.

We have never been able to get intervention above an Assistant Secretary level. Will you please see fit to call Evo Morales, initiate an effort to rescue this man? Several of the prosecutors that were involved with prosecuting him are now behind bars because they broke Bolivian law.

And, finally, child abduction, particularly to Japan—nobody has come back from Japan; 300 cases, nobody has come back. I am running out of time, so real quick. We need to push the child abduction cases, especially as it relates to Japan.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman Smith, let me begin by saluting your unbelievably long-term passion for all of these human rights issues. You and I have worked together on a couple of things, and I really respect your tenacity and your focus. And I know that it makes a difference for these people that you raise these issues.

I will tell you directly that, on the Chen Guangcheng, I raised not only the issue of his nephew but his family. And I raised it while I was in China last week, at the highest level. And there is nowhere that I visit that I do not raise the issue of our human rights cases.

With respect to child abduction in Japan, I met not—the answer is yes, I raised it, again, at the highest level. I know people personally who have had children abducted, and they have never gotten a response, they have never come back.

I might add, I have raised that issue—the last conversation I ever had with Mubarak was a half-hour struggle with him over the issue of Colin Bower from Massachusetts, who has two kids that were kidnapped out of Massachusetts and taken to Egypt, and he has had unbelievable difficulty having the law enforced and being able to visit them and so forth.

This is a huge issue. We have families of kids who have been abducted, gone to Japan, they can't see them, they don't get to them again. We have to resolve this. And, to his credit, Prime Minister Abe has submitted to the Diet the Child Abduction Convention and has pledged to try to get it passed. And I think we will find, perhaps, new cooperation with this administration.

So these are all extraordinary issues. And, most importantly, on the abduction of these young women, the Coptics, you know, there still is slavery in the world. You know that, I know that. And it is a tragedy. There is human trafficking that takes place in many more places than people think, in many more ways than people think.

And we are going to raise that. We are raising that within the State Department. I raised it as chairman; we held the first hearings of the Foreign Relations Committee on it in the Senate. And I promise you we will continue to focus on that in the days ahead.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Gregory Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is delightful to see you, Mr. Secretary. And again, thank you for your dedication to our country and all of the work that you have done over the years, first in the Senate and now as Secretary of State.

Mr. Secretary, I applaud the Obama administration's ambitious negotiations on the two important trade agreements that you talked about, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with Europe, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement with trading partners in Asia. These negotiations hold the promise of boosting the U.S. economy with increased access to our largest markets and stronger investments in our Nation that will lead to more jobs. The economic potential is critical at a time when one in

five jobs in our country are trade dependent. But trade is always about much more than about tariffs and nontariff barriers.

Europe, we know, is critical to helping the United States with challenges that cut across the foreign policy spectrum. Iran, Syria to name a couple. And Asia is also key to several of our strategic economic security interests, as you highlighted in your recent trip. Mr. Secretary, I believe that while we deepen our economic ties to the EU and Asia, there is also that we can't lose sight of the strategic importance of other critical nations like Turkey and Russia. Tackling some of our toughest geopolitical challenges will require a closer connection, I believe, to these Nations. Yet, and I praise you on your recent trip to Turkey, where you have gotten Turkey closer to resolving tensions with Israel. That is a move that I think is tremendously important, and I commend you on that.

I am concerned about Russia and Russia's recent reaction to the list of names released by the U.S. Treasury under the requirements of the Magnitsky law. So my first question is, Mr. Secretary, as the administration focuses its foreign affairs budgets, how would you collaborate with Russia and Turkey, and what role do they play to balance the deepening of ties with the EU and Asia, while also, you know, and while working together with them, Russia and Turkey on some strategic and mutual interests that we have?

And lastly, Mr. Secretary, you know, I have worked in the Western Hemisphere for a long period of time. And I would like a view of whether or not and how the administration is looking at the Western Hemisphere, and I think in a post-Cold War viewpoint. I, like anybody else, believe that all votes should be counted. In fact, I wish all votes were counted in 2000. But didn't happen here. But at any rate, you know, working with our strategic partners, you know, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Venezuela happens to be there, they seem to be working with one another in connection with us because we see poverty beginning to be lowered there. What is our overall policy, or how is the foreign affairs budget, the State Department's budget would be prioritized in the entire region as opposed to just focusing on one country, since they seem to be trying to work together closer than ever before?

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you very much, Congressman Meeks. I am very, very hopeful. I am planning a trip shortly to both Colombia and Brazil, and other countries, hopefully, as time permits. We have had some issues, obviously, with Argentina in late time over some debt issues and repayment and so forth which we need to work through. But look, the Western Hemisphere is our backyard. It is critical to us. Too often, countries in the Western Hemisphere think that the United States doesn't pay enough attention to them. And on occasion it has probably been true. I think we need to reach out vigorously. We plan to. The President will be traveling to Mexico very shortly. And then south, I think he is going. I can't remember which other countries, but he is going to the region. I will be going. We will have other high-level visits. And we intend to do everything possible to try to change the attitudes of a number of nations where we have had, obviously, sort of a breach in the relationship over the course of the last few years.

The TTIP and the TPP, I will say to everybody here, are really critical to the United States, as well as to Europe and the Pacific

relationship. Japan is very anxious to be involved in the TPP. They have taken steps to try to meet the standards. Canada, New Zealand, and Australia still need to make a decision about them coming in. But the hope is that we could get to the July negotiations with Japan and really move forward on that. Europe is very excited about the TTIP. And Turkey would also like to have a negotiation that is parallel to the negotiation with respect to the TTIP.

So I think what we are seeing here is an enormous opening up of opportunity to raise the standards by which people have been trading to the highest common denominator, not the lowest, and to begin to open up new opportunities for growth in countries that are struggling right now to find that growth. So I think these are plus-plus, win-wins for everybody, and we are going to continue to work toward them. On Turkey, Russia, you know, Russia, some people criticize and say, well, what happened to the reset? I think they are overlooking. Are there counter reactions to some things? Yes, there are. Have we gone down into a lower moment of that relationship? The answer is yes. And we have these fights over adoption, over Magnitsky, et cetera. But on big issues, I want everybody to take notice that Russia has cooperated with us with respect to Afghanistan and the northern route, which has been critical. Russia has cooperated with us on the WTO, cooperated with us on Iran, Iran sanctions, on the U.N. resolution, cooperated with us on the DPRK, and cooperated with us on the START treaty.

Those are big ticket items. So even though there have been some bumps in the road, I am very hopeful that we can move this relationship back to a more visibly completely constructive place. And we need to work at it. I had a very good meeting in London with Foreign Minister Lavrov to that end. I have been invited to go to Russia, which I will do prior to the G8. And I look forward to trying to work to do that.

Turkey has been tremendously cooperative and very positive in a number of different ways. Foreign Minister Davutoglu and I have a very good working relationship. I met with Prime Minister Erdogan a number of times already this year as Secretary. They have pledged to be supportive of the Middle East peace process. They are being supportive with respect to Syria. They are hosting this meeting this Saturday in an effort to bring the Syria core group together. And Turkey is talking with us right now about helping with respect to both Cyprus and Nagorno-Karabakh, two frozen conflicts where we need to break out of the past. And I think Turkey is going to be a constructive player in those. So I look forward to a productive relationship.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Dana Rohrabacher, chairman of the Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats Subcommittee.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Welcome aboard.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, sir. Good to see you. How you doing?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Good to see you. We worked together on a number of issues in the past.

Secretary KERRY. A lot of years.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I have got three specific things I would like to ask you about very quickly, two of them very quickly anyway. Number one, you have already been alerted in the hearing as to

our concerns, and you have already expressed your concern about the MEK's vulnerable situation in Camp Liberty. We do know that there was an attack on February 8, or last February, because it was on the 9th, and eight people were killed, and many were wounded. We have asked them to take down the structures—not asked them, the structures giving them protection have been taken down. Are we going to—the question is, are we going to hold the Maliki government responsible for their safety? And if there is another attack and more of them are murdered, are we going to withdraw any of—will the administration withdraw its requests for aid to a regime that is murdering innocent refugees in a camp that we helped put there? That is number one. Number two—why don't you go ahead and answer number one. Are we in any way going to pressure the Maliki regime on this issue?

Secretary KERRY. I raised this issue directly with the Prime Minister when I was there a couple of weeks ago. We are deeply engaged in this. I am very concerned about the potential of another attack. We are trying very hard to find a place to resettle everybody. I will tell you——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I want to say, Senator—Mr. Secretary, I have got two more questions that are important.

Secretary KERRY. Okay. Go ahead. But I will just say to you the answer is yes, we are looking for accountability, and we are working very hard to provide safety.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Accountability for the Iraqi Government is important on this issue.

Secretary KERRY. It is Iranian Government that I believe was behind the attack. We need the Iraqi Government to help provide security.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Maliki's coziness to the mullahs in Iran is disturbing. And this may reflect that. The administration is asking for hundreds of millions of dollars in aid, military aid for Pakistan. So we are asking for aid, hundreds of millions of dollars, if not $1 billion and other aid, to a government that is holding in prison the doctor who helped us bring to justice Osama bin Laden, a government that gave Osama bin Laden 10 years of safe haven.

When, my question to you specifically is, how much longer are we going to rely on quiet diplomacy, talking with the Pakistanis about trying to free Dr. Afridi, who is an American hero? How long are we going to use quiet diplomacy rather than just cutting off their aid?

Secretary KERRY. Well, you know the old saying, Dana, about cutting off your nose to spite your face. Cutting off aid to Pakistan would not be a good move, certainly at this point in time, for a lot of different reasons. We are working with Pakistan with respect to nuclear weapon safety and nonproliferation. We are working with Pakistan to get our supplies both in and out of Afghanistan. Pakistan has lost perhaps 50,000 people in the last years to terror. They have soldiers——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Again, Mr. Secretary, Dr. Afridi was given safe haven. They are the terrorists' friends, and here we are planning to give them millions of dollars, and they have ended up giving some of our aid to terrorists who are killing us. And the guy who tried to save us is languishing away in a dungeon. Shame on

us, not you, Mr. Secretary, shame on us if we ignore Dr. Afridi languishing away in a dungeon.

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, we are not ignoring Dr. Afridi at all, believe me. This discussion we have, and it goes on. But it is just not as simple, it is just not as simple as holding everything accountable to one thing where they, they assert that there were certain laws that were broken. You know the arguments. Now, that complicates it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I have got 30 seconds, Mr. Secretary, and I got one more issue that is vitally important to bring up.

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And that is, I know that you are new to this job. We wish you all the success. I do not believe that Secretary of State Hillary was honestly cooperative with this committee about Benghazi. And you take a look, we have made request after request about, for example, just to get the list of the names of the people who were evacuated from Benghazi. And we haven't even gotten that, much less some of the other important questions.

Now, I know the State Department has flooded us with paper for some of the more insignificant things. Mr. Secretary, we think that there was a cover-up of some kind of wrongdoing that led this administration to lie to the American people about the nature of the attack immediately after the attack, and for a week after that attack. We need to have these questions answered. We need to talk to the people who were on the scene. Can you give us a commitment now that for this administration, you will be coming up with the request, the honest request of this investigative committee as to who was evacuated and how to talk to them so we can get a straight answer and an understanding of what happened in Benghazi?

Secretary KERRY. Well, before I became Secretary, Congressman, I believe I got the answers to who was evacuated, and had a pretty good sense of what happened there. But now that I am the Secretary, and I am responsible to you and the Congress, I can promise you that if you are not getting something that you have evidence of, or you think you ought to be getting, we will work with you. And I will appoint somebody to work directly with you starting tomorrow with you, Mr. Chairman, to have a review of anything you don't think you have gotten that you are supposed to get. Let's get this done with, folks. Let's figure out what it is that is missing, if it is legitimate or isn't. I don't think anybody lied to anybody. And let's find out exactly together what happened, because we got a lot more important things to move onto and get done.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Sires of New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I am sorry about what happened in your State.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you.

Mr. SIRES. I share your hurt. I have three questions. One of the questions is can you give me a status and the latest efforts we are making to release Alan Gross from Cuba?

Secretary KERRY. Excuse me?

Mr. SIRES. Alan Gross from Cuba. What are our latest efforts to have him released? And where are we with that? The other part

of that question is we have in New Jersey a million-dollar bounty on Joanne Chesimard, who has been living in Cuba for many, many years. She is the person that shot a State Trooper in New Jersey and fled to Cuba. I wonder if you are going to raise that issue when there is some sort of conversation.

The second question I have is, you know, I represent a great deal of Coptic Christians in my district. And it seems that Egypt is making a concerted effort to remove the 16 million Coptic Christians in Egypt. I mean a couple of weeks ago, there were more murders in Egypt. Nothing seems to be done. And the final question I have is do you anticipate any cuts to the assistance that we are going to give Israel in the coming year?

Secretary KERRY. Do we anticipate any cuts?

Mr. SIRES. Any cuts.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I will answer the last part first, and then I will get to Alan Gross. Israel got a plus-up in the budget I think to $3.1 billion total. But that is subject to sequester, as is everything. And we are not able to undo that. So there will be a plus-up, but then there will be a reduction from the plus-up. It is still a net plus up, but there is a sequester that will apply to everything, including Jordan, Egypt, Israel. Sequester, folks, was not supposed to happen. That was the theory. And we are living with it. And so we have cuts that we don't want. And that is the absence of making the policy choice itself.

So, yes, there will be cuts under the sequester. Now, on Alan Gross, there is a lot of effort that has gone into that. Senator Leahy just came back, he was down there, he visited with Alan Gross, and has talked to the government about it. They were, and have been, attempting to trade Alan Gross for the five spies that are in prison here in the United States. And we have refused to do that because there is no equivalency. Alan Gross is wrongly imprisoned. And we are not going to trade as if it is a spy for a spy, which they are trying to allege. We are trying to work this out on a humanitarian basis.

And I am personally engaged, as others are. I have had personal meetings before I even became Secretary, trying to get Alan Gross out of there. And I hope that somehow we can appeal to the regime's—I guess I should rephrase that. We can find out whether there is a humanitarian capacity or not, because he does not belong in prison. He is sick. He has been there for 3 years now or more. And he ought to be released on a humanitarian basis. We are going to continue to press it.

Mr. SIRES. And Joanne Chesimard?

Secretary KERRY. I don't have the background on that. I need to get that. And I will get back to you.

Mr. SIRES. All right. Joanne Chesimard, just for the record, killed a State Trooper in New Jersey. And New Jersey has a $1 million bounty. And she has been living in Cuba home free for the last 20-some-odd years after killing a State Trooper in New Jersey.

Secretary KERRY. Let me get the file on that and see where we are, and I will get back to you.

Mr. SIRES. She fled to Cuba, yes.

Secretary KERRY. I appreciate it.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you. And the Coptic Christians in Egypt?

Secretary KERRY. I have met with President Morsi several times. I have raised the issue of protection. Generally speaking, when we have raised issues, there has been a response, but it is not even and it is not across the board. And we are very concerned about safety and security going forward. Egypt is in, you know, a very, very difficult state right now. There is no other way to describe it. And there are a number of forces at play, not just within Egypt. But certain states in the vicinity are supporting groups that are creating problems. You have got the black box, you have got other groups that are being funded from outside. And we are trying very, very hard to move things toward a place of stability. But it is very complicated because the Muslim Brotherhood, obviously, raises questions of the readiness and willingness of people to work with it in not just Egypt itself, but outside of Egypt. So they need to be showing the opposition and the rest of the world with greater clarity that they are prepared to protect rights, and prepared to provide security, and prepared to be inclusive. And we have again and again been talking to them about the need for a broader-based governance than is currently being provided.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Chabot, chairman of the Asia Subcommittee.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, with regards to North Korea, the Obama administration has thus far pursued a policy that some have referred to as "strategic patience." In other words, we hope that Kim Jong Un is going to see the error of his ways and stop the dangerous theatrics and return to the negotiating table and move toward denuclearization.

Instead, we find ourselves, I am afraid, in a situation where the current dictator has surpassed even his tyrant father and grandfather in unpredictability and recklessness. In a joint subcommittee hearing last week, I think most of our members agreed that the policy of strategic patience, if you want to call it that, has been a failure. I would appreciate your response, but I will get all the questions out, and then you can respond.

The second question is with reference to Burma. Certainly we have witnessed dramatic changes in that Nation over the past 2 years, but I think we all agree that there may well be some bumps in the road ahead. We applaud the reforms instituted thus far, and certainly we are happy to see an emerging new political process in last spring's elections. However, we are also witnessing an escalation of ethnic violence. The military remains one of the most powerful actors in the country, and instead of working to curtail ethnic violence, it is thought by many to actually be the perpetrator. It would appear that President Thein Sein cannot keep his regional commanders under control in many instances.

What steps will the administration be taking in its discussions with Burmese officials to stress that continued progress in civil society and democracy building is preferable to a policy that could, in fact, lead to further ethnic strife and a potential civil war? Also, as one of the co-founders of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus, I would like to talk about Taiwan just for a minute. In 2001, there was the announcement by President Bush of Washington's willingness to cooperate with Taiwan in acquiring eight diesel electric

submarines at a cost of $12 billion. The official position of Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense remains committed to procuring those submarines from the U.S.

However, as the U.S. stopped making diesel submarines many years ago, the sale has been stalled. I know we worked with France and some of our allies on this. Could you advise what the current status of the submarines being acquired by Taiwan is?

Finally, you don't necessarily have to comment on this but if you would like to, you can. Former President Chen Shui-bian languishes to this day in a jail cell in Taiwan. To me, it smacks of the criminalization of politics. To the extent that this administration communicates with President Ma, I would urge you to encourage President Ma to do the humanitarian thing. President Chen's health is failing. I will now yield back. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Congressman. I appreciate it. I will take that and just follow up on it. And let me see what we can do about that.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. On Burma, you are absolutely correct, there will be bumps in the road, I hope not big ones. Obviously, things are happening today that were unimaginable a few years ago as the generals who imprisoned Aung Sun Suu Kyi are now standing with her and working toward this democratic process. But I am very worried about the minority up in the northwestern corner who are still being very badly treated. And there are other issues, obviously, of the military. I can't sit here and tell you I know with confidence how this is going to play out. But we are constantly working to push it toward greater democratization, toward the fulfillment of the promises that are on the table. That was the purpose of President Obama's visit. I think it had an historic impact. And I think generally speaking, we are moving in the right direction. On North Korea, I would not describe our strategy as strategic patience. I would call it strategic impatience. And the conversations that I had in the region made it clear that we are not going down the same old road. We are not going to reward them and come to the table and get into some food deal without some pretty, you know, ironclad concept of how we are going forward on the denuclearization.

Now, I am going to be candid with you. You know, we have responded absolutely, I think, appropriately to the threats by making it clear that since Guam was now potentially threatened, or Hawaii was potentially threatened, or even, according to their biggest bragging, that the continental United States could be reached, the President took the steps necessary that any President ought to take to make sure that you are not taking anything for granted. And so we have made it clear we will defend our allies, and our friends, and our interests. Now, that said, I think it is very clear from the last 15 or 20 years that the United States of America doesn't have direct influence with North Korea other than the military threat. And that has huge risks and dangers with somebody as untested, as provocative, and who has already proven themselves willing to be reckless over the course of the last months.

China does have a relationship. China provides almost three-quarters of the fuel to the North. China is a significant banking

conduit for the North. China provides significant food aid to the North. I think it is fair to say that without China, North Korea would collapse. Therefore, I think it is important for us to work with China. And I think China has indicated its willingness to work with us. Now, you know, they also are worried about instability. And I can understand that. China doesn't want to create greater instability in the Korean Peninsula, or create a situation which, from the humanitarian point of view, they would inherit most of the problems with it.

So, hopefully diplomacy can actually work here. And that is the key, to work with the Chinese to change the equation that has had a bad repetition syndrome of total reneging, of complete failure, and of increased nuclearization. We have to try to change that.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Connolly of Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I am sure you remember, I was on the staff of the Committee on Foreign Relations when you joined the Committee on Foreign Relations in 1985, and worked with you for the next 5 years. I was also proud to head up Kerry for President in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where we carried for Kerry in terms of the Democratic primary vote. And I was also a delegate to the Democratic convention on your behalf that year. And now you are Secretary of State and I am here.

Secretary KERRY. This is leading up to a big ask.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yeah. Yeah. That ambassadorship to Switzerland is coming open. And I want to welcome you and congratulate you. And I know you are going to be an historic Secretary. I wanted to ask you about two things: I wonder if you would comment on USAID. Some of us are very concerned. And as you may know, Howard Berman, former chairman of this committee, and I introduced a bill trying to streamline and make more focused the AID legislation. But in some ways, AID has over the years been hollowed out. It was once a place of great expertise that lots of development experts went to. It has largely become a contracting management agency today. And I don't mean that to disparage AID. I think Congress has a lot to do with that degradation. But shouldn't we be rebuilding AID to be the lead premiere development agency in the United States Government? And I know you spent time when you were in the Senate, Mr. Secretary, on that subject. So I think we would all benefit from hearing your views. And then secondly, congratulations to you and to the President in trying to engineer a rapprochement between Turkey and Israel. I wonder if you might comment on how you think that is going. I think that is a very important relationship in terms of our policy in the Middle East. And I think it is very important that that relationship work, and again, would welcome your views on that broad subject. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you. Thank you very much, Congressman. And I am grateful for your friendship and support through the years. And thank you for being part of the staff early on when I first came. And I appreciate that kind of friendship. It is important.

Mr. CONNOLLY. If you would keep Switzerland in mind again, please.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you. Say it again. Excuse me?

Mr. CONNOLLY. I said thank you for that, but just keep Switzerland in mind, please.

Secretary KERRY. Okay. AID is our lead and premiere development agency. It really is. And it does amazing things that a lot of people don't see in a lot of parts of the world. There is just an extraordinary amount of great work that is going on. You always hear about a flagship problem. It is easy to find the problem. And there will be problems. Because some of what AID has to do is be the development entity in places no one else will go, and sometimes invest in a place where the economy is not where it would support necessarily a market solution, which is why AID has to be there.

So you have got sort of the Millennium Challenge Corporation over here, and you have got AID. AID is the preponderance of our expenditure, obviously, but it has adopted significant reforms in the last few years that have actually moved some of the sort of development challenge kinds of enterprise into AID. Wherever we can, we are trying to do economic-based aid in a local way that is sustainable and that will result in long-term gains, not a project that comes, and when the project is over the money is gone and there is nothing to show for it. But there are some places where you still have humanitarian demands and other kinds of demands that will not lend themselves to that. And we just need to understand that. We have to understand that is, you know, for the minimalist fraction of a percentage of our aid that that may represent, it is still an expression of our values and interests. And it is important.

Now, we are—I am not going to sit here and tell this committee that the job is done. We are very focused on how we take the rest of the Department, AID, and bring it along further on this effort to sort of react to a changed world and to change requirements. And I think you will see that as we go through this next year in many ways in the programs that we are developing and supporting. But Raj Shah has done a great job of pressing the reform agenda. There are people who don't like it in some places. There is always resistance to reform. So we are going to push ahead, I can promise you, and I think you will like the results as we go forward. One quick thing on the rapprochement, Mr. Chairman, if I can just say. There is a very important next step that will take place—what are we today, the 17th? Next week there will be a meeting between the Israelis and the Turks that is the next step of the agreed upon roadmap of the rapprochement. And hopefully, that will resolve the compensation for victims. And then there will be an exchange of Ambassadors, and we move to the fullness of the relationship that we are looking for. I am very hopeful that that can go forward without any hitch.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Joe Wilson of South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. Our sympathy and solidarity for your hometown of Boston.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much.

Mr. WILSON. As we proceed, in 1999, one of the achievements of the Clinton administration was a nonproliferation agreement with the Russian Federation. As part of that, there was the agreement to dispose of high grade plutonium, instead of for weapons to be made into fuel. And that resulted in a mixed oxide fuel fabrication facility being built at the Savannah River site in Aiken, South Carolina.

Sadly, in the most recent budget, the administration is reducing the funding for the construction of the facility. It is 60 percent completed. It can indeed be such a great testimonial to the relationship that we have with the Russian Federation, fulfilling our agreements, but providing for fuel of what has been something that from an environmental standpoint, from a nonproliferation standpoint, all of it is just so positive. What do you see should be done?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I just was asking, because I was unfamiliar with that. And I am just told it is a DOE issue, which is why I am not familiar with it. I didn't realize that cut had taken place. Obviously, from a macro policy point of view, we are very supportive of the nonproliferation initiative. I was very concerned about the Russian suspension of a component of it recently. I hope that we will get back on track, because that has been really one of the most constructive things I can think of in terms of nonproliferation in the last 50 years.

Mr. WILSON. It really is. And I appreciate you recognizing that. And it is virtually joint DOE and State. So I hope you will look into that.

Secretary KERRY. The funding part is not joint, but the policy part of it is. But I am on it.

Mr. WILSON. Excellent. Additionally, Secretary Clinton was very positive in promoting trade. In the State of South Carolina, we have had the remarkable situation in the last 2 years of becoming the leading exporter of cars of any State in the United States, BMW; the leading exporter of tires of any State in the United States, thanks to Bridgestone, Michelin, Continental Tire. We are very grateful for the investments in our State with GE, Westinghouse, Boeing. Will you continue the policies promoting economic trade between our country and developing countries and countries all over the world?

Secretary KERRY. Hugely. I said in my opening statement before the Foreign Relations Committee for my confirmation that today, in today's world, foreign policy is to a large degree economic policy. And I am deeply committed, I am working right now to close out my appointments, the President's appointments within the State Department with respect to our economic effort. I personally believe this is how we are going to be able to do things is leverage assistance. And I wish we had more time, I could sort of talk about a modern day Marshall Plan, if you will, which is going to involve the private sector to a large degree. And that is the way you are going to make a difference. What these countries need are jobs for young people, masses of young people.

So we need to try to find ways to, and I think the TTIP, the TPP, other kinds of initiatives can help do that. In the West Bank, what I was about to describe earlier, was that Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas have agreed to this add-on initia-

tive of trying to bring the private sector to the table for rapid economic development to really make a difference, as well as for some infrastructure.

So I think you can join both, leverage development, create jobs, brings you stability. That is sort of the new model. And I think we have to do a lot of work together to try to develop it.

Mr. WILSON. And another positive example has been the nuclear agreement that we have had with India. And I hope we can proceed with that. Energy, which would be so important for that country to continue its development. I am also very grateful to be one of the very few Members of Congress, including Ranking Member Elliott Engel, who have been to North Korea. I saw a situation where it seems like to me it would be in the interests, and you have already touched on this, it would be in the interests of China for a more rational existence to be there. They can already see the positive example of South Korea. Seoul, actually through their investments, employs 2 percent of the people of China.

I can imagine that North Korean investments is nonexistent. So I hope that you will persist in pointing out what would be positive for China to see change in North Korea. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, thanks for your thoughtful comments.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Ted Deutch of Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the committee. I also add my thoughts and prayers to the City of Boston, as well as the family of Anne Smedinghoff, and her colleagues in the Foreign Service who continue to mourn her loss. I would also ask you, Mr. Secretary, as you begin your tenure, that you continue to push for information about my constituent, Robert Levinson, now missing from Iran for 2,230 days. I have a few questions to ask now. I will submit some other questions for the record for you to respond to. I would like to first just point out that last July's Burgos, Bulgaria bus bombing was carried out by three Hezbollah terrorists. Killed three Israelis and a Bulgarian national. Last month, a three-judge panel issued a decision and described Hezbollah's activities across Europe. And the President, when he was in Israel just recently was very clear in saying that every country that values justice should call Hezbollah what it truly is, a terrorist organization.

Mr. Secretary, I hope that you will continue to impress upon the Europeans why it is so important that the EU designate Hezbollah a terrorist organization. I would like to follow up on something you said earlier. You said that you thought the window for a two-state solution is shutting, that there is perhaps 1½ or 2 more years or it is over. I would just ask if you believe that to be the case, I just hope that you will press Prime Minister Abbas, President Abbas on preparing his people for peace, on if there is this short window that is left, why is it that there is not more focus on negotiations, that he continues to impose conditions? That rather than focusing on negotiations, much time was lost as he bypassed those negotiations to go to the United Nations. Statements that could be made to help stop incitement. There is an awful lot that can be done, and I hope when I am finished, I hope you will speak to that. And then finally,

I would like to talk about Iran sanctions and follow up on something that my colleague, Congressman Sherman, said earlier.

He talked about significant reductions. And I would acknowledge that under section 1245(d) of the Defense Authorization Act, a waiver of sanctions can be granted if the President makes a determination and reports to Congress that a country has significantly reduced its volume of crude oil purchases.

Now, because of the sanctions, Iran's oil exports have dropped by 60 percent over the past year. And I commend State Department greatly, and this administration, for doing what it has had to do to get countries to comply. In December, waivers for China and several other cooperating countries were renewed for another 180 days. But over the past 3 months, China's imports of Iranian crude have steadily increased, as I understand it, from 354,000 barrels per day in February to 415,000 barrels per day in April. And I would ask you, Mr. Secretary, what constitutes significant reduction? And shouldn't significant reduction be defined differently at this point, given where the Iranians are in their nuclear program? And with the additional now outside information that Iraq is producing 3 million barrels more per day, Libya's production has been restored to pre-revolution levels, or about 1.4 million barrels per day.

What are we doing to encourage the other countries to do more so that oil production—oil importation, rather, is really reduced? I am grateful for the State Department's efforts. But given where we are and given the timing, it seems that before waiving sanctions again there should be much more done and expected of the Chinese in terms of real reduction. And if you could speak to that, I would be grateful as well.

Secretary KERRY. You know what I want to do is send you the statistics that show you, and I don't have them all here now, but I will get them to you, with respect to the China question. There is a point where these reductions become very, very—I just say this to you, it is not an excuse, but there is a point where these reductions become not only very difficult for a particular country to go beyond a certain point, but also where they have an impact on the global price. So if you want the price to go up here, you can have the Chinese vying for more somewhere else because they can't get it where they are getting it now, and you are going to see some price changes that may have everybody screaming as the summer comes and people—so things are interconnected. But I will nevertheless show you—I am not saying that is a reason for doing it.

There has been a net reduction, and I will give you those stats. Let me come back, the two questions, three you asked about, on Levinson, I have actually engaged in some back-channel diplomacy in an effort to try to see if we can get something done there. That has been raised at very high levels. And it is not a forgotten issue by any means. We are on it. On the Hezbollah, every conversation I had in Europe and elsewhere, I urged the labeling as a terrorist organization. Because it is. And I emphasized to our European friends particularly, the importance of that in terms of giving us greater financial tools to be able to restrict the flow of financing that allows them to engage in these activities.

And finally, on the two-state solution, look, the hurdle we have to get over here, part of the difficulty is that the level of mistrust on both sides is gigantic. President Abbas deep down is not convinced, and that may be a light word for it, that Prime Minister Netanyahu or Israel are ever going to give them a state. And on the other side, Israel is not convinced that the Palestinians and others are ever going to give them the security that they need.

So we have to find an equation here, folks, where we can try to dispel those years of mistrust and get both sides to understand that both things are, in fact, possible. That is as far as I am going to go in terms of talking about the challenge here. But I think that that is the complication. And we are trying to undo years of failure. And I think one can. I believe we can. But it has got to go carefully, step by step.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. McCaul, chairman of the Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Mr. Secretary, congratulations on your new assignment. I know you will continue to serve the country well. And my condolences to the people in Boston.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much.

Mr. MCCAUL. I plan to visit on Friday. I think the response efforts of the Boston Police Department, the fire department, and the people of Boston is a true inspiration, and makes me proud to be an American.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. MCCAUL. My question has to do with Benghazi. Earlier this year, Secretary Clinton testified. And I asked her about a classified State Department cable marked "secret" from Ambassador Stevens to the State Department on August the 16th. And in that cable, he essentially warns the Benghazi consulate could not withstand a coordinated attack. And that is a quote. The Regional Security Officer believed that our consulate could not be protected at an emergency meeting, which is a very extraordinary thing, less than a month before the attack on September 11. A contingency plan was supposedly drafted to move the consulate operations to a CIA annex about a mile away. And this cable came on the heels of three significant events: One, April 6, 2012, a crude IED was thrown over the wall of the U.S. facility in Benghazi; on May 22, the Red Cross building was hit by two RPG mortars by the Brigades of the Blind Sheik; on June 6, the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi was targeted by an IED attack that blew a hole in the perimeter wall at the Benghazi consulate. Again, the Brigades of the Blind Sheik take credit and responsibility for this.

In written questions after the hearing, I asked the Secretary, who in the State Department saw this cable and what specific actions were taken in response? I was disappointed, quite frankly, with her response. And I hope that you can do better. Her response simply identified personnel in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs as having reviewed the cable. But it did not say who received the cable specifically and what specific actions were taken in response to what I consider to be a cry for help from our Ambassador to our State Department in

Washington that possibly could have prevented that tragic event from occurring.

Mr. Secretary, can you tell me which individual or individuals saw this cable and what specific actions were taken?

Secretary KERRY. I can't tell you which ones reviewed it because there is a process going on right now, which is supposed to come to me very shortly, which is an internal review and analysis of who did what and who may have or may not have made the right judgment, or no judgment, or whatever. And I have to act on that.

So I have not seen that yet. And I don't want to—you know, I am not going to prejudice anything that I have to do here. I think the chairman raised the issue of people still working. There is a process. There is a due process, there is an administrative internal process. It will come to me. And I will have to make some kind of a decision. I am not even sure exactly what the parameters of that are yet because I have waited until it is ripe and comes to me. But I know that it is coming. And I will then know exactly who made what decision or didn't, and I will have some responsibility to act one way or the other regarding it.

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, I appreciate that. But can I have your assurance that you will let this committee know which individuals actually received that cable——

Secretary KERRY. Sure.

Mr. MCCAUL [continuing]. And what response was taken?

Secretary KERRY. You have a right to know.

Mr. MCCAUL. I certainly appreciate that. One last question. This is sort of a mixture of State Department and the Department of Homeland Security. But recently, the Global Entry program was offered to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is where 15 of the 19 hijackers came out of. I can't think of any greater threat to aviation security than the Saudi Peninsula with Yemen right south of Saudi Arabia.

For the life of me, I don't understand why Saudi was given preferential treatment over our NATO allies who fought alongside with our soldiers and fought and died and were wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. And instead of rewarding NATO, our NATO allies with this Global Entry, we are rewarding Saudi Arabia. I personally—I am not trying to be political here—I think it is a dangerous policy. And it could result in American lives being killed.

Secretary KERRY. I am just trying to determine, and I apologize, but I am trying to determine who actually makes the final decision on that. And I am told it is an interagency process, which is, you know, doesn't satisfy me and it won't satisfy you. I need to find out where that final decision gets made. But, but, and I want to say this in fairness, Saudi Arabia has cooperated with us and is cooperating with us in extraordinary ways. There are plots that we have uncovered that have never come to light, and won't, and shouldn't because of Saudi Arabia's assistance. Saudi Arabia is providing invaluable assistance in the counterterrorism efforts in the Arabian Peninsula. And Saudi Arabia has an extremely effective, and has entered into with us, a major capacity to vet, to determine the security. And as you know, in the Global Entry program you go through a huge background analysis and check. Plus, you have major biometrics that are a component of it. I went through this a year ago or so so that I could join it. And I remember, you know,

every fingerprint, every sort of aspect of you is proctologized. And so you wind up with a pretty good sense of who is who. So I personally have confidence in the capacity of Saudi Arabia to do that. And I think I wouldn't prejudice them automatically by virtue of what happened. I would look at the procedure and check and see what goes into it in fairness.

Mr. MCCAUL. I agree. My time has expired, but I will say—and the Saudis have been extraordinary allies with respect to intelligence. I agree with you on that point. But I do think it merits review by your Department as well.

Secretary KERRY. I will check out on the final review. But I have great confidence in the Saudi Arabian contribution. The Kingdom has been very, very helpful in any number of ways.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Secretary, going back to your earlier comments as you referenced the Benghazi review, can you provide us a copy of that internal review once it is completed?

Secretary KERRY. I don't know. Honestly, I just don't know whether there is a privacy internal administrative restriction that we all have given through Congress. I don't know what the law is.

Chairman ROYCE. We will make a request on that.

Secretary KERRY. I will take a look at that.

Chairman ROYCE. We appreciate your follow-up on it. We go now to Karen Bass of California.

Ms. BASS. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I want to congratulate Secretary Kerry on your appointment, and also join my colleagues in expressing my condolences.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you.

Ms. BASS. I look forward to working with you, and especially working with the committed women and men at the State Department. I have to tell you that I have really enjoyed working directly with the State Department. And I am honored to have an excellent Pearson fellow in my office, who I am looking forward to continuing to work with. As the ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee, I wanted to share with you several priority issues that I hope you will consider. First of all, U.S.-Africa trade relations. Number two, the importance of development assistance programs, including global HIV/AIDS funding through PEPFAR. And number three, support for peacekeeping operations.

As you know, the U.N. is considering establishing a peacekeeping force in Mali. And there is already a substantial peacekeeping mission in the DRC. I know you are aware that six of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world are located in sub-Saharan Africa. And it is my hope, to the extent possible, that the State Department will prioritize trade with African Nations. You should know that we have a bipartisan, bicameral effort working in conjunction with Chairman Smith to quickly put forward a renewal of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act.

So I have four questions I would like to ask you. I wanted to know, what steps are you taking to focus on Africa's extraordinary growth potential? What are your thoughts about the U.S. appointing a special envoy to the DRC? Does the request for peacekeeping operations accurately reflect the growing needs on the continent? And can you comment on the significance of the 6-percent cut to USAID HIV/AIDS funding?

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much, Congresswoman. Let me emphasize, first of all, that we were really pleased that PEPFAR was able to be held whole. I think that is vital. I have personally visited, I was in Durban, north of Durban, in the mountains watching how that program is being effectively administered, and the difference it has made. We are looking at, as Secretary Clinton said when she testified, we have the potential to have an AIDS-free generation as a result of what we have done. And we should be very, very proud of that. That will continue completely. With respect to the DRC, the answer is yes, we are going to appoint a Great Lakes Special Envoy in short order. I think you will be very pleased with the President's choice. That is also caught up in the vetting process right now.

Ms. BASS. Okay.

Secretary KERRY. But I am very anxious to do that, because I believe that without a great deal of input, one could deal with M–23 and encourage Rwanda to perhaps take a different approach, help President Kabila to be able to deliver better governance. There is a lot that we can do. But we have got to be able to be there and be engaged.

To that end, in answer your question, is the level of funding sufficient? I tell you the answer is it is what we can ask for under the budget constraints we are living with. But I don't think anybody should kid themselves that we are stepping up to do what is possible, and what is perhaps morally critical with respect to developing an indigenous African capacity to respond through the AU or otherwise to some of these crises. And as you know, we have a number of U.N. efforts there now that are just not yet sufficient to be able to do the job.

So we have some development work to do in that. And it would be such a return on investment. Because a lot of this violence is thuggism, it is just criminals that run around and are unleashed. And if we had the ability to be able to provide some order, I think we could do a lot more for economic development and peace.

Ms. BASS. Absolutely. And Mr. Secretary, before I finish, I really think that we need to just change our perspective on how we view the continent. With some of the world's fastest growing economies on the continent, I would like for you to address the significance or the priority that the State Department would put on it.

Secretary KERRY. Six of the 10 or 12 fastest growing countries in the world are in Africa. And I want to say to our colleagues we all are concerned about our economic future, China is investing more in Africa than we are.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Secretary KERRY. And we need to—I mean, it doesn't have to be, you know, a zero sum game. But we ought to recognize where our future economic interests and capacity may lie. And I think that is why these investments are so small against the return on investment in the long run. And Africa we need to be deeply engaged in, and intend to be. The President will travel there. And we have a lot do.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We will go to Judge Poe, chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. I want to, first of all, thank you for your help last year on the Foreign Aid Transparency Act. I think we can—if we get this passed this year, it will do a lot to explain to the American public why we give foreign assistance if it is held accountable by some type of legislation. So thank you for your work on that.

I want to talk about if I have time, four different issues: North Korea, Benghazi, the MEK, and also Pakistan.

I read recently that when you were in China, that you suggested the United States would reduce our missile defense system in Asia in exchange for Chinese help with North Korea even though we were being threatened by nuclear attack by the North Korean Government. First of all, is that an accurate statement? And if so, explain that, if you would.

Secretary KERRY. No, not an accurate statement. I think it was corrected while I was over there. There was reporting to that effect.

What I—there was no offer, no deal, no contemplation of it. What I did say, publicly, and I will say it again, is that the President took specific deployment steps of missile defense in direct response to North Korea. And it stands to reason that if the North Korean threat disappears, there would be a logical question of whether or not that same level of deployment is necessary. It is all, I stated, was a sort of fact based on the rationale of the deployment itself.

Mr. POE. Do you think that the United States should give aid to North Korea of some type to temper their sabre rattling, which they seem to do about this time every year?

Secretary KERRY. No.

Mr. POE. All right. Thank you for those comments. Glad I agree with you totally. Just want to clear that up for the record.

As all have said regarding Boston, and Chairman McCaul especially, the activity of our first responders was textbook. But also the people. How they came out of the stands and down the street to help other wounded, and critically wounded citizens, and noncitizens as well, people from all over the world. I especially am encouraged by the cowboy from Costa Rica who is now an American citizen, how he helped with one of the runners. And that is why one of the best parts of America is its people.

You had mentioned bringing those perpetrators to justice, and they will be brought to justice.

But buttressing in on Benghazi, it has been 7 months since that attack. People are frustrated, Members of Congress are even frustrated, 100 want a select committee to study Benghazi. Of course, many of them aren't on any committee of jurisdiction, but they want a committee. And I hear comments all the time, "Why haven't we captured somebody who did these bad things in Benghazi?"

Reports indicate that the Libyan Government really won't do anything because, reportedly, some of the groups, the militia groups that support the Libyan Government may be involved in the attack. Would you comment on that, if you can?

Secretary KERRY. I don't have any knowledge whatsoever about that. Let me just say that one of the first things I did when I came in was call Director Mueller at the FBI to get an update on this. Because, obviously, we—you know, there is no family in America

that wants justice more than the State Department family, believe me.

So I wanted to know where we are, and I think we are making progress. Now, there is video, as you all know. We have identified people. And they are building a case. You know, we are going through the tedious, laborious, and very difficult process of gaining evidence from a part of the country which is dangerous. And working in a place where the standards are different and the expectations are different. We are working through that.

But I can guarantee you this, and I think all of you know because of Bob Mueller's service, and the extra years that people passed a law to allow him to serve, there is no more dedicated or capable leader of the FBI, and there is nobody more committed to do this. So I have confidence in that. I also have confidence in something else. This President of the United States made it clear once before that he would do what was necessary to bring somebody to justice. And I guarantee you, he has made it clear, yet again, that we will find justice here. And the President will do what is necessary. Our hope is to work with the Libyan Government and do this through a process.

Mr. POE. I will submit further questions for the record, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. We will go to William Keating of Massachusetts.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. I know that both of us, although we are here, part of us are still back home in Massachusetts this morning.

But getting to the theme of this morning's hearing, your theme of small, smart investments is right on point. I couldn't agree with it more. One of those areas that the administration and you have been involved with personally and Secretary Clinton had been involved with is really dealing with issues like the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security in the world. And I think that we can't approach the broader issues of poverty and the rule of law and education and healthcare around the world without dealing with these issues. They are core to any advancement in that area. And, furthermore, I think they are the smartest way to make some of these investments for our dollar and to be effective.

So I would like you to just do two things, if you could, comment on. One is generally comment on your ability to deal with these gender equality advancement issues with women around the world. And, number two, particularly, gender-based violence, you know it in your capacity, you knew it when you were a prosecutor, as I did. They know no borders or bounds when you are dealing with violence based on gender-based violence. And internationally the violence that so many women experience take many different forms, from rape to early forced marriage to harmful traditional, you know, practices that occur, such as genital mutilation, honor killings, acid violence, sexual violence and contact. And I could go on and on and on. But can you comment on the Department's first time ever strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally? Those are the two things I would like you to come on, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Congressman. Good to see you. Thanks for our shared feelings about what has happened up in Boston.

Secretary Clinton did a terrific job of putting this issue squarely on everybody's agenda. And I am determined to make certain that we live up to that standard, if not exceed it. And we are in—I think we are in a good start to do that in terms of trafficking issues and other things. But in London last week at the G8 Minister's meeting, Foreign Minister Hague of Great Britain made the centerpiece of our meeting sexual violence as an instrument of war. And we had a, you know, a meeting, we had outside representatives come in who helped to raise the profile of that. And, in my judgment, you know, was a very valuable moment for people to realize that this is going to be held accountable as a war crime. And that we are going to keep this gender-based violence front and center as we go forward.

I would also say to everybody when I was in Afghanistan, a couple weeks ago, when Ann Smedinghoff was my control officer, she helped put together a remarkable meeting of 10 entrepreneurs, 10 women in Afghanistan who are struggling against all of the resistance, culturally and historically, in that country to stand up and start businesses and help girls go to school, help women be able to be entrepreneurs, a remarkable process. And the courage that they exhibited deserves everybody's support. It will certainly get ours in the State Department, and we are going to continue this in many, many different ways over the course of next year. I think you will see us continue it.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you. In terms of accountability, Mr. Secretary, could that also include some conditions that might be tied to aid from time to time to some extent?

Secretary KERRY. You know, Congressman, there are some places that I think lend themselves to that kind of conditionality, and there are others that just don't. And I don't think there is a blanket, cover-all way of explaining, you know, a set of standards that is going to apply everywhere. In some countries, the standards actually can be counterproductive, and you don't get done what you are trying to do. It really depends what is the package, what is the nature of the program. And I think you have to be pretty customized in that approach.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chairman, as I turn it back to you, I do want to thank the members of the committee as well as the Members that I have been talking to on the floor for their genuine and heartfelt concern about what is occurring in Boston. I know we are all in this together. And I want to thank the Secretary for his remarks.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much, Congressman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Keating.

We go now to Matt Salmon, chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Mr. SALMON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome. First of all, I would like to submit several written questions that were put together by 700 retired Special Forces operators that are in regard to Benghazi. And I would just like a written response to that.

Also, you have urged us to review the video from the attack of that night. We have requested that video, but the Department has not provided it. When I mean "we," the committee.

Secretary KERRY. We don't have it. I think it's a—I saw it in a classified briefing. I believe it may be the agency or something.

Mr. SALMON. Would it be possible for you to take measures to ensure that we do get it?

Secretary KERRY. I will try to find out where it is and what the deal is. I am surprised. I would think——

Mr. SALMON. We have requested that video, but it has not been provided.

Secretary KERRY. Okay. We had an all-Members briefing, I am reminded, in the Senate, and it was shown there.

In the House. There was an all-Members briefing in the House, apparently, which did show it.

Mr. SALMON. Okay. If we could get that as a committee, it would be extremely helpful.

Secretary KERRY. Mr. Chairman, do you know which committee would have hosted that? All Members? Maybe the leadership did.

But I am confident that—look, every Member who was there saw it. And if you haven't seen it, I am confident people will make arrangements for you to see it.

Mr. SALMON. Great.

I have a few questions regarding the Western Hemisphere and some energy issues. As the chairman mentioned, I am the chairman of the Western Hemisphere committee. And I am very interested in what the next move is going to be from the administration regarding the XL Pipeline. I believe that it has been documented over and over and over again the jobs that that will produce, the benefit to our economy. Your State Department has said that there are no significant greenhouse gas issues with it or problems with regarding to global warming. And so I am kind of wondering why the administration continues to stall on that.

Also, regarding liquid natural gas, we have an overabundance of LNG in this country. And a great opportunity to export, especially to the Caribbean. With the current economic problems in Venezuela, and I think their diminished capacity to provide this great commodity, we have a phenomenal opportunity, again, to provide jobs in the United States. And export—the President said he wants to double our exports over the next 5 years. I wholeheartedly endorse that idea. It is wonderful. Here is an opportunity to actually put our money where our mouth is. And I am wondering what it is going to take to get the Department of Energy to get off the dime on issuing these permits so that we can get on with exporting that, especially to the Caribbean.

And then, finally, I am a strong supporter of the Transcontinental Hydrocarbon Agreement with Mexico. I think it provides yet another wonderful opportunity for the United States and America to enter in a great economic joint venture, as well as make the Western Hemisphere energy independent, which I think is a great goal. We have some great opportunities, I think, to do economic activities with our partners here in the Western Hemisphere. But I think—I think it is time for us to move forward with that.

I have met with some of your personnel, and they have submitted language that is acceptable. I would like all hands on deck from your Department to help get that done now. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me begin by saying, first of all, there is no—I assure you, there is no stalling going on. The law is being followed. We are just following the law. We have a procedure that had do in EIS. The EIS was appropriately contracted out. EIS was done. Then we have a public reporting period. That public reporting period is going on right now. Then after the public reporting period, there is an option—it is all under the law, to perhaps get more information if there is some reason the public comment required it, there is a determination of public interest, then ultimately the decision will come to me.

It is not ripe, it is not there. And I am staying as far as away from that as I can now so that when the appropriate time comes to me, I am not getting information from anyplace I shouldn't be, and I am not getting engaged in the debate at a time that I shouldn't be. But we are following the legal procedure that is required. I assure you.

Secondly, regarding LNG and so forth. Look, I spent a lot of time on energy and climate and so forth when I was in the Senate. And I would love to see the Western Hemisphere be energy independent. It is not a dream. It is conceivable that it could happen. You and I might have a slightly different sense of what the mix of energy ought to be and how you might achieve it.

Mr. SALMON. You would be surprised.

Secretary KERRY. It is doable, and I think proceed it. I think there is a Canada-U.S.-Mexico-Latin America, you know, Central American component to this which is really worth exploring much more vigorously, and I am prepared to do that.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Cicillini of Rhode Island for 5 minutes. And afterwards we will go 3 minutes per member.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Secretary, and thank you for your continuing service to our Nation. I, too, want to extend my condolences to you for the recent loss at the State Department. And I know I speak for all Rhode Islanders when I extend our condolences for the residents of the City of Boston and of Massachusetts and express that you will—they will continue to remain in our thoughts and prayers.

I would also like to add my voice to the priorities that were set forth by my colleague, Congresswoman Bass, about the continent of Africa and the importance of remaining fully engaged in that region of the world. I am very pleased to hear your response to that. And with your indulgence, I will submit written questions with respect to the status of the implementation of the recommendations of the Accountability Review Board as they relate to diplomatic security. A question regarding the waiver program for Portugal and the Lajes Air Force Base in the Azores and mitigating the impact there. A question regarding Armenia. Particularly Nagorno-Karabakh. A question about our longstanding relationship with Greece. And, finally, the State Department's role in protecting

LGBT individuals and human rights of those individuals all around the world.

But I would like to ask you today, Mr. Secretary, to speak to two specific areas: Syria and North Korea. As you know, Mr. Secretary, over 1 million refugees have currently left Syria. At the Kuwait conference in January, pledges were made of $1.5 billion in humanitarian assistance, but only a small percentage of countries that have made that pledge have fulfilled their pledges.

And so I would like you to speak to what efforts are underway to ensure that Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE in particular are making good on their commitments, and what coordination is underway with donor countries to ensure that the assistance is reaching the affected individuals? I would also like your thoughts on whether or not we are considering closing the Syrian Embassy here in the United States and what is the rationale of keeping that relationship ongoing.

And, finally, on the issue of Syria, I would like you to speak about what efforts are being made with respect to protecting Syrian girls and women in the refugee camps. We have seen some recent reports, again, that talk about sexual violence and the exchange of money for family members in exchange for young women being forced to marry, and so the sexual violence of these refugee camps is a particularly important issue.

And, secondly, I would ask you to talk a little bit about what your recent trip to Seoul and Tokyo might have contributed to your thinking about what is happening on the Korean Peninsula, what is your assessment of what is likely to happen, what we might be able to do as Members of Congress to help bring stability to that region of the world and to protect American national security interests on the Korean Peninsula.

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you, Congressman. Good to see you again, and I appreciate the questions.

On Syria, let me just say very quickly, we are really in touch very directly with these donor countries. As I said, we have given $385 million to the refugee issue. They are probably—we are nearing the million mark over at—the fourth largest city in Jordan today is a tent city. It is a refugee camp. And you can imagine the destabilizing impact and the problems with the Jordanians, who have other issues and challenges economically. So this is a big deal.

In Lebanon, you don't have camps. In Lebanon, the refugees are spread throughout the country. But the estimates are they may be as much as 10 to 20 percent add on in terms of population. And then in Turkey, you have very significant numbers of refugees in addition. You also have displaced persons within Syria itself.

So this is reaching a major humanitarian crisis level. And it is one of the reasons why we are going to meet in Istanbul this weekend is some of the donor countries will be there. But none of us want to sit around and simply see this refugee crisis grow and grow and grow and ultimately wind up with an implosion of the country itself.

That may happen. I am not going to sit here and tell you that we can prevent that. But the best shot at preventing it is to try to get to the negotiating table to get the Geneva communique implemented so you can save the institutions of the state, not wind

up with an enclave state with huge instability and problems with extremist groups that have grown stronger as a result of this conflict. So time is our enemy. Sooner is better in terms of getting to the table and conceivably getting some agreement.

Just very quickly, because I know the gavel has rung. On North Korea and the peninsula, I will just repeat again. President Park has a new policy called Trust Politic. And she wants to reach out to the north. She obviously can't do that in the middle of this kind of process. My hope would be that the Chinese will come to the table in a way that they never have before, that we can work with the Chinese to redefine what is in all of our interests, which is a kind of stability in the peninsula moving north to a denuclearization, and ultimately, hopefully, an integration into the community of nations, based on economic reform which China, the United States, others could become engaged in. And that could ultimately even open up the possibility of President Park's outreach to be able to have an impact.

Absent China coming to table, I believe Kim Jong Un laterally calculates that "I can get away with anything if China isn't going to hold me accountable." So that is where we are.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois.

Mr. KINZINGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you for being here, Mr. Secretary. Since my time has been cut down, I want to just make a few brief comments, and then a couple of very brief questions for you, sir.

First off, I want to say I was one of six Republicans to support the President in Libya. I supported his decision to go in there. I think it was the right thing to do. I believe, as you had mentioned in your testimony, in the strength of America and that America cannot retreat from the world. Even at times when we face tough budgets and everything else. I am glad to hear you say that. Where I was dismayed in the Libya situation, though, and what I have seen since then is this idea of America leading from behind. And it is a strategy that I know was mentioned a couple times in passing. But I worry that we are now trying as a Nation to be more of a leader from behind. And I believe personally that when America retreats from the world or retreats from a leadership role in the world, that chaos ensues. And so it is an area, and I want you to address that, but I want to make a couple of other quick comments.

You mentioned, I think, in one your—in your Senate confirmation hearing that you hear from diplomats, they wonder if the United States can continue to deliver. And I appreciate that. And I wonder if that is related to the new strategy of leading from behind, and not necessarily a financial issue?

I believe one of the greatest mistakes we have made in the last few years was not leaving a leave-behind force in Iraq. And I believe that now what we are going to see in Iraq actually frightens me. And I know you all are doing great work there. And I want to be very clear that the Department of State has a strong presence in Iraq, and I appreciate that. But I believe not leaving behind American troops was a major mistake. And that turns me to Afghanistan. As we are looking at winding down Afghanistan, a concern I have is the IMET funding for training and education. Ninety-five percent of soldiers are reported as illiterate.

So my question to you specifically, first off, to address the leave-from-behind strategy, sir, and how you see it. And then, secondly, from Afghanistan, are we in a position with the President's timetable for withdrawal, which I believe was basically based on an arbitrary date, but are we in a position without a strong U.S. military presence after 2014 to leave behind an Afghan military that can defend itself against a resurgent Taliban or against al-Qaeda. And with that, I will give you the remaining minute, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. I really appreciate it. Two very good questions. Let me begin. And I am really happy to have this opportunity. Let me kill this idea of leading from behind. I don't know where it comes from. I don't know what it means.

Mr. KINZINGER. I don't either.

Secretary KERRY. Well, how I don't know how you lead from behind. If you are leading, you are leading.

Mr. KINZINGER. Confused me too, sir.

Secretary KERRY. Let me just finish. I believe that this President led on Libya. The fact that you decide not to put your boots on the ground doesn't mean you are not leading. There are different roles for different people to play. Now, I respectfully suggest that almost ever member of this committee would have said, "I don't want boots on the ground in Libya." I also believe most people would say, "I don't want boots on the ground in Syria." But it doesn't mean we are not leading. We are leading.

The President sent me to Rome to bring together the—together with our Italian friends, a core group. And we upped what we were doing. And we led the effort to try to get greater support. I went to Turkey, I met with Foreign Minister Davutoglu. And the prime minister, and we agreed there, at the President's instruction, to see if we could put together an additional effort with respect to Syria. That meeting will take place this Saturday. That is leadership. I believe the President has led from the beginning in helping to put the Syrian opposition on the map, to get it recognized, to have the Paris meeting, the London meeting, the subsequent meeting in Rome and so forth. And to me that is leadership. So put it behind.

I am just going to say one word on Afghanistan. The whole purpose of our policy today is to train and equip the Afghan army to be able to fend for itself. Most of the reports, colleagues who have been traveling there, friends from the Senate who have told me they went over recently, were encouraged by what they have seen the Afghan army capable of doing. You don't see major assaults of the Taliban against the army. You see people blowing themselves up. You see cowards coming out or people convinced, young children, 16, 17 years old, to go blow themselves up. You don't see the leadership blowing themselves up, ever.

So I think that the fact is that what we are seeing are sort of a kind of desperation on the part of the Taliban. And hopefully, in this fighting season, we will see what the value and capacity of the Afghan army is. And in the next fighting season. We still have two fighting seasons to see how this army develops. And as to the leaving of the troops in Iraq, look, the Iraqis would not give our troops immunity.

Mr. KINZINGER. I don't think we pushed very hard for that, Mr. Secretary.

Chairman ROYCE. Hold on.

Mr. KINZINGER. I know my time is up. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. If the members can be brief with their questions—little iconic here—we can get through all of the members here.

Alan Grayson of Florida.

Mr. GRAYSON. As briefly as possible, Mr. Secretary, I wanted to ask you a few questions about the Visa Waiver program. Are you familiar, in general, with the program?

Secretary KERRY. In general, yes. That is a pretty good way to describe it.

Mr. GRAYSON. Well, formerly the administration had the authority to add countries to the Visa Waiver program, and now it does not. Would you like to see that authority on behalf of the administration restored?

Secretary KERRY. Which authority?

Mr. GRAYSON. The authority to add countries to the Visa Waiver program, which allows qualifying citizens of those countries to come to the United States on a short-term basis without a visa.

Secretary KERRY. Sure. I think if people qualify. Look, we have a standard, as you know, that people are supposed to meet in order to be able to qualify for it. And, sure. Look, you are not going to have every country in the world being visa waivered, for obvious reasons. But where people can meet the standards of requirement with respect to the rate of refusal, which is the key standard, we are all for it.

Mr. GRAYSON. Would you like to see strong strategic allies like Israel and Brazil and Poland rewarded for their cooperation with U.S. foreign policy by including them in the Visa Waiver program?

Secretary KERRY. Yes. But I am not in favor of waiving standards to do it. I think we have to have people meet the standard and proceed from there.

Mr. GRAYSON. Up to now, the standard has been what you described, which is a 3 percent rejection rate, as determined by the Customs and Immigration Service.

Secretary KERRY. Right.

Mr. GRAYSON. Some countries go slightly beyond that in part because there isn't a uniform standard applied by Embassies throughout the world, some Embassies have a more liberal policy with regard to applications than others do. With that in mind, instead of outsourcing the decision making to the Customs and Immigration Service, would you like to see input with regard to diplomatic and security and also economic considerations when these determinations are made?

Secretary KERRY. I would have to review that. Let me just tell you that there are—there are several established criteria in the act with respect to the current standard for the Visa Waiver. One is that government provides reciprocal Visa Waivers; two, that the government issues secure machine-readable passports; three, that the government certifies they have a program to incorporate biometric identification into their passports; four, that the government reports the thefts of blank passports; five, that they maintain the low immigrant refusal rate; and, six, that they maintain less than 2 percent rejection for travel for nonimmigrant applicants.

So those are the standards in the current law. And you guys, obviously, have the right to change that if you see fit. But that is the current standard. And I am not in favor of waiving that.

Mr. GRAYSON. Well, none of those standards are economic. For instance, none of them consider the economic benefit to the United States. None of those standards are security-related, for instance, concerning the benefit to loyal allies——

Secretary KERRY. Will you give us a lot more analysts in the budget so we can do all of that?

Mr. GRAYSON. Would you be in favor of considering those favors as well, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary KERRY. I want to have some evaluation of it to me to make a judgment as to whether or not it makes sense.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Brooks of Alabama.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Kerry, 7 months ago, Americans were murdered at the Benghazi consulate. You mentioned earlier in your testimony that the administration has testified eight times, given 20 briefings and provided 25,000 pages of documents about Benghazi. Yet the American people still do not know why Ambassador Susan Rice, during a heated Presidential race, made so many false statements to the American people about what happened in Benghazi. More specifically, on September 16, 2012, on "This Week with George Stephanopoulos," Ambassador Rice stated, and I quote, "What this began as, it was a spontaneous, not a premeditated response to what transpired in Cairo."

Yet on the very same day, Libyan President Mohammed Magariaf stated on NPR, "The idea that this criminal and cowardly act was a spontaneous protest that just spun out of control is completely unfounded and preposterous. We firmly believe that this was a precalculated, preplanned attack that was carried out specifically to attack the U.S. consulate."

Similarly, the State Department's own Accountability Review Board concluded that there were no protests prior to the attack on the U.S. consulate. Again, on September 16, 2012, on "Meet the Press" with David Gregory, this time, Ambassador Rice stated, "What happened in Benghazi was, in fact, initially a spontaneous reaction to what had just transpired hours before in Cairo, almost a copycat of the demonstrations against our facility in Cairo, which were prompted, of course, by the video."

Ambassador Rice made three false statements in one sentence. First, Ambassador Rice misrepresented that Benghazi was a spontaneous reaction to the Cairo protests; second, Ambassador Rice misrepresented that Benghazi was a copycat of the Cairo demonstrations; and, third, Ambassador Rice said Benghazi was prompted, of course, by an anti-Muslim video, when there was little, if any, credible evidence to support this claim.

Secretary Kerry, as we now know, the Libyan President told the truth, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations did not. My question to you is, can you give assurances to the American people that you will conduct an investigation that will find out why Ambassador Rice made so many false statements to America

about what happened in Benghazi and that you will share your findings with the American people?

Secretary KERRY. No. Because I don't think it is necessary. Ambassador Rice has apologized for her mistaken comments, which were based on talking points that she was given. And she has made it clear that she was mistaken. I am absolutely confident beyond any reasonable doubt Ambassador Rice did not purposely mislead anybody. She was using the talking points. And there was confusion in the early hours about the demonstration that took place in Cairo, and a release that had taken place from an Embassy person in Cairo, which, incidentally, was inappropriate.

A release that was not very well thought out that said something about—I can't remember the surprise language, but it looked as if we were not standing up for freedom of speech. That was subsequently retracted. And in the process, I think there was a sufficient level of confusion. I think she would tell you she over-relied on those talking points. But I can tell you that Susan Rice would never go out and purposely mislead you.

Now, at some point, we have got to find a way to make a judgment here about how much information we have and how much information is sort of somewhere out there in, you know—that might contribute something further here constructively.

I will work with you, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to spend the next year coming up here talking about Benghazi. If there is something legitimate that really needs to be put on the table, I will put it on the table. And I will work with you in good faith. And I believe after we do that with you and the ranking member, you will not have questions. And I ask you to, you know, put what your members feel they need—but let's put this behind us. We have got serious, major, big, current, important issues vital to our national security to be debating.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. And I will help you clear the air on this, but I want to do it in a fair-minded way.

Chairman ROYCE. We have made several requests here today. We will follow up.

Will we go now to Mr. Schneider of Illinois.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for sharing your time with us.

Let me start, like my colleagues, expressing my condolences to the families of those lost in Boston, my wishes for a full recovery for those injured, and our solidarity with all of the people of Boston. I also want to extend condolences to Ann Smedinghoff's family, as well as her family at the State Department. I also think it is important to note the countless acts of heroism we saw in Boston. That reflected, I believe, the truest reflection of the American spirit. And it is also the spirit I think we see in the people like Ann Smedinghoff and Chris Stevens and all the others who work on behalf of our country around the world putting their lives on the line every day.

So let me ask also thank you for your emphasis in this budget to making sure that our people around the world in harm's way have the security that they deserve.

Let me now turn my questions, really want to focus on Israel and the Palestinians. You talked about the window closing on a two-state solution, potentially as soon as in 18 months, a focus you indicated on both sides for seriousness of purpose. And in the context, if we look around the region, with Egypt, Syria, and in particular, the threat of nuclear Iran. But at the same time, you noted that Abbas was not convinced that there was a pathway to peace. And I think what we have seen in the last number of months and, unfortunately, on Saturday, with the resignation of Salam Fayyad, is the partner for peace—I have questions about it.

And my question for you is, how do we, in light of Salam Fayyad's resignation, and the direction that the P.A. seems to be taking, how do we help get them to the table for negotiations so that the window doesn't close and we can find a pathway to peace.

Secretary KERRY. Well, it is a really excellent question. And I am happy to clarify it because I think it is important in this whole context to do so.

First of all, I have enormous respect for Salam Fayyad. I have worked with him closely, had many, many meetings with him. I think a lot of people had confidence in his stewardship, financially, in his financial stewardship, the accountability, transparency he brought. But, first of all, he is not going away completely. He is going to be there as a caretaker. I don't know how long that caretakership will take. But he will be there to work in a transition, number one. Number two, he will remain involved in Palestinian affairs, I am confident. Number three, the peace process and the capacities of the Palestinians are, in the end, bigger than one person. They just are. And there are people who can continue this journey. And I am confident of that. I believe that there is a way for President Abbas to be persuaded of the good faith efforts that the Israelis are prepared to take, providing they take them. And I think there is a way to get to these negotiations.

So I am not saying to you there is no pathway for peace. I am saying to you that he comes to the table with enormous mistrust, as do the Israelis, who pulled out of Gaza and continue to get rockets on them. And who pulled out of Lebanon and—we all know the history here. We all know.

The art here is not to get trapped in the past and in who did what to whom at some point. It is to take the place where we are today and be as constructive as possible to move it forward. I think that there is a way to avoid the unachievable preconditions. I believe there is a way to build a series of initiatives that can speak to this mistrust. But you have to do it quietly, and you have to do it patiently. But you also have to do it rapidly at the same time because of this time frame.

You know, President Abbas has the power to go to the United Nations again, tomorrow. He has the power to ask to be part of an agency or recognized now, given the recognition which was a vote of 120 something, 140 to 9. I think that it would be difficult maybe to find those 9 next time. And people know that. You may find 4 or 5, but you won't find the 9.

So given that, he is restraining from doing that. That is his sign of good faith at this moment too. He would like to see if we could get this process moving. So everybody needs to kind of not react

the normal sort of tit for tat, stereotypical way. Give peace a chance by providing some opening here for the politics and the diplomacy to work. That is what both sides need to do. That is what I believe both sides are prepared to do. And the proof will be in the pudding.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Cotton of Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your time today. Thank you for your service to our country, including your service as a young man in uniform in Vietnam.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you.

Mr. COTTON. The United Nations recently approved the Arms Trade Treaty. Article 5 of that treaty requires nations to create a national control system, which includes a national control list. Article 10 requires nations to regulate the brokering of conventional arms. I am concerned that in the unlikely event that treaty is approved by the Senate, it could be used to justify such measures as a national gun registry, a ban on certain kinds of firearms or ammunition, or licenses to purchase firearms or ammunition. Can you assure the committee today that the administration does not intend to pursue such measures, should the treaty be approved?

Secretary KERRY. I can absolutely guarantee you that this administration is not going to do anything to violate the second amendment rights of any citizens of the United States nor the Constitution itself. And whatever we agree to will be constitutional and appropriate.

Mr. COTTON. And that includes in the interim period for the treaty as ratified, there is a customary international legal norm that nations will not attempt to frustrate or block the purpose of the treaty. The administration will not do something to enact those measures I mentioned earlier through Executive Order or regulation.

Secretary KERRY. The President, I think he has made it clear. I think you see that—look, I am out of politics now. But I think watching the debate on guns right now, it seems to me the President's position is pretty clear. He is not proposing—I think, you know, as controversial as some of the issues may be, there is nothing there that would suggest a fundamental violation of second amendment rights, notwithstanding that people can still disagree with one position or another.

Mr. COTTON. Thank you. Like to move now to Syria and arming the Syrian rebels. Last May, as a Senator, you said the United States should at least consider establishing a safe zone and providing lethal military assistance to the rebels if they could be more unified and, obviously, identifying them as moderate elements. Based on reporting in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, we now know that Secretary Clinton, Secretary Panetta, General Petraeus all supported taking those measures. The President and his advisors in the White House blocked them. Wondering what your current position is on whether the United States should engage in providing that kind of assistance. I know you said in Doha most recently that our Middle Eastern allies should consider it, and we encourage that. But where does the United States currently stand on it?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the United States policy right now is that we are not providing lethal aid. But we are coordinating very, very closely with those who are and with our core group allies here. And the meeting that we will have in Istanbul this week is really to evaluate sort of where the situation on the ground is and what accelerants to Assad's departure might make the most sense. And we will have that meeting.

And just final comment on the—with respect to—well, I will just leave it there. I think that covers it.

Mr. COTTON. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We go to Dr. Ami Bera of California.

Mr. BERA. Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you for appearing here. And, like my colleagues, I want to thank you for your service to our country and continuing service. I look forward to working with you.

You know, as my colleagues have already expressed, our condolences go out to the families and victims in Boston. You know, what it does point out, that we have to remain vigilant against those that are jealous of our freedoms and our way of life. And we have to remain vigilant against terror, whether domestic or foreign. I want to compliment Chairman Chaffetz for convening a series of hearings on South Asia, especially in light of our drawdown of troops in Afghanistan. And at one of those hearings, we had the pleasure of questioning Under Secretary Blake and talking about the importance of holding onto our gains in Afghanistan and continuing to maintain some stability. And the importance of India in this role.

I know there had been trilateral negotiations between the United States, India, and Afghanistan to, again, stabilize the region. And a recognition of India's critical role in helping maintain those goals and the stability and the economics of South Asia.

I would like to hear from you just an update on how those negotiations are going. And your thoughts as we are drawing down on how we maintain the gains and the safety and don't let terror reemerge in Afghanistan.

Secretary KERRY. The negotiations on the bilateral security agreement?

Mr. BERA. Correct.

Secretary KERRY. Well, they are proceeding. I think they are going effectively. I had a very good meeting with President Karzai a few weeks ago. I think he is well disposed to want to finalize that agreement. I think it is in everybody's interest to do so. I have confidence that that will happen.

I think, look, I think, you know, the jury's out on the question of where—of exactly how independent this army that we have helped to build is going to be. But it is performing pretty effectively right now. And the early indications seem to be that the morale is high, the enthusiasm and energy is up. I think the green-on-blue incidents have gone down. Knock on wood. You have to keep working diligently at that. But this is the fighting season. This is the time for the test. And we are all going to sort of see how it plays out.

Mr. BERA. I am curious about your perspective on India's role in helping develop an economy in Afghanistan.

Secretary KERRY. India can play a huge role. I have been a longtime big believer in India's capacity to be an enormously important partner in a number of different things. I think I recall taking the first trade mission to India in the 1990s when they first began their economic transformation, a far cry from where India is today. And I have always believed in, because of their democracy, because of their tradition, there are great reasons for us to partner with India in many significant ways. But India and Pakistan obviously have a very different relationship. And so it is a very complicated circle between Afghanistan, Pakistan, India. How much India is in Afghanistan affects Pakistan's views. And they each have a capacity to see bad things happening, depending on what the other does. So we have to work at that diligently.

Mr. BERA. I thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We will go to Mr. Weber of Texas.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman——

Secretary KERRY. Mr. Chairman, thanks for your largesse there. I apologize.

Mr. WEBER. Mr. Kerry, good to see you. Appreciate your being here. I have three questions for you. You said to Brad Schneider that the art here is to not to get trapped in the past, was what you said regarding Benghazi. Toward that end, I have two questions. Number one, your predecessor said that those four employees in the State Department that didn't, I guess, pay attention to the requests for help, firing them was not an option, it didn't rise to the level of a fireable offense. A, I want to know if you have got a policy going forward to define what a fireable offense is. Because if that is not, then I don't know what is. B, have you got a policy going forward to where they get—people who are getting those requests for more security can pay close attention to it at some level so that we don't lose more Americans?

And, finally, my third question is, we have got people that are trapped in a camp called Camp Liberty that have had a lot of protections removed. You may have addressed this earlier; I had to go to another committee. So to keep them from getting trapped, can you tell us that you will move forward on getting them moved out of that camp to a safer camp? And I will yield to you.

Secretary KERRY. Congressman, thank you for those questions. I appreciate it.

With respect to the issue of Benghazi and paying attention to the past and those employees, what is the standard. I have learned that apparently there is a—there are a set of rules that govern that. And so, as you know, we operate under standards by which people have expectations that those standards will be adhered to in terms of firing, hiring, discipline, and so forth.

So I am waiting for this report to come to me which will give me a full indication of what my options are under the law. Following those rules. But let me make it dead clear to everybody here, the first conversation I had when I became Secretary of State and entered into our first meetings was where are we on the Administrative Review Board proposals and requirements. I get a, if not weekly, I mean, you know, I mean, not a weekly, but more so, if necessary, updating. And I am constantly asking, where are we? And we, believe me, up and down the chain of command, everybody un-

derstands the vigilance that is necessary going forward and the accountability that will be present going forward.

So it is a good question. We are clearly under the gun on that, and every incident, whatever, is going to be subject to a new standard. I know that coming in as Secretary.

Your third question is about the MEK and being trapped in the past with respect to Camp Liberty versus Camp Ashraf. You know, Camp Ashraf has been judged to be not safe. Now, Camp Liberty has proven also to have its problems with respect to security, and I understand that. Which is why I raised the issue with Prime Minister Maliki when I was there. And I am not saying to you today that I am satisfied yet that it has that. I am worried about the security situation there. And, as such, we have been trying to raise our level of initiative to move people. You know, we have contacted countless countries, we have been refused by countless countries.

We had worked out an arrangement with the Albanians to take about 250 people. But then the people in the camp themselves declined to go. Subsequently, we have had an interview process, because we are trying to interview people to figure out where the best fit may be for them to go, and they have suspended taking part in the interviews because they want to go back to the camp where they were. So we are trapped in a kind of a round-robin of different perceptions of what people's interests are here, and we are trying to work through that. And I can guarantee you it is a high priority.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We will go now to Lois Frankel of Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Secretary Kerry. Thank you for being with us today. I have three questions, I will try to be quick with them.

I met recently folks from the U.S. Institute of Peace, and they explained to me that they go to dangerous areas of the world, such as Libya, with their missions of peace and understanding. And that they are able to reach out to folks who might be, and audiences that might be more hostile to agencies that are closely related to the United States. And I am just wondering, number one, whether you work, or the State Department works with the institute?

Secretary KERRY. Whether it works—I couldn't hear you very well.

Ms. FRANKEL. Whether the State Department works with the Institute of Peace at all.

Secretary KERRY. Oh, absolutely. Work closely with them. And I admire their work enormously. They do an amazing amount of work on conflict prevention, conflict mediation, conflict termination. It is excellent work.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you for that.

Secondly, two more questions. Secretary Clinton was here to testify about what happened in Benghazi. And one of her recommendations was that we allow the State Department, when contracting for security in high-threat regions, to use a best-value contracting rather than the lowest bid. And Mr. Radel here filed a bill that many of us, I think, joined on to accomplish that. And I am wondering whether you support that.

Secretary KERRY. Boy, do I ever. I thank you for raising that. It is—I just ran into this the other day in one of the stops I made in Asia where the Ambassador was telling me they have to hire security at the lowest price. Folks, let's get serious. Of course, I absolutely support that. We have got to have the ability to make value judgments in the provision of security to our personnel. Thank you for asking.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you. I think I will just—I wanted to just thank you for continuing the work of Secretary Clinton in advancing the status of women around the world. And I know as you come back, we will have some more questions on that. And I thank you very much.

Secretary KERRY. Look forward to talking with you about it.

Ms. Frankel. I yield my time.

Chairman ROYCE. We thank the gentlelady.

We go to Mark Meadows of North Carolina.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

Secretary KERRY. You are a patient soul, you guys down here at the third tier.

Mr. MEADOWS. Well, freshman have their privileges. As we go to that, I want to shift a little bit to the budget, as we start to enter into this. I think your Fiscal Year 2014 looks at $1.8 billion in global food aid to be administered by USAID. One of the concerns I have, though, is a shifting of the resources away from the requirement that food be U.S. grown and be more flexible. Do you not see this as having a negative implication on American farmers?

Secretary KERRY. Not ultimately. Honestly, I don't, Congressman. And I got to know American farmers pretty well in 2004, 2003. And I am——

Mr. MEADOWS. How does buying food from a foreign source help American farmers?

Secretary KERRY. Because the market right now with respect to—this is not what our farmers are depending on right now. Our farmers are exporting at a greater level than any time in recent memory. That market is only going to pick up. There are billions of people to feed. And our capacity within this program is not going to make the difference to the farmers. It does make a difference to our expenditures to be able to provide more people food, faster, when our goal is to deal with malnutrition, and we can win by 11 to 14 weeks. That is the difference between living and dying.

Mr. MEADOWS. Let me move on. One of the other areas that we have had a plethora of expert witnesses here talking about military versus economic versus political reform in Egypt. And it gets highlighted over and over about F–16s getting—being given to Egypt or sold to Egypt. We have got 1.3 billion in your new request. Would it not be more prudent to look at shifting some of those funds to be more balanced on the economic and political, or do you feel like it is necessary to continue to shift F–16s to Egypt?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Congressman, I will tell you that—and this will be counterintuitive to a lot of people coming from me—but one of the best investments we made in Egypt over the last 30 years is the Egyptian military and our relationship with it.

Mr. MEADOWS. But we have a government that has changed now.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we have a government that has not yet completely changed it, and I will tell you how and why I am saying what I am saying. And it is important for us to focus on.

I believe Egypt, were it not for the restraint shown by the military, were it not for the leadership of the SCAF, who knows what would have happened. Egypt could have been in unbelievable bloodshed and civil war.

Mr. MEADOWS. Agreed.

Secretary KERRY. But the military, largely through the ethic that had been created working and training at Fort Benning in America and various places, there were officer-to-officer relationships. We had majors who could talk to each other. We had colonels who could call on the phone and say, you guys got to be restrained here, you know, here is how you handle this.

And I met many times with Field Marshal Tantawi during the time that the military was managing the country. And the fact is that they held to what they said they would do. They held an election. They created a democracy. Now, you know, the people who won surprised a lot of folks, in a sense; didn't surprise others, given the base of the country. But they had a democracy, they had an election, they turned over their power, and they went back to the barracks.

And they have been, I think, an important ingredient to the peace with Israel. Right now the Gaza peace is holding because of the mil-to-mil relationship and the intel-to-intel relationship. We do not want to lose that.

And, thirdly, this is not—you know, I would love to make a larger economic effort, but, as the chairman knows, we worked this with Chairwoman Granger and others to try to have some component of economic assistance. But unless there is economic reform in Egypt, unless they can meet the IMF standards, unless they reach out to the opposition and bring them more into the governance, unless they create stability and a capacity to invite capital back from other countries with the sense of security they have created, unless those things happen, right now giving more money would actually be not to good avail.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We go to Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your presence here today and your candid answers and commitment to working with us on issues that we all care very much about.

I want to extend my own appreciation, the appreciation of families across my State of Hawaii on your recent focus specifically on Asia and the Pacific and recognizing the necessity for that focus, especially as we are facing the threats that are very real for folks in Hawaii and Guam and other places, and appreciate your commitment there.

Today you talked about doing things differently going forward, and I have a two-part question based on how we go forward, how do we do things differently.

From the aid perspective, what other real incentives can we provide that go beyond food aid should we get to a position where we can negotiate and have conversations with North Korea?

And on the sanctions front, I think the chairman had mentioned earlier in his testimony about the 2005 sanctions on hard currency. We have heard from various experts that that worked while it was in place but it was perhaps prematurely stopped. And I wanted to get your thoughts on maybe why that was and what your feeling is on those types of sanctions going forward.

Secretary KERRY. I am sorry, which type of sanction are you referring to?

Ms. GABBARD. On hard currency.

Secretary KERRY. Well, with North Korea, we actually don't have a lot of options, to be honest with you. But as I think I have described in the course of the hearing this morning, the North Koreans, for the moment, see their nuclear program as the centerpiece of the regime's capacity to hold itself together. And as long as that is true, we are not going to be able to do very much until they shift into a denuclearization posture.

Now, one of the considerations here that is central to anything to do with North Korea is sort of, you know, what their perceptions are about their relationship with us and what China will or won't do with respect to its relationship with them. The North Koreans, it appears, believe that, you know—they literally believe—I mean, we are told that they believe we are prepared to go to war with them, that we are going to try to destroy them. I mean, you know, there is a certain mythology but there is also a certain hardcore belief to that, and that drives their policy.

We need to obviously shift that into a denuclearization. And until we get to denuclearization, we are not going to go down the road of providing aid to them of any kind. Because we have been through too many divorces. And I think we need to find that we are getting a sort of verifiable, clear track to the denuclearization, at which point you could, you know, venture to do something.

But I think the biggest thing we ought to try for with China is a paradigm shift, where they really decide that they are going to try to be like China in terms of their economy and shift into a different economic model, at which point all these issues about sanctions and hard currency and everything else become moot. I don't see much changing until we get that bigger shift.

Chairman ROYCE. We have gone over the time for the Secretary of State. We will go to one last question for Doug Collins of Georgia, followed by one last question for Brian Higgins from New York.

Mr. Collins?

Mr. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

One of the things, I thought it was interesting, I was going between committee meetings but watching because I was very attentive to what you have to say, especially as it regards, when you said you are not into politics anymore, I think you are getting back into it today here at the committee hearing. But it is good for your answers to hear.

The question I have, though, is when Secretary Clinton was here in January, she strongly endorsed remedying a lapse in something that I have looked forward to, of getting back on regular order, in which we actually pass the appropriations bills as we should. You

know it has been over a decade since that has actually happened with the State Department.

However, the fact of the matter is the House did pass an authorization last Congress with strong bipartisan support that included total funding levels at or above what the Senate appropriators had endorsed, as well as a helpful security authority, such as this best value for local guards. It has been consistent in both places.

I wanted to just, the question I have for you is, do you agree with Secretary Clinton on the importance of having these appropriations bills pass? And is that a priority for you?

Secretary KERRY. Yes. I——

Mr. COLLINS. Because undoubtedly it was not in the Senate.

Secretary KERRY. Well, it was not that it wasn't a priority; it is that we just couldn't get it done.

Mr. COLLINS. Couldn't get it done. And I think that is what we have to get to. We have to get back to regular order and function like the people want us to function.

Secretary KERRY. Can I just comment to all of you? Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, in your leadership roles, I will tell you that we are diminished in our leverage in other parts of the world when we go out there today and say, hey, you guys have to get your budget together, you know, you have to meet the IMF standards, you have to do this or that. And people kind of—you can tell from the look that they are sort of asking, well, how is your budget deal going?

So I have argued this before, I gave a speech at UVA in which I talked about getting our domestic effort together so that we can really speak, as we say in the parlance of the law, with clean hands. And we need to do that.

Chairman ROYCE. And if I could respond as chairman, Mr. Engel and I are working in tandem on an authorization bill. We will have that passed over to the Senate. We are talking to our Senate counterparts. And it is our goal to have that on the President's desk. But any assistance that the Secretary of State could give us in this regard would be very welcome.

Secretary KERRY. Very supportive, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. And I congratulate you on that. That is great.

Chairman ROYCE. We are going to go to Mr. Higgins for his question.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for sticking it out.

I have been working with the State Department regarding the assassination of John Granville, a United States AID diplomat from Buffalo who was murdered 5 years ago in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. Islamic extremists were convicted of his murder, and last year they escaped from prison. The accomplice in the prison who helped them escape was just pardoned by the al-Bashir government. The State Department has done tremendous work in keeping the pressure on, and I just want to encourage that to continue.

Also, in August 2006, I had traveled to Beirut, Lebanon, shortly after the Hezbollah-Israeli war. We came over the Mediterranean from Cyprus and landed in military helicopter on the Ambassador's residence in Beirut. Ambassador Feltman, at the time, was visibly

shaken and took us into the residence and said that anti-American sentiment was at an all-time high. We then moved to the Prime Minister at the time, Prime Minister Siniora's residence, and I had asked the Ambassador what his concern was. And his concern was that the Lebanese National Guard was guarding the Embassy but that the next day 75 U.S. Marines would be deployed to the Embassy to guard the interests of the U.S. Ambassador's residence.

As you know, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations forms the basis for diplomatic security that is responsible for security personnel. But it is specific to protection of classified information, and it is the host community who is responsible for the security of diplomatic personnel.

I am just wondering if you think it is time that the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations be changed to put a greater emphasis on security being the responsibility not of the host nation but of the nation who has representation in that country.

Secretary KERRY. Well, I know what you are getting at. And, you know, I think it would be difficult to say that we ought to change the fundamental premise, because in most countries or in, you know, the vast majority of countries, you can rely on people. I mean, you know, we get great help in many parts of the world, and we give great help to people who come here. And I think that is fundamentally how it ought to work.

But we ought to have a capacity, obviously—and this is what we are doing now. As a result of Benghazi, we have made evaluations—this was part of the ARB—and we now have judgments about high-risk, high-threat locations, and we are beefing up our Marine detachments in those places. So we have asked the Congress for the money and for the additional 1,000 Marines, and that is part of the request. And we are waiting, you know, for the deployment, et cetera, to get that done.

But the bottom line is I think we shouldn't chuck the Vienna Convention. I think we ought to maybe tweak it appropriately, create some judgments there that allow adequate domestic security where you have a serious enough threat that you can't count on the local community.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, we want to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary for his testimony here today. We face some daunting challenges abroad, but we look forward to following up on the items that we discussed.

And we stand adjourned.

Thank you again, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Appreciate it. Thank you, sir.

[Whereupon, at 12:46 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

April 17, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live via the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Wednesday, April 17, 2013

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

SUBJECT: Securing U.S. Interests Abroad: The FY 2014 Foreign Affairs Budget

WITNESS: The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Wednesday* Date *4/17/13* Room *2172*

Starting Time *9:35 a.m.* Ending Time *12:46 p.m.*

Recesses *0* (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ed Royce

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☑
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☑

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☑
Stenographic Record ☑

TITLE OF HEARING:

Securing U.S. Interests Abroad: The FY 2014 Foreign Affairs Budget

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See Attached Sheet

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

None

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☑ **No** ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

SFR: Chairman Royce on behalf of Rep. Turner, Del. Faleomavaega

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:46 p.m.*

Jean Marter, Director of Committee Operations

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
"Securing U.S. Interests Abroad: The FY 2014 Foreign Affairs Budget"
April 17, 2013

Present	*Member*
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
X	Joe Wilson, SC
X	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Matt Salmon, AZ
X	Tom Marino, PA
X	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Adam Kinzinger, IL
X	Mo Brooks, AL
X	Tom Cotton, AR
X	Paul Cook, CA
	George Holding, NC
X	Randy K. Weber, Sr., TX
X	Scott Perry, PA
X	Steve Stockman, TX
X	Ron DeSantis, FL
X	Trey Radel, FL
X	Doug Collins, GA
X	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted S. Yoho, FL
X	Luke Messer, IN

Present	*Member*
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
	Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, AS
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
X	Brian Higgins, NY
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
X	Alan Grayson, FL
X	Juan Vargas, CA
X	Bradley S. Schneider, IL
	Joseph P. Kennedy III, MA
X	Ami Bera, CA
X	Alan S. Lowenthal, CA
X	Grace Meng, NY
X	Lois Frankel, FL
X	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
X	Joaquin Castro, TX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE EDWARD R. ROYCE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AND CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MICHAEL R. TURNER
Tenth District, Ohio

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP

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House of Representatives
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April 17, 2013

Statement for the Record
The Honorable Michael R. Turner
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Securing U.S. Interests Abroad: The FY 2014 Foreign Affairs Budget

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement for today's hearing with Secretary of State John Kerry.

Energy security continues to play an important role in global relationships and dialogue. In my role as Chairman of the U.S. delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly, many leaders and representatives of our key foreign allies have expressed to me their need to diversify energy resources away from one source or from unstable regions.

The United States is currently experiencing a surplus of natural gas production, helping to keep the price low compared to global rates. This is creating opportunities not only to boost job growth right here at home, but also for U.S. natural gas to compete in the global marketplace.

Increasing natural gas exports would not only help reduce our trade deficit and create job opportunities for American workers, but also help our key allies diversify their energy resources, bolster their energy and national security, and strengthen our strategic alliances.

For example, a Department of Energy-commissioned study determined that increasing natural gas exports would have positive benefits for our economy. On the geopolitical implications, a recent report by the Brookings Institute entitled "Liquid Markets: Assessing the Case for U.S. Exports of Liquefied Natural Gas" states:

> "The risk of high reliance on Russian gas has been a principal driver of European energy policy in recent decades. Among central and eastern European states, particularly those formerly aligned with the Soviet Union such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, the issue of reliance on imports of Russian gas is a primary energy security concern and has inspired energy policies aimed at diversification of fuel sources for power generation. From the U.S. perspective such Russian influence in the affairs of these democratic nations is an impediment to efforts at political and economic reform. The market power of Gazprom, Russia's state-owned gas monopoly, is evident in these countries."

> "...the addition of a large, market-based producer will indirectly serve to increase gas supply diversity in Europe, thereby providing European consumers with increased flexibility and market power."
>
> "Increased LNG exports will provide similar assistance to strategic U.S. allies in the Pacific Basin."
>
> "...the ability of the United States to provide a degree of increased energy security and pricing relief to LNG importers in the region will be an important and strategic asset."

As you know, the Department of Energy is currently reviewing 20 permit applications to export U.S. natural gas to non-Free Trade Agreement countries to determine if it would be in the public interest. I believe that exports of U.S. natural gas will help strengthen our strategic partnerships with key allies and bolster our national security.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to submit a statement for the record. I look forward to continuing to work with you on strengthening our diplomatic relations with our allies.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA (D-AS)
RANKING MEMBER

Securing Interests Abroad: The FY 2014 Foreign Affairs Budget

April 17, 2013

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member:

I would like to personally welcome Secretary Kerry and commend him on his appointment. I especially thank Secretary Kerry for the attention he is paying to the Asia-Pacific region.

Finally, we are presented with a Foreign Affairs budget which increases funding to the Asia-Pacific region by 7% over 2012 levels. The funding will primarily support the Lower Mekong Initiative which increases cooperation with Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia.

While I am a strong supporter of increased assistance for Vietnam and the Philippines, I have serious reservations about assisting Indonesia and I continue to call upon the Department of State and the Obama Administration to hold Indonesia accountable for its human rights abuses in West Papua and for its failure to implement Special Autonomy, as promised.

Regarding Vietnam, I believe the U.S. should additionally focus efforts on Agent Orange remediation as we have a moral obligation to clean up the mess we left behind years ago. I also believe the U.S. Department of State should dismiss the unfounded rhetoric put forward by critics of Vietnam who are unaware of Vietnam's accomplishments.

Vietnam is key to the success of the U.S. pivot to Asia and it is my sincere hope that we will establish greater economic, strategic and diplomatic cooperation between our two countries based on principles of truth and respect. On the matter of the South China Sea, I hope the U.S. will stand with those who stand with us as we work towards a peaceful resolution for all involved.

Because April 17 each year marks the anniversary of American Samoa becoming a U.S. Territory, I am unable to attend today's hearing as I am in my district celebrating this historical event. However, I offer Secretary Kerry my very best and, on behalf of the people of American Samoa, we extend to him our highest regards.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by Chairman Edward R. Royce
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

The Department has requested $580 million in FY 2014 for a Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund (MENA IF). This total includes $330 million for the Incentive Fund; $145 million for a Contingency Fund; $75 million for the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI); and, $30 million for the USAID Middle East Regional Office (MER).

The proposed $330 million for the Incentive Fund would establish a funding mechanism within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) that functions like the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The threshold for MCC support is already low, doesn't the Incentive Fund remove that threshold altogether and undermine the MCC? What specific problem does the creation of the Incentive Fund overcome? Why can't the same services be provided through existing funding mechanisms?

The $145 million request for the Contingency Fund replaces the existing Middle East Response Fund (MERF) which is an ad-hoc amalgamation of funds brought together to respond rapidly to the Arab Spring. How can the Department justify the continuation of a rapid response account when MERF is being spent slower or on pace with bilaterally appropriated funding?

The events unfolding in the Middle East and North Africa are the pre-eminent foreign policy challenge of this time. U.S. strategic and security interests in the region are unchanged, but the pursuit of them relies on sustained democratic, economic, security and justice sector reforms that respond to the aspirations of the region's citizens for dignity, opportunity, and self-determination. Achieving these outcomes requires committing resources commensurate with the challenge and changing the U.S. Government's approach to assistance. While bilateral funding in the region is being reassessed to meet new requirements, and existing programs are being better calibrated to emerging needs, ongoing security commitments and challenges remain. Our ability to capitalize on these opportunities requires both new resources and new methodologies to encourage reformers in the region moving to undertake the political, security sector, and economic reforms that respond to citizen demands.

Through the President's FY 2014 request for $580 million for the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund (MENA IF), the U.S. Government will support the transparency, citizen engagement, and reform orientation necessary on the part of local authorities to sustain and advance democratic transitions, and in doing so will alter the assistance relationship between the U.S., its partner governments in the region, and their citizens.

Modeled in part on the single account established for the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (AEECA) and drawing on the best practices of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and lessons learned from decades of USAID development programs, the MENA IF will provide the platform from which the U.S. can respond to contingencies and new opportunities across economic, political, and security spheres, begin to address the imbalance between U.S.

military and economic assistance in the region, and promote institutional reform. It will provide the United States with additional tools to work with international partners toward our shared reform objectives, and, through loan guarantee and debt relief authority, to leverage limited assistance dollars for maximum effect and impact.

The MCC and the MENA IF would pursue different but complementary goals in the region. The MCC provides a mechanism to support economic growth in the countries in which it works; the need for this type of targeted assistance will continue to exist in the MENA region and globally. The MENA IF, however, is designed to incentivize reform efforts across government institutions, including but not limited to economic policies. The focus of the MENA IF is on the development of sustainable democratic governance structures that support broad inclusion in both the political and economic institutions of a country.

Question 2:

Why have you requested a 20% increase over FY 2013 for the Office of the Secretary? Are these positions necessary or do they replicate functions already contained inside the Department?

The "Office of the Secretary," as listed in the State Department Budget, is not limited to my immediate staff, or Executive Office. It also includes the offices of the Deputy Secretaries, the Under Secretaries, the Office of Policy Planning, the Executive Secretariat, the 24/7 Operations Center, the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance, and the offices of a few special envoys and special representatives.

The Department's FY 2014 request of $105.5 million for the Office of the Secretary reflects a $11.3 million or 13% net increase over the FY 2012 actual level. However, there is no increase in staffing or funding requested in FY 2014 for my Executive Office.

The increases for Office of the Secretary in FY 2014 include:

- Office of Foreign Assistance Resources: $3.55 million to upgrade the budget data system and support the Foreign Assistance Dashboard, which will better enable a wide variety of stakeholders, including U.S. citizens, civil society organizations, the Congress, U.S. Government agencies, donors, and partner country governments, to examine, research, and track U.S. Government foreign assistance investments in an accessible and easy-to-understand format;
- Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues: $967,000 to support 5 new positions, which will help address the increasing demand for cyber capacity building, training, and policy development necessary to fulfill its responsibilities for leading U.S. international cyber policy development and strategic planning;
- Office of Global Women's Issues: $5.1 million to manage programs that promote integration of gender equality and advancement of the status of women and girls in all Department programming and diplomacy.

Question 3:

What steps are you taking to minimize redundancies and inefficiencies at the State Department? In particular, how do you plan to deal with the redundancies and overlapping responsibilities amongst the Bureau of Budget and Planning (BP), the Office of the Director for Foreign Assistance (F), and USAID's Office of Budget and Resource Management (BRM)?

The President has made it a priority of his Administration to save taxpayer dollars, streamline operations and improve government services. To that end, he has waged an aggressive campaign to eliminate duplication and waste.

In light of fiscal constraints, the Department and USAID are working to streamline their operations and assistance budgets by taking steps such as consolidating assistance accounts, setting targets for reduced operational spending, and taking advantage of cost efficiencies in programs to continue to meet our objectives.

The Department and USAID have also taken steps to eliminate and consolidate foreign assistance accounts to streamline operations and avoid waste. For example, in 2012 the Department of State and the Department of Defense worked together to review our assistance programs in Pakistan and decided that FY 2012 would be the last year of funding for the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund (PCCF). This fund was originally designed to be a short-term surge fund to identify and fill specific gaps. While Pakistan continues to have significant gaps in its counterinsurgency and counterterrorism (COIN/CT) capabilities, we realized that changes on the ground – including the loss of field-based trainers in Pakistan – meant that we needed to change our approach to security assistance. We continue to build our security cooperation, including COIN/CT, and continue security assistance to Pakistan through Foreign Military Financing.

Likewise, changing priorities, the need for greater budget flexibility, the downward funding trajectory for Europe and Eurasia, and successes in a number of countries over time led the Administration to request last year the normalization of programs funded through the Assistance for Europe and Eurasia Countries Account (AEECA) and the elimination of the account. Consistent with last year's request and the FY 2013 CR, the FY 2014 budget requests programs previously funded under AEECA were shifted to other accounts as appropriate.

In addition to foreign assistance programs, we have been consolidating management services within State and USAID, so that we can 1) maximize our program resources, and 2) maintain a robust platform to support the diplomacy and development missions. The shared services concept is widely used in the government and private sectors to deliver quality services at best cost, with satisfied customers. Fifteen services were set for consolidation. Over 98 percent of these services have been consolidated at posts where State and USAID are collocated in the same building or compound. Over 95 percent of services have been consolidated where State and USAID are not collocated on a new embassy compound. We are reviewing additional services beyond the 15 consolidation opportunities.

In FY 2013, the Department also is working toward OMB's targeted spending reductions of $182 million less than FY 2010 on travel, supplies, IT devices, printing and reproduction, executive fleet, and promotional items. In December 2012, leadership at all posts were advised of government-wide mandates to reduce cost, scrutinize travel, review service contract requests, and hasten adoption of cost savings within the "Top Eight Initiatives": Warehousing, Voucher Processing, Utilities, TDY International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS), Regionalization of Support Services, Furniture Pool, Expendable Supplies, and Local Transportation. Leadership at posts were directed to discuss the budget and procurement implications of these orders with their section heads and regional bureau executive office, and to constrain spending.

The Budget of Bureau Planning (BP), the Office of Foreign Assistance (F), and the Bureau of Resource Management (BRM) at USAID work together to produce a coordinated budget that includes the operational and programmatic resources required to achieve our foreign policy, national security and development goals. This arrangement focuses the use of our resources and assists in eliminating overlap and duplication. Each office has a distinct role.

The Bureau of Budget and Planning manages the State Operations budget. The Office of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources was created by Secretary Condoleezza Rice to strengthen the Secretary's ability to oversee and coordinate State and USAID foreign assistance to ensure that resources are strategically allocated, properly coordinated, and effectively used to support U.S. foreign policy, development, and national security priorities. The inaugural QDDR called for the establishment of BRM at USAID, enabling USAID to propose a comprehensive development and humanitarian assistance budget for USAID-managed programs and to have increased responsibility in the execution of development resources.

Question 4:

What are the functional differences between USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), of Bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations (CSO), and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)? Isn't it true that all three have the authority to work with the same implementers for the same programs – at least with respect to the NEA region? If so, what is the rationale behind maintaining, or indeed expanding, three bureaucratic structures?

The many U.S. offices involved in responding to conflict, crisis and other contingencies offer a rich variety of networks, geographic focus, and specializations. Offices vary in their time horizon for engagement, capabilities and comparative advantages, partner relationships, and experience in the region.

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) has developed innovative models of operation that support short-term assistance for political transition and stabilization needs. The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) works almost exclusively with citizen groups to build the capacity of democracy activists, grassroots organizations, civil society, and emerging leaders across the Middle East and North Africa. The Bureau of Conflict and Stability Operations (CSO) operates within the State Department to drive policy to address urgent challenges of violence and conflict in priority places.

In a conflict as complicated as Syria's, for example, it is important to leverage the strengths of various offices in a coordinated manner. In the U.S. Government's support for the Syrian civilian opposition, the activities of each implementer are coordinated and defined jointly by the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) as directed by Ambassador Ford, U.S. Ambassador to Syria, and Ambassador Taylor, head of the Middle East Transitions Office. The programs of all three offices are also highly collaborative in the field, with team leadership co-located in the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) based in Adana, Turkey.

Through in-kind assistance to emergent governing bodies and civil society, OTI strengthens the capacity of key institutions to identify and respond to local needs, and support nonsectarian actors seeking to constructively participate in the political transition. OTI specializes in providing prompt material support to the existing new governing councils in liberated Syria; it does little training. CSO supports initiatives to train Syrian in-country activists, through a remote platform, and it provides some material support, such as communications equipment, to promote their cohesion and resilience. CSO's operations funds allow for broad flexibility, including work with armed actors. MEPI is supporting local governance structures in so-called liberated areas and working with civil society, grassroots organizations, and key opposition constituencies in Syria, building on its work in Syria since 2006. MEPI is focused on the longer-term capacity of opposition structures and leaders by building their actual governance capacity by helping new councils assemble Syrian teams that will continue after the MEPI program concludes. OTI is not doing that kind of institution building from scratch.

Ultimately, each of these offices has a specialty, and each of these skill sets is necessary for different requirements that the U.S. faces in extremely complex environments in the NEA region. We anticipate with time that the MEPI program will work with and equip only civil society activists, OTI will work mainly with governing councils and CSO will do only training of officials and activists.

Question 5:

The Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) consists of various regional offices with overlapping areas of responsibility as noted in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) March 2011 report. The report recommended immediate consolidation of these offices. What steps are you taking to correct this inefficient Bureau and save U.S. taxpayer dollars?

As recommended by the Office of the Inspector General, the Bureau of Eurasian Affairs (EUR) completed a review of the four functional offices identified in the inspection as offices with potential overlap.

EUR has examined the question of possible duplication between the Office of European Union and Regional Affairs (ERA) and the Office of Policy and Global Issues (PGI), and has determined that there is no meaningful overlap. PGI covers a broad range of functional bureau and global issues as they pertain to the complete range of EUR countries and sub-regions across the whole bureau. ERA covers some of those issues as they pertain specifically to the European Union (EU) (as a collective body) in ERA's role as the de facto EU desk and the equivalent of the country desk for the U.S. Mission to the EU in EUR.

As for the Office of European Security and Political Affairs (RPM) and the Office of Policy and Regional Affairs (PRA): RPM serves as the equivalent of a country desk for the U.S. Missions to NATO and the OSCE, with primary responsibility for providing support and approving guidance to each. In an exception to this general rule, PRA takes the Bureau lead in approving guidance to these missions in the areas of missile defense, non-proliferation and strategic arms control. With guidance from the EUR Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary, RPM and PRA directors reviewed the portfolios of their respective action officers and revised position descriptions to ensure that any duplication was eliminated. Both offices communicate regularly and work closely with all EUR offices so that ambiguities in responsibility for NATO- and OSCE-related issues are addressed promptly and the appropriate office takes action.

This was accepted by the OIG on August 4, 2011.

Question 6:

The Administration has requested $78 million in FY14 for UNESCO. These funds require Presidential waiver which, if granted, would open up other UN organizations to Palestinian inclusion. Can you please explain the rationale behind providing any funding to UNESCO given the organization's acceptance of Palestine as a member? Doesn't this undermine our efforts to support a negotiated Middle East peace settlement between all parties?

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) promotes U.S. national interests. At its core, UNESCO is an anti-extremism organization, and one that uses cooperation to address shared challenges. The work that UNESCO does to promote peace, intercultural dialogue, tolerance, and education for all is essential to combating violent extremism. UNESCO's coordination of the global tsunami warning system has already proven invaluable for helping prevent massive casualties from deadly tsunamis, some of which threaten large populations along the U.S. coastline.

UNESCO serves U.S. interests. Many American companies – including Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Procter and Gamble – have partnered with UNESCO to advance core American values, like press freedom, and access to education. At the same time, these companies are expanding their global reach into new and untapped markets.

In addition, UNESCO supports and furthers fundamental American values, including promoting literacy for women and girls; promoting tolerance and respect for all by creating curriculum programs for global dissemination; and supporting Holocaust education as a means to combat anti-Semitism and prevent future atrocities. UNESCO also plays a critical leading role in promoting freedom of the press and safety for journalists globally.

The United States remains a steadfast ally of Israel at UNESCO, and has been able to successfully advocate for Israel within the Organization. The most recent example is at the UNESCO Executive Board meeting in April, where the United States played an instrumental role in negotiating a compromise between the Israelis and Palestinians, resulting in the deferred consideration of five contentious recurring resolutions on cultural sites in the region.

This latest example of U.S. engagement on behalf of Israel in the UN system underscores the critical importance of a continued strong U.S. presence at UNESCO. However, without resuming payment of assessed contributions due to UNESCO, the United States will lose its vote

at the 37th General Conference in November 2013 – an unprecedented consequence that will harm both U.S. interests and those of our allies.

At the same time, we continue our active engagement across the spectrum of UN agencies and directly with the Palestinians to underscore that similar efforts to pursue status as a Member State will only risk undermining a return to direct negotiations which remain the only path forward to a just, lasting, and comprehensive regional solution to end the conflict.

We believe that our actions must be determined by our own national interest both in a just, lasting, and comprehensive regional solution and in a responsible and capable UN system. We remain convinced that the best way to advance these interests is to demonstrate our commitment to Middle East peace and to maintain our investment in and our leadership within the UN system.

Many of our allies have given us a clear message – including through statements at the UNESCO Executive Board that just ended in Paris – that they want the United States to remain an active player at UNESCO and in the multilateral system more broadly. They see the United States as a vital and powerful voice for freedom and democratic values.

As you will recall, it was under the leadership of George W. Bush that the United States rejoined UNESCO in 2003 following a prolonged absence. In a bipartisan effort, President Bush and the late Representative Tom Lantos led the charge in convincing members on both sides of the aisle in Congress that the United States is far better off being at the table at UNESCO. By withholding our contributions, not only do we cut off support for important programs that advance U.S. interests, we weaken our ability to promote our priorities, risk losing altogether our voting rights, and effectively empower others to determine how and when America engages. As a result, our ability to defend Israel from unfair and biased attacks in the UN will also be greatly damaged.

Question 7:

The U.S. government, along with other international donors, has committed to channel at least 50 percent of its development assistance through the Afghan national budget, rather than through contractors and nongovernmental organizations operating on behalf of the U.S. government. The FY14 budget request includes a significant amount allocated to on-budget assistance. Does the Afghan government actually have the capacity to manage the amount of funding envisioned in the international community's pledges of direct assistance? What risk mitigation mechanisms do we have in place—beyond standard monitoring and evaluation—to combat fraud, waste, and abuse?

We believe it is critical to the achievement of our national security objectives to have a strong partnership with an effective Afghan Government. One avenue we have used to improve the performance of the national government and to ensure the long term sustainability of development gains is to employ capable Afghan ministries in the implementation of development projects.

Over the last ten years the United States has worked closely with many parts of the Afghan Government to improve its capacity to responsibly and transparently provide services to the

people of Afghanistan. In order to facilitate further capacity development and increase Afghan ownership of development projects we have in some cases provided funding directly to ministries after an extensive assessment of each ministry's capacity to manage the project. In addition, the Afghan Government continues to take action to improve the transparency of its budgeting procedures and the capacity of its ministries. This includes specific transparency and anti-corruption measures included in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

We understand your concerns about providing U.S. assistance directly to the Afghan Government and recognize the risks. The Department of State and USAID provide funding to the Afghan Government only for specific projects and we assess the financial management and organizational capacity of each prospective Afghan ministry prior to initiating a project. Any risks identified in the assessments are addressed prior to the disbursement of project funding in order to protect taxpayer money to the fullest possible extent. Additional protective measures may include, but are not limited to, requiring the Afghan Ministry of Finance to establish non-commingled, separate bank accounts for each project; disbursement of funds only after verification that the ministry has achieved a performance milestone or we have verified accrued costs; annual audits by Office of the Inspector General approved certified public accounting firms; substantial involvement and oversight by USAID and Department of State staff in procurement processes; third-party management, monitoring and evaluation of services; and technical assistance to increase the capacity of ministries. All on-budget assistance requires compliance with USAID or Department of State accountability and oversight procedures, including site visits by U.S. staff or third-party contractors, as well as regular reporting. We also work closely with the World Bank and other donors to make sure that our contributions to the World Bank administered Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund are subject to similar protections.

Our experience in Afghanistan has shown that on-budget assistance, subject to stringent accountability and oversight measures, is an effective way to build Afghan capacity, increases public confidence in the government, can be used to incentivize reform, sets the stage for sustainable future results, and has a greater positive impact on the Afghan economy, which is of increasing importance as the security transition approaches.

Question 8:

Although the total FY 14 request for Pakistan has decreased because of the phase out of the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund (PCCF), the Administration is still seeking $1.3 billion for Pakistan. Repeated assessments from the three Inspector General offices charged with monitoring U.S. non-military aid programs in Pakistan continue to document that USAID has not been able to demonstrate measurable progress in the implementation of U.S. assistance. What is your assessment of the success – or lack thereof – of our civilian and security assistance to date?

The Administration is seeking $1.16 billion in assistance to Pakistan in FY 2014 to promote core U.S. national interests. This includes advancing our goals in Afghanistan, which our forces have sacrificed so much to achieve. We are constantly evaluating our assistance to Pakistan to ensure that it is consistent with our interests, and have proven successes with both our security and civilian assistance.

Through our civilian assistance, we are making measurable progress in sectors most important to Pakistan's stability: energy, economic growth, stabilization of vulnerable areas, education, and health. For example, energy is a key priority due to critical shortages that undermine Pakistan's economic and political stability. Since October 2009 U.S. assistance has added 900 MW to Pakistan's electricity grid, almost half the installed capacity of the Hoover Dam, benefitting over 12.6 million people. Our stabilization initiatives aim to make communities in conflict and post-conflict regions, particularly along the border with Afghanistan, inhospitable to insurgents and extend the writ of the government, supporting our goal of national and regional security. To that end, USAID and the State Department have funded the construction of over 650 km of roads in these extremism-prone border regions, increasing commercial activity and stability. And since October 2009, we have rebuilt 40 schools destroyed by militants in Pakistan's tribal areas, including 17 girls' schools, enabling 8,600 children to return to school.

In this same vein, our security assistance programs focus on strengthening Pakistan's capabilities in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, and on promoting closer security ties with the United States. Over the past two years, we have closely calibrated our security assistance to ensure what we provide is commensurate with Pakistan's cooperation on our mutual interests. Our military-to-military relationship is now on a stronger footing and we are moving forward with a security assistance program that is more realistic and narrowly focused to pursue joint action on areas of mutual interest.

While there are certainly areas of disagreement between our two nations, and places where we would like to see further Pakistani action, our counterterrorism and non-proliferation collaboration with Pakistan is now at its strongest point in the past few years, due in large part to our security assistance. The Pakistan Military continues its operations against terrorist targets in Afghan border areas, with an increase in the number of sorties due to the capacity they have developed in night vision and precision strike. For example, the March and April campaign in the Tirah Valley received critical support from Pakistan Air Force operations using F-16s. Additionally, bilateral cooperation on our shared interest in countering IEDs is improving. We find that the Government of Pakistan is increasingly acknowledging the threat IEDs present, including to Pakistan's own domestic security, and is working to build its counter-IED capabilities within law enforcement, legislative, and military areas – supported by our security and civilian assistance. For example, since the opening of the NATO supply lines in mid-2012, the United States and Pakistan have conducted several senior and working-level meetings to increase cooperation to disrupt the flow of IED materials in Pakistan and across the Afghanistan/Pakistan border. The result of these meetings has been increased cooperation and transfer of information at the borders, embedding of senior liaisons to better communicate and coordinate action, and an increased focus on enforcing existing counter-IED (C-IED) related legislation and pursuing more effective legislation where needed. More is still required to disrupt and decrease the thousands of IED casualties that occur each year in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and our Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and remaining PCCF security assistance funds have targeted C-IED as a critical capacity to enhance.

Question 9:

The FY 2014 request for Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) includes $50 million for a "UN Presence in Syria," despite the fact that a UN mission in Syria has not been approved by the UN Security Council. Additionally, the request includes a request for authority to transfer additional resources from the proposed "Middle East Incentive Fund" into CIPA, presumably for a UN peacekeeping operation in Syria. Meanwhile, the request does not include funding for Mali, despite the fact that the UN is expected to approve a mission by the end of this month. Could you please help rationalize the CIPA request for FY2014? Would you please also confirm that the Administration will not seek to pay assessments – through "credits" or other mechanisms - above and beyond the rate permissible by law?

The UN Security Council established the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) in April 2012. The mission ended August 19, 2012, given the continued use of heavy weapons and an insufficient reduction in the level of violence; however, the Security Council continues to monitor the situation closely. Should conditions permit, the international community may deploy another UN mission. For FY 2014, the Administration has requested funding for the possible deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation to assist with a post-conflict transition that could include tasks such as facilitating a political transition; managing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants; carrying-out demining activities; coordinating security sector reform (SSR) of the Syrian security apparatus; and promoting human rights and rule of law activities as part of support to a political transition in Syria, if conditions permit. The proposed transfer authority request from the Middle East North Africa Incentive Fund (MENA IF) would bolster our ability to provide assessed contributions should there be any Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) funding shortfalls, including Syria.

Prior to the finalization of the FY 2014 budget request, the Administration anticipated continuing to use of voluntary Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funds to support the African-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). The FY 2014 PKO budget request includes $83.75 million for Mali to support: 1) AFISMA, 2) equipping and training African units participating in AFISMA (or a follow-on UN-led mission in Mali), and 3) security sector reform (SSR) with the government of Mali when it is no longer subject to coup sanctions. Because the UN Security Council approved the UN-led Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) well after the FY 2014 budget request was finalized, funds to support a UN assessed peacekeeping mission were not included in the FY 2014 CIPA budget request. The U.S. assessed share of expenses for MINUSMA is estimated to be approximately $337 million for FY 2014, which is not included in the FY2014 CIPA request. However, as many of the countries participating in AFISMA will also contribute troops to MINUSMA, PKO funds for Mali will still be needed to provide equipment and training for troops deploying to MINUSMA and to support SSR with Mali.

The Administration is committed to paying UN assessments in full. Timely and full payment of peacekeeping assessments since January 2009 has enhanced the UN's ability to attract and retain peacekeeping forces, improved U.S. relationships with those troop contributors, and helped save lives and reduce suffering by strengthening UN peacekeeping. The FY 2013 Full Year

Continuing Resolution (CR) does not provide the authority to use CIPA appropriations to pay at the higher peacekeeping assessment rate of 28.38 percent for 2013, but rather continues the current cap of 27.14 percent (the previous 2012 rate). We will continue to explore all available options to avoid new cap-related peacekeeping withholdings and arrears to continue to meet President Obama's commitment to pay our dues on time and in full. This includes working with Congress to secure additional authority to use appropriated CIPA funds, including FY 2013 funds, to pay our assessed peacekeeping contributions at the new rate. As we explore all of our options, we will of course continue to consult closely with Congress on the appropriate way forward.

Question 10:

This budget proposes to spend $240 million on a pay raise for overseas Foreign Service Officers that the State Department has never shown is necessary. FSOs currently receive a 24% locality pay premium while stationed in Washington, DC. The State Department has begun phasing in this DC locality pay for overseas postings as well, using temporary authority in the 2009 supplemental appropriations bill. According to GAO, the average FSO salary already increases by $2,400 per year when FSOs move overseas including benefits like free housing, education for children, danger and hardship raises, and COLAs. The permanent repeal of this raise was highlighted as an illustrative savings by the President's bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility. How can you justify spending nearly a quarter of a billion dollars on an across-the-board raise for overseas diplomats? Wouldn't funds be better spent on targeted incentives for hard-to-fill posts and language deficiencies – two longstanding problems?

Locality pay in the United States is a pay adjustment that addresses disparities in federal and non-federal salaries in a given locality. When locality pay was created by Congress in 1990, it applied only to positions in the continental United States.

Locality pay differs substantially from the allowances and differentials cited, which are provided to employees for service at places in foreign areas where conditions differ substantially from those in the continental United States. They compensate for higher prices, deficient and/or unavailable local goods and services, difficult and unhealthful conditions and, in the case of danger pay, incentivize service at places in foreign areas with extremely high crime rates, civil insurrection or wartime conditions which threaten physical harm or imminent danger.

Overseas Comparability Pay is intended to close the gap created by locality pay when Foreign Service (FS) personnel work abroad. Congress began authorizing Overseas Comparability Pay (OCP) for FS personnel serving overseas in August 2009. At present, the first two of three phases have been authorized, with OCP paid at 16.52 percent of base salary. This authorization has been continued in subsequent appropriations bills.

The locality pay for Washington, DC, is 24.22 percent; thus when FS personnel go abroad, their pay is reduced by 7.7 percent. Without the current, two-thirds OCP authorization, FS personnel going abroad would receive an immediate 24.22 percent pay cut.

The pay reduction lowers contributions to Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan since these are based on pay plus locality pay.

Locality pay is based upon surveys conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The "basic locality rate," for locations outside of defined metropolitan areas is referred to as the "Rest of U.S." and is set at 14.16 percent. This is significantly higher than that received abroad in the absence of OCP.

In a matter of equity, the intelligence community pays full Washington, D.C., locality pay, plus allowance and hardship pay, to their employees who are stationed abroad, and has since 2003.

Eliminating the OCP would have an immediate and negative impact on retention and morale, particularly at critical mid-levels.

Locality Pay and OCP

To illustrate, FS personnel making $100,000 per year in Washington currently take a pay cut of about $7,149 when deployed overseas, based on two-thirds of OCP. Even with a $2,400 "pay increase" per GAO, they still face a reduction in pay.

- FS personnel who move from Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea – a high cost, difficult, and generally hard-to-fill post – to a federal job in a rural U.S. location, would take only a 2.36 percent pay cut, based on the rest of the U.S locality pay, despite the substantial differences in living conditions.
- Moving from Papua New Guinea to Buffalo, New York, would actually increase FS personnel pay by half of a percent.
- If she/he moved from Papua New Guinea to the Los Angeles/Orange County area, she/he would currently see a pay increase of 10.64 percent, as Los Angeles has locality pay at 27.16 percent.

Question 11:

President Obama declared that the "cyber threat is one of the most serious economic and national security challenges we face as a nation" and that "America's economic prosperity in the 21st century will depend on cybersecurity." In your confirmation hearing, you state called cybersecurity the "21st century nuclear weapons equivalent." However, the State Department's budget request does not include the word cybersecurity even once. The State Department should be funding diplomatic and programmatic efforts to protect our country from cyber attack. Why has the State Department failed to include cybersecurity in its strategy to "advance peace, security and stability"? Why has the State Department not included any financing for cybersecurity programs?

The State Department recognizes that cyber issues, including cybersecurity, lie at the heart of many of our most pressing national security challenges, and we have taken strong proactive and innovative steps to address the cybersecurity challenges facing our nation. Our FY 2014 budget

request recognizes the importance of appropriately funding the Department's efforts to enhance the security of the United States from cyber threats.

U.S. cyber policy, as framed by the May 2011, *U.S. International Strategy for Cyberspace*, encompasses economic, security, crime, military, Internet governance, capacity building, and Internet freedom issues, and represents a new foreign policy imperative for the United States.

The Department is a key player in U.S. efforts to address the full range of cyber threats we face today, including defending against distributed denial of service attacks against our financial industry, dealing with the large-scale cyber theft of intellectual property and trade secrets from the private sector, combating cybercrime, and building consensus on the norms of responsible conduct in cyberspace for state actors.

The Department's Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues (S/CCI) was created in February 2011 to lead the Department's global diplomatic engagement on the full range of cyber issues, including cybersecurity. S/CCI was a first-of-its-kind initiative that has subsequently been emulated by over a dozen countries, including the UK, Germany, Russia, Japan, and China. S/CCI coordinates the Department's cyber work; leads its cyber policy development and strategic planning efforts; serves as the Department's liaison to the White House, federal departments and agencies, and the private sector; plans coordinate the Department's diverse cyber work; and executes cybersecurity and cybercrime capacity building programs.

S/CCI leads U.S. cyber engagements with a multitude of states, bilaterally and in regional groups such as the European Union and NATO. In the last year alone, we have launched dedicated whole-of-government senior-level cyber policy dialogues with India, Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Japan, and Germany in order to share perspectives and build a consensus view on the future of cyberspace. We also continue to seek deeper engagement with countries like Russia and China, who may have a different world view, but with whom we need to find ways to develop stronger relationships.

S/CCI's FY 2014 budget request is $4.367 million, which will allow S/CCI to add additional personnel to implement and expand the Department's international cyber diplomacy efforts around the globe.

In terms of protecting our own networks and infrastructure, the Department has established a global "defense-in-depth" cybersecurity program that leverages the cybersecurity expertise of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and Bureau of Information and Resource Management to identify and mitigate threats to our networks and information assets. As part of those efforts, in March the Department launched the Foreign Affairs Cybersecurity Center (FACC), a state-of-the-art cyber operations facility that focuses on detecting and understanding the emerging cyber threats and activities within the Department and the entire foreign affairs community.

The State Department also participates in interagency efforts to implement President Obama's recently issued Executive Order on Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity (E.O.) and new Presidential Policy Directive on Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience (PPD-21) to address the threats we face from cyber attack on our most critical assets, networks, and systems. Under DHS' coordination of an Integrated Task Force, the interagency is addressing the E.O. and PPD-21 actions in nine work groups in which the State Department is participating. As part

of this effort, the Department is collaborating on stakeholder engagement, particularly with other countries, informing them of the E.O. and PPD-21 developments; planning for international input and participation, where appropriate; and noting where there may be international implications for other areas of implementation.

The Department will continue to protect our nation's national interests and cybersecurity by working with other nations on efforts that will ensure a secure, open, interoperable, and free Internet.

Question 12:

How is the work of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) funded under State, USAID, USTDA, OPIC, Ex-Im, MCC, Peace Corps, African Development Foundation, Treasury and other implementing agencies coordinated to help countries take advantage of AGOA? Is the State Department engaging with African countries about AGOA implementation outside of the AGOA Forum? If so, how and when?

The interagency coordinates economic engagement with Africa and the promotion of the **African Growth and Opportunity Act** (AGOA) through a number of mechanisms. The USTR-chaired Trade Policy Staff Committee and the Commerce-chaired Trade Promotion Coordination Committee provide a framework for regular interagency dialogue on trade-related topics, including AGOA.

The State Department, along with other agencies, regularly engages with African countries about AGOA implementation outside of the annual AGOA Forum. Our embassies in African countries hold discussions with host government counterparts on the political and economic reforms needed to maintain or re-acquire eligibility for AGOA benefits, and USTR chairs annual interagency discussions to review countries' adherence to AGOA's eligibility criteria.

State also participates in USTR-led Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council meetings, during which strengthening AGOA utilization is frequently an agenda item. The United States has TIFAs with 11 countries or regional economic communities in sub-Saharan Africa. During the most recent TIFA Council meeting, with Nigeria in December 2012, the two sides discussed how to increase and diversify Nigeria's utilization of AGOA benefits.

In conjunction with the June 2012 AGOA Forum, State and other agencies hosted a U.S.-African Business Conference in Cincinnati in response to African requests for increased interaction with the U.S. private sector to expand trade and investment linkages. The conference included structured networking opportunities, panel discussions, and site visits centered on energy, transportation, and water and sanitation sectors.

State has also developed the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) to strengthen African women's abilities to integrate into the global economy, including through taking advantage of AGOA to export to the United States. Successful AWEP alumnae exporting under AGOA include a Kenyan businesswoman who exports home décor goods to Walmart, Marshalls, Target, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Neiman Marcus; and a businesswoman from Cameroon who secured a $45million deal to export her Chia seed to a California company.

To strengthen AGOA utilization, USAID – in cooperation with State, USTR, and the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture – launched the African Competitiveness and Trade Expansion Initiative (ACTE) in 2011. The ACTE initiative provides up to $120 million over four years to improve Africa's capacity to produce and export competitive, value-added products, including those that can enter the United States duty free under AGOA. ACTE supports the work of USAID's three regional trade hubs and enhances trade opportunities for Africans and Americans alike. The trade hubs provide targeted assistance to African businesses and educate private sector groups and associations about AGOA opportunities. The hubs also support AGOA-eligible countries to develop action-oriented strategies to take advantage of AGOA and focus on areas of competitive advantage.

MCC's work, while not tied to AGOA directly, has helped a significant number of African countries realize the potential of AGOA through the agency's work to reduce poverty through sustainable economic growth. MCC is partnering with 14 African countries to improve their capacity for trade by removing internal barriers to trade; building institutional capacity in areas such as customs and national standards; developing business skills; and building the transportation, energy, and other infrastructure needed to enable trade and business expansion that can propel economic growth.

Export-Import Bank coordinates with the Foreign Service and Foreign Commercial Service on the United States Government's economic engagement with Africa pursuant to the African Growth and Opportunity Act. By supporting US exports such as aircraft, rail, power and other infrastructure related exports to Sub-Saharan Africa, Ex-Im Bank has helped build the framework for trade between Africa and the US.

Question 13:

Of the overall IMET account, how much funding is provided to Iraq for military training? Of those funds, what is the percentage of IMET assistance that is dedicated to the Kurdish Peshmerga? Additionally, does the Department have any controls in place to ensure that funding passing though Baghdad does in fact reach Peshmerga forces? In the absence of such controls, how does the Department avoid an imbalance of security assistance funding and training between Iraqi Security Forces and Peshmerga?

Since 2010, the Department of State has allocated approximately $2 million annually in IMET to the Government of Iraq. IMET-funded courses expose defense establishment personnel to U.S. military training, doctrine, and values and are intended to promote democratic values, build capacity in key areas, increase the professionalization of the forces, and build lasting military-to-military relationships.

As per our normal practice in other countries, the Department of State partners with Iraq's central government, as the sovereign government, in its security cooperation efforts. As such, the Department of State does not dedicate a set amount of funding to the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Peshmerga (MoP), but rather offers particular training and education opportunities to the Iraqi government, of which the MoP is considered a part. The United States develops the IMET plan in conjunction with the Iraqi government and requires that candidates

for particular courses meet certain pre-requisites such as rank, language skill, and professional focus, but the Iraqi government has discretion in the candidate selection process. However, we do not advise the Iraqi government regarding the proportion of IMET funding dedicated to MoP.

As a general rule, when conducting exchange programs and training programs with Iraq, the Department of State seeks to have a diverse pool of participants, representing a balance of genders, regions, sects and ethnic groups.

Questions for the Record
Submitted on behalf of the Honorable Gus M. Bilirakis
By Chairman Edward R. Royce
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

Secretary Kerry, last March at a meeting in Korea, President Obama announced that he had been told by Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan that he had decided to reopen the Halki Seminary. Over a year later, Halki is still closed and no resolution appears to be in sight. Turkey's disregard for Ecumenical Patriarchate, the spiritual home of the world's oldest and second largest Christian church, has a long and bitter history and they have repeatedly ignored calls to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Theological School of Halki without condition or further delay. What is the State Department's position on the opening of Halki and what path forward do you see?

The United States fully supports efforts to reopen Halki Seminary, a vital institution of spiritual learning for Orthodox Christians around the world. We will continue to urge the Government of Turkey at the highest levels to reopen the seminary as a symbol of its commitment to religious freedom. Secretary Kerry raised this issue with Foreign Minister Davutoglu during his most recent visit to Istanbul on April 21. He also met separately with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I to underscore our commitment to Halki's reopening and the rights and status of the Patriarchate in Turkey. The Ambassador and officers from the U.S. Embassy and Consulate General also engage on this issue on a regular basis.

Though incremental, some progress has occurred. The Turkish government's return of property surrounding the Seminary to the Church in January was a positive step, and the current constitutional redrafting process is encouraging an unprecedented dialogue on individual rights and religious freedom. We will continue to encourage the government of Turkey to work cooperatively with the Ecumenical Patriarchate to pass legislation and overcome political roadblocks that are hindering the reopening of this historic institution. We will also encourage Turkey to take additional steps to promote religious freedom, such as allowing more religious communities to own property, register their places of worship, and train their clergy.

Question 2:

As a result of the recent financial crisis in Cyprus, the new government finds itself having to implement very difficult austerity and financial measures to get the Cypriot economy back on track. Do you agree it would be unreasonable to expect the Cypriot government to engage in a new round of UN talks before the country has gotten back on its feet economically and is able to devote the necessary attention to the diplomatic process/problem of negotiating a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus question? Do you agree that negotiations for the solution of the Cyprus question should only resume once the appropriate preparations take place, so as to ensure that these will be meaningful and result-oriented, allowing for substantial progress and real prospects for a solution?

I am pleased that both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders recently reaffirmed their commitment to finding a solution, and expect negotiations will resume once appropriate preparations have been made. The UN Secretary General's Special Advisor for Cyprus Alexander Downer was in Cyprus recently to hold meetings with both leaders on the way forward. During his visit, he expressed understanding that President Anastasiades must address significant economic challenges in the short term. The United States remains committed to supporting efforts under UN auspices to reunify Cyprus as a bizonal, bicommunal federation. We do not seek to impose deadlines, but as the parties themselves have said in the past, the status quo is unacceptable. So while I recognize the challenging nature of the process, I hope the parties will reach a settlement as soon as possible.

Question for the Record
Submitted on behalf of the Honorable Michael R. Turner
By Chairman Edward R. Royce
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

Mr. Secretary, with respect to the energy needs of our allies and recent economic analysis, do you believe that exports of U.S. natural gas can assist our diplomatic efforts to help bolster energy security abroad for our key allies and strengthen our strategic partnerships?

The increase in U.S. gas supplies is already having foreign policy impacts. Although the United States for the moment is still a net importer of natural gas, the United States also exports natural gas by pipeline and has exported liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Alaska. The decline in U.S. LNG imports has boosted global supplies and given some consumers, particularly in Europe, greater flexibility in meeting their energy needs. A number of our allies and partners have also expressed a desire to import natural gas from the United States, which they see as a secure and potentially cheaper source of supply.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by Ranking Member Eliot L. Engel
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

What is your assessment of Egypt's current commitment to close relations with the United States and to its peace treaty with Israel? Is Egypt capable of controlling the Sinai, and what is it doing now to get the situation under control? How do you assess the Morsi government's performance on human rights, including freedom of expression?

Egyptian civilian and military leaders, including the Presidency, have repeatedly assured us of its commitment to the Peace Treaty with Israel and its commitment to a good relationship with the United States; we have made clear that the two are inextricably tied. Egypt has affirmed its commitment to these two things not just in words, but also through actions, including continued efforts to strengthen the Egypt-brokered Gaza ceasefire, increase security for our U.S. Mission, and pursue dialogue between our two governments.

As great as our interest is in a stable, secure Sinai that is free from extremism, no one has a greater interest in achieving this stability and security than Egyptians themselves. Egyptian officials recognize the need to reassert control over the Sinai, and they have addressed problems of stability and extremist violence through stepped-up action against terrorist networks, increased weapons interdiction, and enhanced border protection. Our Embassy and the Administration have been working with the Egyptian government to advance and assist with those efforts, including through our military assistance.

Egyptians enjoy greater freedom today than prior to the January 2011 revolution, but freedom of expression, association, women's rights, religious freedom, and rule of law remain areas of concern. We believe Egypt's prosperity and stability will hinge on upholding and protecting these universal rights, and we have repeatedly raised these concerns, including on individual cases, at high levels with the Egyptian government. President Morsi has publicly stated his respect for freedom of expression and ordered that all legal complaints filed by the presidency against journalists be dropped. He has also underscored his commitment to govern for all Egyptians. President Obama, our Ambassador in Cairo, and I have consistently made clear to our Egyptian counterparts the need to follow through on commitments to protect the rights of all Egyptians. We support a number of programs on the ground that reinforce these rights and aid creation of strong democratic institutions to sustain them.

Question 2:

Last month, Kenyans elected Uhuru Kenyatta as their next President. However, the ICC has indicted both Mr. Kenyatta and his running mate, now Vice President William Ruto. How, if at all, will the State Department engage with President Kenyatta and his administration?

The United States congratulated the people of Kenya for voting peacefully on March 4. Since its independence in 1963, Kenya has been one of America's strongest and most enduring partners in Africa. Our partnership is based on a shared commitment to democracy, security, and opportunity. We remain committed to that enduring partnership, which does not depend on particular individuals or offices. The State Department will continue to work closely with Kenya and the Kenyan people. At the same time, accountability for political violence is a critical ingredient to lasting peace in Kenya. In that regard, we welcome and wish to underscore the importance of Kenya's commitment to uphold its international obligations, including those with respect to international justice. We urge the Government of Kenya to live up to commitments to seeking justice for the victims of the 2007-2008 post-election violence, including by cooperating fully with the ICC process. We cannot ignore the serious charges set out in the ICC proceedings, and we will calibrate our engagement with Kenya's elected leaders accordingly. U.S. policy, values, laws, and interests will guide this engagement.

Question 3:

Mr. Secretary, from your recent conversations in Beijing with the top levels of the Chinese leadership, what is your understanding of the Chinese government's communications with Pyongyang? Beyond China's public statements, have the Chinese conveyed their frustrations directly with the North Korean leadership about the North's bellicose rhetoric? And finally, what is your understanding of the commitments that Beijing has given, if any, to try to dampen tensions on the Korean peninsula and rein in North Korea's aggressive behavior?

The United States continues to work closely with China to deepen our dialogue on North Korea to achieve our shared goal of verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Through our discussions, we will continue to encourage China to leverage more effectively its unique relationship with the DPRK. Chinese officials have made clear their concerns about North Korea's bellicose rhetoric, destabilizing and provocative behavior, and commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

China has repeatedly and publicly urged the DPRK to avoid actions or rhetoric that increase tension on the Korean Peninsula. We worked closely with China in the adoption of UN Security Council Resolutions 2087 and 2094, which impose new sanctions on North Korea. Chinese officials have stated publicly that China is committed to strict implementation of UNSC sanctions. We continue to press China to enforce all relevant DPRK-related UNSCRs and to address North Korea's threats to regional peace and security and the global non-proliferation regime.

Question 4:

The fragile peace of Northern Ireland is threatened by the UK government's efforts once again to access the Boston College Oral History Archives on the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The United States invested substantial political capital in the peace process to promote the political courage needed to overcome what had been viewed for decades as an unbridgeable sectarian divide. The U.S. government not only has a right but an obligation

to ensure that the path in Northern Ireland is forward and not backwards. How do you intend to handle this issue?

The United States' response to the United Kingdom's request in this case is subject to our obligations under our Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). On April 15, 2013 the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a challenge to a First Circuit Court of Appeals decision not to block the release to the UK of materials responsive to the MLAT request.

Following the resolution of pending litigation, we will closely coordinate next steps with the Department of Justice, which is primarily responsible for MLAT matters under the treaty.

Our view of the current situation in Northern Ireland is shaped by long experience as well as more recent events. In the last several years, the Northern Ireland Executive has worked to build a peaceful and prosperous future for all the people of Northern Ireland. On May 9, Northern Ireland's First Minister and deputy First Minister announced they will introduce a new plan to build a united community. We welcome this announcement as a step towards healing the divisions of the past and forging a shared future.

The United States fully supports the efforts in Northern Ireland to eradicate false excuses for political violence and build a brighter future for its people. However, many complexities surround the past in Northern Ireland. We have stressed to leaders in Belfast, London, and Dublin that addressing these historically divisive issues is vital for continued progress in securing a lasting and a prosperous peace in Northern Ireland. We assess that greater efforts by political leaders are required to generate the long-delayed vision and path to a future in Northern Ireland that all its inhabitants can embrace. That is why I have engaged with key figures in Northern Ireland, Ireland, and the UK government. On March 18, I met separately with UK Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Theresa Villiers, Irish Deputy Prime Minister Eamon Gilmore, and Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams. In these meetings, I stressed the importance of the U.S., Irish, and UK governments working together to encourage and support Northern Ireland's leaders to work collaboratively and fully support the rule of law.

On March 28, commemorating the 15th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, I released a statement encouraging all parties to rededicate themselves to achieving a shared future and to healing the divisions of the past. I also stressed the need for Northern Ireland's leaders to work together in full support of the rule of law.

On the same day, President Obama released a statement encouraging the political parties to work together in the service of lasting peace and prosperity. The President reaffirmed the United States' commitment to the Northern Ireland Peace Process.

While troubling, we do not believe that recent spates of unrest signal a return to the violence of the past. The United States has consistently engaged both politically and economically with Northern Ireland, and we continue to support the vision that was set out in the Good Friday and subsequent agreements.

Question 5:

The United States suspended most of its assistance to Mali following a military coup there last year. Although Mali has not yet restored democratic rule, some have called for the US to resume assistance to the Malian military to combat rebels in northern Mali. What is your view on this issue?

Although the Malian military must play a role in the future stability of its country, unresolved tensions among multiple factions within the Malian military and the lingering influence of junta leader Captain Sanogo and his supporters in Mali's transitional government make identifying appropriate partners and normalizing relations with the Malian military inadvisable at this time. The U.S. government must avoid the perception that we are aligning ourselves with those who overthrew Mali's democratically-elected government and engaged in human rights violations. Once a democratically-elected government takes office, we look forward to reengaging with Mali's military to support the full restoration of civilian control over the military, accountability for human rights violations, and future reform efforts.

We nonetheless recognize that the absence of an effective Malian military continues to prevent the government of Mali from fully exerting control over its territory. We are coordinating efforts in the region with our European partners, including the European Union, which has launched an integrated training mission for the Malian armed forces and is rebuilding military elements and their command structures. This complements U.S. support for the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). U.S. resources have focused on providing logistics support for African forces deploying as part of AFISMA. U.S. funds are also supporting training and equipping requirements for some African troops as part of AFISMA. That force will soon transition into the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSMA) in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2100 (2013). We will provide vehicles, communications equipment, personal equipment, field kitchens, field hospitals, and generators to some AFISMA contingents to help them meet the UN's equipment standards in order to transition from a regional force into effective UN peacekeepers. U.S. Africa Command's Army component command is providing pre-deployment training, including human rights training, in coordination with the Department's Africa Contingency Operations and Training Assistance (ACOTA) program. In addition, we have significantly assisted the ongoing French- and African-led counterterrorism and military operations in northern Mali.

Given the presidential elections currently scheduled for July 2013, we are laying the policy and budget groundwork for a return to security assistance and training for the Malian armed forces. We are collaborating with other international partners (particularly the European Union and the United Nations) who have been working directly with the Malian military. In a burden sharing effort, these other donors have been assisting the Malian military. The Departments of Defense and State continue to monitor the ever-evolving security situation so that, once a democratically-elected government is in place and appropriate Malian counterparts can be identified, military-to-military and law enforcement cooperation can resume.

Question 6:

Press reports from April 18 indicate that Britain and France have informed the United Nations there is credible evidence that Syria used chemical weapons on more than one occasion since December. And recent press reports indicate that the government of Israel is "nearly 100 percent" certain that Syria has recently deployed chemical weapons against their own population. Does the United States agree with the findings of our British, French, and Israeli allies? If so, what action is the United States planning to take in response?

As you heard yesterday, our intelligence community does assess with varying degrees of confidence that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons on a small scale in Syria, specifically the chemical agent sarin. This assessment is based in part on physiological samples.

We are working to establish credible and corroborated facts to build on this intelligence assessment, in order to establish a definitive judgment as to whether or not the President's red line has been crossed, and to inform our decision making about next steps.

The President has made clear that the use of chemical weapons – or the transfer of chemical weapons to terrorist groups – is a red line for the United States. Our red line has not changed.

However, precisely because the President articulated a firm red line, we have an obligation to fully investigate any and all evidence of chemical weapons use within Syria before we can draw a definitive conclusion.

That is why we are pressing for a comprehensive United Nations investigation that can credibly evaluate the evidence and establish what took place. We and other partners have offered support, including by providing information regarding credible allegations of the use of chemical weapons. However, the Assad regime's staunch refusal to allow the UN to investigate any and all credible allegations of chemical weapons has made such a comprehensive investigation difficult, if not impossible, thus far.

But we are not depending solely on the UN investigation. We are also working with our friends, allies, and the Syrian opposition, to procure, share and evaluate additional information associated with reports of the use of chemical weapons so that we can establish the facts.

Given the stakes involved, and what we have learned from our own recent experience, intelligence assessments alone are not sufficient – only credible and corroborated facts that provide us with some degree of certainty will guide our decision-making; the intelligence assessment is only one part of a broader process.

We are prepared for all contingencies so that we can respond appropriately to any confirmed use of chemical weapons, consistent with our national interests.

The United States and the international community have a number of potential responses available, and no option is off the table.

Question 7:

The Administration on several occasions has discussed the Middle East peace process with senior Turkish officials. What is your vision for a Turkish role in Middle East peace efforts? Given Turkey's warm relations with Hamas, should Turkey be invited to play any role, and, if so, why?

We welcome broad international support for the objective of Middle East peace based on a two-state goal and we appreciate the interest of many in the international community who wish to be helpful. We believe our close ally Turkey can play a constructive role in promoting Middle East peace, in close coordination with the United States. While we do not always agree with Turkey's statements or approach on this issue, as allies, we have an ongoing and transparent dialogue that allows us to say when we disagree. The Secretary has conveyed our position on Hamas to senior Turkish officials. Hamas is a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization under U.S. law, and we regard it as a destabilizing force within Gaza and in the region.

Question 8:

How do you assess the legality of the settlement of mainland Turks in occupied northern Cyprus?

Any comprehensive agreement to end the long-standing division of Cyprus will need to take into account issues of citizenship and residency on the island. I believe that a plan dealing with these and other questions needs to be worked out between the communities, with United Nations support, and needs to be acceptable to majorities in both of the island's communities. I strongly support efforts under UN auspice to reunify the island, which is the only practical way to resolve the many critical issues between the communities.

Question 9:

Could you provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Accountability Review Board for Benghazi, and particularly on improved planning and training, such as the multi-bureau supports cells for new posts or training of personnel serving in high-risk areas?

The independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB) made 29 recommendations in key areas such as training, fire safety, staffing, and threat analysis. To hold ourselves accountable for implementation, we divided the recommendations into discrete tasks and then assigned bureaus with the tasks and deadlines.

To date, the Department has taken action to substantially address all of the ARB's recommendations, insofar as resources and staff training cycles permit. Some of this work – such as enhancing language and security training or constructing facilities – requires a multi-year commitment. Others – such as expanding the presence of Marine Security Guard – require ongoing interagency cooperation and continued funding. In support of these efforts, the Department has done the following:

- The Department reviewed our presence and staffing footprint at high-threat posts, and established a High Threat Board to review our presence at High-Threat, High-Risk posts every 6 months.
- We are improving training for our employees headed to high-threat posts, and have expanded the number of posts from 13 to more than two dozen, where such additional security training is required.
- We surveyed fire and life safety equipment, and have procured needed equipment for posts.
- All posts performed a review of tripwires to determine if any had been breached in the past year. The Department then developed and issued revised guidance on responding to tripwires, and established a Washington-based "Tripwires Committee" to review tripwires upon breach.
- With Congressional support, we are creating 151 new DS positions; 113 are expected to be hired this fiscal year. The remainder will be hired in FY 14.
- The Department is working with the Department of Defense, and the Congress, on increasing the number of Marine Security Guard Detachments deployed to U.S. diplomatic posts overseas.
- We developed a concept for "Support Cells" for opened/reopened posts; the process is being incorporated into the Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH).
- The Department established a six-person panel to thoroughly review DS' organization and management structure; the panel has developed draft findings.

The Department will never be "done" when it comes to security. The stark fact is that we can never truly eliminate the risks that our diplomats and development experts face as they advance America's national interests abroad. But we must always be working to find ways to minimize that risk.

Following through on our progress will, of course, require continued support from the Congress. Your support for our FY 2013 funding request to enhance embassy security – as recommended by the ARB – has been invaluable. To truly address the findings of the ARB, we hope Congress will continue to be a partner, in terms of providing resources and oversight. The FY 2014 budget requests the resources necessary to carry on this important work.

Question 10:

The Durban Platform agreed to in South Africa in 2011 set the world on the path to establishing a "legal instrument or legal outcome" by 2015 to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and help developing countries deal with the impacts of climate change. With a year and a half to go, there have not been any significant breakthroughs to indicate an agreement is imminent. However, the Administration is working through other mechanisms to advance the climate discussion, such as the U.S.-Asia-Pacific Comprehensive Partnership for a Sustainable Energy Future last year. Over the next year and a half, what should the United States be doing to reach a final agreement? How can initiatives, such as the U.S.-Asia-Pacific Partnership, contribute to a final, holistic agreement?

President Obama and I have made climate change a top priority and we are committed to making concrete and meaningful progress on this important international challenge.

The United States has demonstrated real leadership in the international community, both within and outside of the UN, on the issue of climate change. We are working with our international partners to continue to make progress on (1) reducing emissions, (2) adapting to a changing climate, and (3) looking ahead to a post-2020 world. This includes working through the Durban Platform, a process under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to negotiate a new global climate agreement by 2015 that is applicable to all.

The United States is committed to negotiate an agreement that is ambitious, flexible, dynamic, applicable to all, and feasible. It should allow for the widest possible participation, and reflect a structure that all countries—including the United States—can implement.

The President has expressed his commitment to continued action to reduce our emissions at home, and is exploring a range of options for doing so. In his State of the Union message, he challenged Congress to find a market-based solution to address climate change, and we know members of Congress are working on a variety of options for action.

We are making excellent progress toward our goal of reducing emissions in the range of 17% by 2020. Our energy-related CO2 emissions are down 8.8% over 2005 levels.

In addition to remaining actively engaged in the UN negotiations, we are also working actively in other fora, including the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate (MEF). The MEF plays an important role in promoting dialogue among key developed economies like the U.S. and EU and major emerging economies like China and India to combat climate change and promote clean energy, and to advance international consensus on climate change in the UN context.

Further, in 2012, the United States, along with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and six developed and developing country partners, launched the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC) to address some of the pollutants, like methane, black carbon, and HFCs, that have significant warming impact in the short term as well as significant health and agricultural impacts. In just one year, we have expanded the coalition to include 60 partners (including 30 governments), and raised more than $35 million in pledges.

Multilateral efforts like the MEF and CCAC, as well as our revitalized bilateral cooperation with key partners such as China, India, and others, will continue to catalyze action around the world in a way that is complementary to our efforts within the UN negotiations. We expect that such efforts will help to build the mutual confidence needed for progress towards a new agreement.

Question 11:

In geographically large countries, a lack of access to U.S. Consular Offices serves as a deterrent to travel to the United States for millions of business visitors and tourists. For example, in Brazil, there are only four consulates. Many would-be visitors would have to travel thousands of miles to the nearest consulate for the required personal visa interview.

The quality of remote videoconference technology has improved significantly in recent years – and is now used routinely for secure communications in the State Department and other sensitive federal agencies, as well as in such demanding environments as battlefield medicine. The use of videoconference technology to conduct visa interviews will enable U.S. consulates to expand access to visa services without reducing the level of security for visa interviews, and with little cost.

Over the past year, the State Department, in an effort to fulfill the goals of the President's National Tourism Strategy, has made remarkable progress toward reducing wait times for visa interviews. As demand continues to increase and to meet the President's goal of attracting 100 million tourists by 2021, we need to develop effective and economical tools to sustain this progress.

In 2009, Congress authorized a State Department pilot program to utilize videoconferencing technology for visa interviews. Yet, no pilot program has been initiated. Can you give us an update on any efforts to implement a pilot videoconferencing program in certain consulates? What are the reasons for the delay?

After Congressional authorization of the pilot program in 2006, we tested the option of video visa interviewing and determined it is not a solution for handling an ever-increasing number of applicants. A combination of security, technical integrity, and productivity concerns rendered the process impractical for field deployment. Technical security concerns are acute especially in certain countries.

Video Visa Interviewing is Less Efficient: The travel and tourism industry has long advocated that video visa interviewing would be a more efficient and convenient method for fulfilling our legal requirement to interview visa applicants. In fact, video interviewing is less efficient because of delays in setting up before the camera and providing instructions remotely, meaning the Department would actually adjudicate fewer visa applications than under current procedures.

Video Visa Interviewing is Less Effective: In situations where an interview is warranted by concerns related to fraud, security, or other eligibility considerations, the interview requirement plays a crucial role in our national and border security. The "in-person" nature of an interview is vital - the consular officer cannot pick up subtle messages conveyed in an applicant's demeanor and expressions and tone in a video interview, no matter how high-resolution the picture may be. There are other physical cues to fraud that are also unavailable by video. For example, is the conduct, demeanor, and presentation of an applicant fully consistent with their purported profession and circumstances? Is the applicant being "coached" to provide specific answers from off-camera? This is information that is only made available by physical proximity.

Video Visa Interviewing Does Not Save Resources and is Less Secure: Any video interviewing scenario would require the use of brick and mortar interviewing facilities, operated by consular staff and subject to Diplomatic Security facility protection requirements. The law permits only specially-trained, U.S. citizen Department employees with secret clearances and consular commissions to interview and adjudicate, and these individuals may only adjudicate

visa applications in consular facilities that meet strict security and technology standards. Consular employees must be present to verify applicants' identities. There is no scenario in which it is possible to ensure the integrity of our application process and have applicants interview "in the comfort of their homes," as the travel and tourism industry envisions. Protection of our officers, consular staff, records, and systems is mandated by law and regulation and cannot be compromised. Remote facilities potentially could put visa applicants at risk, if those interviews were conducted in facilities vulnerable to physical or technical attack. Moreover, consular officers who would otherwise adjudicate visa applications would have to be sent on a regular basis to these remote facilities to ensure the integrity of the equipment and to monitor operations. This requirement decreases the potential efficiency gains from remote interviewing. There is also no guarantee that a host government would permit offsite facilities to be established in a given country.

Technical Concerns: Cyber security and bandwidth remain key challenges. Commercially available systems and software cannot guarantee the security of the video link in all countries, and it may be exceptionally difficult to ensure the security of the remote location from which the interview is conducted. This is especially true for certain countries where visa demand is highest. Remote interviewing is also dependent on abundant internet bandwidth – an asset that is difficult to come by in most developing countries –where visa demand is highest. The efficiency gains for consular officers and visa applicants alike are lost if a connection cannot be consistently maintained and an in-person interview ultimately must be conducted.

Status of Pilot Program: For the reasons stated above, the Department has not conducted a pilot program since 2006, instead choosing to focus its efforts and limited resources on endeavors that would result in far greater levels of efficiency – secure visa facilitation programs.

Question 12:

There is a serious and ongoing conversation in Congress regarding the use of drones overseas. What is your assessment of the impact the use of drones has had on the U.S. relationship with Pakistan and other nations in which lethal drone strikes have been employed? To what extent does the Secretary of State or the country ambassador have an opportunity to express his or her views on the foreign policy implications of drone strikes before they take place?

Any decision to use force abroad, even when our adversaries are terrorists dedicated to killing American citizens, is a significant one. While I cannot address any specific situation in this context, decisions to capture or use force against individual terrorists outside the United States and areas of active hostilities are made at the most senior levels of the Government, informed by departments and agencies with relevant expertise and institutional roles. The Secretary and other senior State Department officials regularly express their views, and the views of our ambassadors in the field, on the foreign policy implications of our counterterrorism policies and activities.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable Michael T. McCaul
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

Can you please describe that process and explain what role the State Department had in deciding to include Saudi Arabia in the Global Entry Program? Did the State Department have a chance to provide DHS with input about the decision to include Saudi Arabia in the Global Entry program before a decision was reached? If so, what was the nature of those comments? Do you think the decision to include Saudi Arabia in the Global Entry Program enhances our national security? Was this decision made based on diplomatic considerations? Or purely on security considerations? Does it make any sense to you that Saudi Arabia be included in this program when other allies, such as Great Britain, have been excluded? What is the national security case for including Saudi Arabia in this program; will this enhance our nation's security?

The Global Entry Program is run exclusively by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. As the Department of State has no role in administering this program, the Department of Homeland Security would be best placed to provide additional information.

Question 2:

Mr. Secretary, China has the second largest economy in the world after the United States and is forecasted to grow 8.2% this year, according to the Asian Development Bank. China is also a major U.S. foreign debt holder, holding over $1.2 trillion in U.S. Treasury Securities, the largest by any one country. Yet your Department is requesting tens of millions of dollars in funding for China, including millions from the Economic Support Fund. This is insulting to me and my constituents who don't need to look at any numbers to know that China is doing just fine without our help. How can you possibly justify borrowing trillions from China only to turn that money around—interest and all—and put it right back into their pockets? What do you say to my constituents who have to pay for that assistance at a time when many are facing their own economic hardships and resent the fact that we would hand this money off to a rich competitor?

The President' FY 2014 budget request includes $7.7 million for foreign assistance to China. This amount is consistent with previous Fiscal Year Requests, although Congress has historically appropriated additional funds for China ($12 million in both FY 2011 and FY 2012).

This assistance does not support the Government of China, but advances several U.S. priorities in China: improving conditions for the Tibetan people, stopping the spread of pandemic disease, and promoting rule of law. Of the $7.7 million requested, $4.5 million or 58 percent will provide assistance to Tibetan communities in China. These programs build sustainable livelihoods for Tibetan people, support economic integration, and promote sustainable development in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and in other Tibetan communities in China. We are also requesting $2.4 million for HIV/AIDS programs in China to mitigate the spread of disease across borders

into Southeast Asia and throughout the world. The remaining $800,000 requested would support a Resident Legal Advisor at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing to provide expertise on criminal law and procedure to Chinese officials, jurists, and academics and to support efforts by the U.S. Embassy to promote long-term criminal justice reform in China.

Question 3:

Mr. Secretary, as you know, on February 1, 2013, a suicide bomber killed himself and a Turkish-national security guard outside our embassy in Ankara. Mustafa Akarsu, the guard killed defending our embassy, had served the U.S. Government for over twenty years. Like many foreign nationals working abroad for our government, Mr. Akarsu hoped to take advantage of a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) so that one day he could move his family to the United States. SIV's are not easy to get: one must serve faithfully for 15 years or more and be recommended by the principal officer of a Foreign Service establishment provided that the Secretary of State approves such a recommendation. For Mr. Akarsu, he and his family were so close to coming to the United States and then tragedy struck. Sadly, the Immigration Nationality Act is silent on the eligibility of surviving family members of a U.S. Government employee killed in the line of duty who has already met all of the other requirements to be granted a Special Immigrant Visa. And so a grieving family, whose husband and father defended our embassy for over two decades, the dream of America died along with their loved one.

This week I introduced the Mustafa Akarsu Local Guard Force Support Act to say thank you to Mr. Akarsu and his family for making the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our nation and to clarify that surviving family members of a foreign employee killed in the line of duty are still eligible for a Special Immigrant Visa if they have satisfied all other requirements under current law.

Can you comment on this legislation and the contributions that local guards, like Mr. Akarsu, play in protecting U.S. facilities and personnel abroad?

The Department deeply appreciates the actions of Representative McCaul and the bill's co-sponsors in introducing such legislation, and we welcome further Congressional action on this issue. As I recalled during a memorial ceremony for Mr. Akarsu in Ankara, "Mustafa laid down his life for all of us. He guarded these gates for more than 20 years. But he didn't just stand guard; he stood tall, taking pride in his work for the people of Turkey and the people of the United States. And when the menace of terrorism came to these gates, Mustafa didn't hesitate for a moment. He and his fellow guards acted heroically, saving lives with quickness and with bravery." Mustafa Akarsu and his local guard colleagues are the United States' first line of defense at more than 270 diplomatic posts around the world. They put their lives on the line every day to keep our people safe. Local guards perform many essential tasks, including greeting and screening visitors, vehicles, and packages entering our diplomatic missions, and searching for weapons, explosives, or other dangerous items that may harm our personnel. As I noted, Mr. Akarsu "wanted to give his children an opportunity to earn an education in the United States. And Mustafa was so keen on these plans, that I'm told his boss eventually gave him a

nickname: Yari Amerikali – Half-American. And today, it's our duty to complete those dreams for him."

We look forward to this legislation moving forward through the committee process and to the floor vote. The passage of this legislation is a priority of the U.S. Department of State.

Questions for the Record
Submitted by the Honorable Brad Sherman
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

Voice of America estimates that one hour of Sindhi broadcasting a day can be done for $1.5 million a year. There is probably no population more important to us in our efforts against terrorism and extremism than the people of Pakistan. But for many years, the Pakistani government has focused the country and its institutions on just using one language, Urdu, when in fact Sindhi is spoken by tens of millions of people. VOA broadcasts for about 12 hours a day in Urdu while there is currently no Sindhi service. Are we effectively reaching the population of Sindh without broadcasting in the native Sindhi language?

Engagement with audiences in Pakistan is an essential element of our bilateral relationship with that nation. The Broadcasting Board of Governors' (BBG) current international media efforts provide a variety of programming in multiple languages for audiences in both urban and rural Pakistan.

Since Pakistan is primarily a television market, the BBG has added a significant number of television affiliates in Pakistan for programming in Urdu from Voice of America (VOA). However, radio for Pakistan remains a focus as well, with programs in prime time from 7 p.m. onward each day -- six hours of live programming, including four News Hours and two live discussion shows. (Research indicates that three-quarters of native Sindhi speakers understand Urdu, while only three percent of Pakistan's Sindhi speakers understand none of the languages in which VOA broadcasts.) In addition, there is 24-hour news and current affairs programming from VOA available on the Internet and via social media. VOA also provides English-language broadcasts for Pakistani audiences, including a Learning English program for Josh FM and another for G1-TV.

The BBG-funded Radio Mashaal, operated by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, broadcasts Pashto language programming for nine hours every day via cross-border medium wave and shortwave radio frequencies, satellite and streamed Internet audio. Radio Mashaal broadcasts into the Pashtun heartland along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in a coordinated stream with VOA's Deewa Radio, which is also in Pashto. Mashaal's website, mashaalradio.org, and a variety of digital media also provide Pashto language audiences in Pakistan, Afghanistan and around the world with access to original, multiple-media content.

The Department of State deploys Urdu-speaking Foreign Service officers stationed in Pakistan, and an Urdu-speaking public affairs spokesman from Washington, D.C., to Pakistan, to engage with Urdu media on a regular basis. We are also looking for ways to establish a full time Urdu spokesperson position based in Islamabad.

Our public affairs staff in Karachi appreciates the need to engage with the Sindh press and have recently expanded efforts to do so via direct media outreach and increased translation of press releases, facts sheets on U.S. assistance, social media postings, and other Public Diplomacy

products into the Sindhi language. Sindhi broadcasters also have access to press releases, audio and video soundbites and events from State On Demand and other sources on the web, utilizing voiced translations over these elements.

USAID has also expanded its outreach in the last two years to the Pakistani public via paid and earned media. A nationwide television, radio, print, and billboard campaign in Urdu began last year and has increased recognition of U.S. assistance. In December 2012, USAID began a weekly Pashto-language radio show focused on a particular assistance project each week. The radio show was complemented by a month-long TV campaign that aired an advertisement per day in Pashto on three TV stations. USAID intends to continue these outreach efforts in local languages in the coming year. For example, in advance of opening a photo exhibit highlighting USAID's 50 years of assistance to Pakistan in Hyderabad last month, USAID ran Sindhi print and radio advertisements to publicize the exhibit.

Both the Broadcasting Board of Governors and the Department of State will continue to explore other options for reaching out to the Pakistan people in their local languages through our international media and public diplomacy programs.

Question 2:

75 Members of Congress are cosponsoring the *Visa Waiver for Israel Act*, H.R. 300, the House bill I introduced with Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX). There are 37 countries in the Visa Waiver Program, but not Israel. Israelis with passports can visit most of Europe, Canada, and several other countries around the world, visa-free. Trips to the U.S. by Israelis totaled nearly 320,000 visits annually the past three years. In 2011, Israelis spent over $1.6 billion in travel and airfare to the United States. Given the economic and cultural benefits of adding Israel the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, is this something the State Department should support?

Under current law, a country must meet a number of requirements to qualify for designation under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Israel does not currently meet all of the thresholds for inclusion in the VWP, even with the elimination of the visitor visa refusal rate requirement. For example, Israel does not grant reciprocal visa free privileges to all U.S. citizens. For years, U.S. citizens of Palestinian or Arab origin seeking to enter Israel have faced several restrictions pertaining to regions or ports of entry that are not encountered by other U.S. citizens. The Department has raised this concern with Israel multiple times. While the Department recognizes and values the economic and cultural benefits Israeli travelers contribute to the United States, we are statutorily bound by the law (INA 217) to ensure that countries meet every requirement before designation in the program.

Although in 2008 the law gave the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to waive the visa refusal rate requirement up to ten percent, this provision was suspended in July 2009. At no time were those countries that benefitted from the waiver authority in 2008 exempt from having to meet all other requirements of the program before designation. Prior to using the waiver authority, there were additional security measures contained in law that needed to be considered.

Question 3:

In August 2012, Azerbaijan's President pardoned and praised a confessed axe-murderer Ramil Safarov, who was convicted of killing an Armenian officer at a 2005 NATO training program in Hungary. What is the State Department doing to urge Azerbaijan to re-incarcerate Ramil Safarov? Will the Administration tie military assistance to Azerbaijan to a reversal of Baku's aggressive policies?

Mr. Safarov was tried and convicted of a brutal murder. The United States was extremely troubled to learn that he would not serve the remainder of his sentence, as were many of our Allies. Immediately after learning of Azerbaijani President Aliyev's pardon of Ramil Safarov, the United States raised its concerns directly and forcefully with the highest levels of the government of Azerbaijan. In addition, both the White House and the State Department released strong public statements of concern over Mr. Safarov's transfer and subsequent pardon.

As a co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, the United States continues working to help the sides reach a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The United States condemns any action that fuels tension in the region or threatens to damage the peace process.

Security assistance for Azerbaijan is carefully reviewed to ensure it does not undermine efforts for a peaceful settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Question 4:

Azerbaijan has threatened to shoot down civilian aircraft that fly into the airport of the Nagorno-Karabakh. What consequence would Azerbaijan face if it were to shoot down civilian aircraft flying into the airport in Stepanakert?

As a Co-Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe OSCE Minsk Group along with Russia and France, the United States remains committed to helping the sides find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I have discussed the issue of civil flights to Nagorno-Karabakh with the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan at the highest levels. The Minsk Group Co-Chairs are working to help the sides find a means of resolving this issue diplomatically, and have received assurances from the sides that they will reject any threat or use of force against civil aircraft. We remain concerned about any action that could fuel tension in the region or threatens to damage the peace process.

Question 5:

The Turkey-Armenia protocols, which were announced on April 22, 2009, sought to end Turkey's blockade of Armenia and establish diplomatic and economic relations. What meaningful steps has Turkey taken to ratify the protocols? What is the State Department doing to press Turkey to end its blockade of Armenia?

The Obama Administration strongly supports the efforts of Turkey and Armenia to normalize their bilateral relations. We continue to use our interactions with senior Turkish officials to urge ratification of the protocols. We have also called on Turkey to take unilateral measures, such as re-opening the border with Armenia, which would facilitate trade and commerce. The United States maintains an ongoing dialogue with Turkish and Armenian officials at all levels on these issues, and we will continue to support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges the history they share in common.

Question 6:

I would like to thank the State Department for leading two resolutions on Sri Lanka at the U.N. Human Rights Council. I believe that an independent international investigation is important to determine the facts about and responsibility for serious crimes committed at the end of the war in Sri Lanka. Will the U.S. be leading a resolution when Sri Lanka is brought up again next March to initiate such an investigation? Are there other mechanisms to explore outside the UN Human Rights Council to make a credible investigation a reality?

We appreciate your concern about the human rights situation in Sri Lanka, a concern that the State Department shares. For the second consecutive year the international community came together at the UN Human Rights Council to note strong and continuing concerns regarding the rule of law, human rights, reconciliation, and accountability in Sri Lanka. This year's resolution built upon last year's resolution, and noted the High Commissioner's call for an independent and credible international investigation into alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. It also addressed longstanding concerns about the rule of law, judicial independence, religious discrimination, freedom of expression, reconciliation, and accountability in Sri Lanka. The Department will remain actively engaged in pursuit of these objectives.

As the U.S. government explores next steps, we will renew our consideration of all mechanisms available, both in the Human Rights Council and elsewhere. We will continue to examine all options for effectively pressing the Government of Sri Lanka to take the steps toward accountability and reconciliation that the country needs and its people deserve. We will also continue our bilateral efforts through sustained diplomatic and programmatic engagement with the government and Sri Lankan civil society in support of accountability, reconciliation and democracy.

Question 7:

Despite the increased U.S. sanctions, there are many areas where Iran sanctions enforcement should be improved.

Could you please explain why the administration has not sanctioned foreign shipping companies that continue to service ports operated by the IRGC (the Revolutionary Guards), foreign airports that continue to service Iranian airlines sanctioned for sending arms and personnel to aid Assad, exchange houses, currency traders and precious metal dealers that are helping Iran evade sanctions?

The State Department renewed the exemption to our Iran sanctions targeting financial transactions with the Central Bank of Iran for China in December, citing a "significant reduction" in Beijing's purchase of Iranian oil.

What is the current status of overall Iranian oil exports and specifically to China, India and Turkey? What standard are you using to determine what qualifies as a "significant reduction" in purchases of Iranian oil and is there evidence that China reduced its purchases of Iranian oil?

The United States has built and led a global coalition to create the toughest, most comprehensive sanctions to date on the Iranian regime. Our sanctions are having a real impact on the ground in Iran, exacerbated by the regime's own mismanagement of its economy. We will be happy to meet with you and/or your staff, and provide a briefing on these very important issues.

Question 8:

On February 9, 2013, dozens of rockets were fired on Camp Hurriya in Iraq where approximately 3,100 members of the MEK have been residing. They were recently relocated from Camp Ashraf. Seven unarmed residents were killed and many more were wounded. The Hezbollah Brigades, an Iranian-affiliated group in Iraq, claimed responsibility for the attack and "warned that others would follow." What is the State Department doing to press the Iraqi government to take meaningful steps to provide better security and better living conditions for the residents?

Following the February 9 rocket attack targeting Camp Hurriya, the Government of Iraq (GOI) has taken steps to enhance security in and around the camp and we continue to urge the government to take all possible measures to ensure the safety of Camp Hurriya residents. United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the GOI are trying to work with the residents on security enhancements and we continue to firmly support the GOI and UNAMI's efforts in this endeavor. To date, the UN reports that over 250 bunkers and over 500 small T-walls have been delivered to the camp. However, the MEK must also do what it can to facilitate and enhance security at the camp, and ensure that safety equipment is used for its intended purpose of protecting individuals.

We believe the permanent resettlement of former Ashraf residents outside Iraq is the only sustainable solution to ensure the safety of the residents, and remain committed to assisting the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Government of Iraq in this endeavor. The resettlement of Camp Hurriya residents outside Iraq requires immediate and urgent attention. Camp Hurriya remains a target and further delays only jeopardize the safety and security of residents.

The United States has called on the leadership of the MEK to immediately and unconditionally accept available offers for resettlement and to ensure that all residents are able to freely participate in the UNHCR interview process, and have the opportunity for private conversations with monitors and other visitors. In that light, the residents of Camp Hurriya must resume full participation in resettlement interviews to ensure that individuals avail themselves of safe and

secure relocation opportunities outside Iraq. It is imperative that the leadership put the safety and security of their people foremost by taking advantage of these opportunities.

UNAMI continues to assess that conditions at Camp Hurriya are well in excess of basic humanitarian standards for the provision of life support systems such as housing conditions, water, electricity, medicine and food supply. The camp is routinely monitored by United Nations agencies, who confirm that the camp has more than adequate basic life support. USG officials, including high-level officials from Washington, have also visited the camp and confirmed the accuracy of UNAMI's assessment of the living conditions.

Question 9:

Secretary Kerry, you mentioned our recent refocus on Asia and the fact that a significant part of that has to do with trade. I see a lot of wisdom in the "Asia Pivot." I do want to caution the Administration, however, on the trade aspects of the pivot. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations seem to be the big economic component of the pivot, and I am afraid this is a mistake. If you look at the admittedly early experience of the KORUS FTA, you will see that it has not delivered promised benefits to American manufacturers or workers. The agreement went into effect in 2012. Our merchandise trade deficit with Korea in 2012 was $16.6 billion, up from $13.2 billion in 2011. Exports from the United States did not increase – they actually fell by about a billion, to $42.3 billion in 2012. I fear a similar result with Vietnam, Malaysia and Japan, significant economies taking part in TPP with which we do not yet have an FTA. Should we be certain that we will have a positive impact on our trade balances before we enter into the TPP?

Trade Agreements generally take several years to reveal their true impact on the countries involved, and this holds true in the case of our FTA with Korea. While we have seen positive results already, the tariff cuts and non-tariff provisions of the agreement will be phased in over time. Today, almost 80 percent of U.S. consumer and industrial exports to Korea, and over two-thirds of America's agricultural exports, are already duty free. By January 1, 2016, Korean tariffs on more than 95 percent of exports of U.S. industrial and consumer goods to Korea will have been eliminated.

Despite sluggish global economic growth and reduced demand in Korea, which is at a 3-year low, in just the first year of the agreement, we are already seeing tangible benefits for businesses, workers, and consumers on both sides. Thanks to KORUS, the U.S. is fairing well compared to Korea's other top trading partners that do not have FTAs with Korea, such as China and Japan, which have both seen drops in their exports to Korea.

For example, overall exports of U.S. manufactured goods to Korea have grown, with notable increases in the transportation sector, which experienced a 24 percent increase to $5 billion. U.S. passenger vehicle exports to Korea increased by nearly 50 percent. U.S. chemical and pharmaceutical exports have also increased by 20 percent and 30 percent, respectively, and we cannot forget about services. For example, exports of U.S. services – such as legal services, and travel services – increased by 9 percent in 2012 over 2011. Moreover, more high-tech trade has brought firms increased revenue related to royalties and licenses.

There is also strong U.S. export growth in the agriculture sector. U.S. exports of fresh fruits and nuts, wine, and fruit juices, for example, have shown tremendous – even triple-digit – increases under KORUS. From day one, the tariffs on more than 10,000 products were cut to zero. Over the coming years, many more sectors will benefit as the agreement is phased in.

The Asia-Pacific region will see significant economic growth in the coming years, with some experts predicting up to 50% of global growth centered there. In addition, more than one billion Asian-Pacific middle class consumers will be generated during this time. The TPP will tap this economic dynamism through increased market access, lower tariffs, and deeper integration through supply chain convergence and enhanced regulatory coherence. It will solidify the 21st century rules of trade, incorporating safeguards for innovation, addressing concerns in technology industries, and protecting workers and the environment – all key concerns for our policy makers and our population.

Participating in such a game changing, paradigm shifting agreement is crucial if we are to continue generating jobs for American workers and spur increased export opportunities for our companies. Our industrial and agricultural goods will benefit from additional market access and tariff elimination in Vietnam, Malaysia, and Japan. They will also profit from comprehensive supply chain enhancements that will make goods originating from the TPP region more competitive against goods emanating from elsewhere. The TPP will serve as a catalyst for necessary structural and systemic reforms in these nations and our negotiators – cognizant of the non-tariff impediments that exist in these countries – are working tirelessly and creatively to ensure a level playing field is secured during the negotiations. Moreover, the TPP has significant strategic value in providing the economic foundation for our security alliances in the region, broadening the links necessary to consolidate our worldwide leadership position in the coming decades.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable Ted Poe
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

Three Inspector General offices charged with monitoring U.S. non-military aid programs in Pakistan found that USAID has not been able to demonstrate measurable progress in the implementation of U.S. assistance. Do you agree with this finding? If so, how does your budget request address these concerns so there will be measurable progress in the aid you are requesting here?

We do not agree with this finding. Through our civilian assistance, we have made substantial and measurable progress in sectors most important to Pakistan's stability: energy, economic growth, stabilization of vulnerable areas, education, and health. For example, energy is our top assistance priority in Pakistan, as critical energy shortages undermine Pakistan's economic growth and even political stability. Since October 2009, U.S. assistance has added 900 MW to Pakistan's electricity grid, almost half the installed capacity of the Hoover Dam, benefitting over 12.6 million people. Our stabilization initiatives aim to make communities in conflict and post-conflict regions, particularly along the border with Afghanistan, less hospitable to insurgents and extend the writ of the civilian government, supporting our goal of national and regional security. To that end, to date USAID and the State Department have funded the construction of over 650 km of roads in these extremism-prone border regions, increasing commercial activity and stability. And since October 2009, we have rebuilt 40 schools destroyed by militants in Pakistan's tribal areas, including 17 girls' schools, enabling 8,600 children to return to school.

The Administration is seeking $857.6 million in non-military assistance to Pakistan in FY 2014 to continue promote core U.S. national interests, as a stable, democratic, prosperous Pakistan that can provide alternatives to extremism for its population is in our long-term national security interest. This also includes advancing our goals in Afghanistan, which our forces have sacrificed so much to achieve. We are constantly evaluating our assistance to Pakistan to ensure that it is consistent with our interests and producing measurable results.

Question 2:

Elements of the Pakistani security establishment have assisted groups like the Haqqani Network and the Taliban in numerous attacks on American soldiers in Afghanistan and have attacked the U.S. Embassy and ISAF Headquarters in Kabul. Additionally, the Pakistani security services have a history of supporting Lashkar-e Taiba and the 2011 David Headley trial in Chicago clearly showed the links between the ISI and the Mumbai attacks. According to U.S. law, is Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism?

The United States and Pakistan continue to have a vital, shared strategic interest in the fight against terrorism. Pakistan has suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists and extremists, with more than 6,000 military and civilian casualties over just the past year. We believe Pakistani

leaders – civilian and military alike – understand that Pakistan's security and economic interests will ultimately be best served by a more stable region free from violent extremism.

Pakistan is a key ally in the shared fight against al-Qaida. Through our mutual efforts with Pakistan, we have been able to substantially weaken al-Qaida's leadership and operational capabilities. As President Obama has said, since 2001, more terrorists have been killed in Pakistan than in any other country. Pakistan has also publicly called on the Taliban to enter into a dialogue with the Afghan government. Pakistan supported the listing of the Haqqani Network under the UNSCR 1988 (Taliban sanctions) regime.

Of course, there is no denying that safe havens on both sides of the border continue to pose a serious threat to Afghans, Pakistanis, and Americans alike. We have long expressed our view that we are especially troubled by the safe havens the Afghan Taliban, Haqqani Network, and groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) have in Pakistan. The United States and Pakistan have a strong shared interest in working together to tackle these safe-havens, from which terrorists threaten both of our countries and others in the region.

We continue to press Pakistan to take additional steps to dismantle all terrorist groups, no matter whom they target or where they strike. This includes LeT, which carried out the terrible attacks in Mumbai in 2008 that killed six U.S. citizens, and remains a serious threat to regional stability. We also continue to underscore that there must be a coordinated and concerted effort to combat extremists of all kinds, whoever they threaten.

Question 3:

Given the recent terrorist attack that killed 7, do you support adding T-walls to Camp Hurriya? Would the residents of Camp Hurriya be safer in Camp Ashraf?

Following the February 9 rocket attack targeting Camp Hurriya, the Government of Iraq has taken steps to enhance security in and around the camp. We continue to urge the government to take all possible measures to ensure the safety of Camp Hurriya residents. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the GOI are trying to work with the MEK camp leadership on security enhancements and we continue to firmly support the many efforts of the GOI and UNAMI in this endeavor. Since the attack, UNAMI reports that over 250 bunkers and nearly 600 small T-walls have been delivered to the camp and other security measures have been put into place. As we have seen from other terrorist incidents, no amount of physical structures can guarantee the safety and security of Camp Hurriya or Camp Ashraf, which clearly underscores the urgency of resettlement of residents outside of Iraq.

We join UNAMI and other nations in urging the permanent resettlement of former Ashraf residents outside Iraq. Resettlement is the only sustainable solution to ensure the safety of the residents. We remain firmly committed to supporting and assisting UNAMI, UNHCR and the Government of Iraq in their efforts to facilitate resettlement. The resettlement of Camp Hurriya residents outside Iraq requires immediate and urgent attention. We have made known to the MEK leadership and Camp Hurriya residents that Camp Hurriya remains a target and further delays in resettlement jeopardize the safety and security of residents.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable Albio Sires
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

As a result of the recent financial crisis in Cyprus, the new government finds itself having to implement very difficult austerity and financial measures to get the Cypriot economy back on track. Do you agree it would be unreasonable to expect the Cypriot government to engage in a new round of UN talks before the country has gotten back on its feet economically and is able to devote the necessary attention to the diplomatic process/problem of negotiating a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus question? Do you agree that negotiations for the solution of the Cyprus question should only resume once the appropriate preparations take place, so as to ensure that these will be meaningful and result-oriented, allowing for substantial progress and real prospects for a solution?

I am pleased that both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders recently reaffirmed their commitment to finding a solution, and expect negotiations will resume once appropriate preparations have been made. The UN Secretary General's Special Advisor for Cyprus Alexander Downer was in Cyprus recently to hold meetings with both leaders on the way forward. During his visit, he expressed understanding that President Anastasiades must address Cyprus' significant economic challenges in the short term. The United States remains committed to supporting efforts under UN auspices to reunify Cyprus as a bizonal, bicommunal federation. We do not seek to impose deadlines, but as the parties themselves have said in the past, the status quo is unacceptable. So while I recognize the challenging nature of the process, I hope the parties will reach a settlement as soon as possible.

Question 2:

Significant natural gas finds off the coast of the Republic of Cyprus could contribute to the European Union's plans for energy diversification and future energy security. Do you continue to support the right of Cyprus to explore for natural gas in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ)? Are you concerned about threats by other countries to interfere in such exploration?

I support Cyprus' right to explore for energy in its offshore areas. Disputes over energy exploration in Cyprus must ultimately be resolved through the negotiation process, under UN auspices, to reunify the island. Such a settlement will help to strengthen regional stability as it would facilitate the normalization of relations between Cyprus and Turkey. I believe that the island's oil and gas resources, like all of its resources, should be equitably shared between both communities in the context of an overall settlement.

Question 3:

US Policy has always supported a solution to the Cyprus question that involves a bi-zonal, bi-communal, reunified Cyprus. I am concerned that funds used for bi-communal programs on Cyprus have been obligated without appropriate advance notification to and consultation with the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. How can we work to address this issue and ensure that USAID funding is working in concert with US policy?

Every activity implemented with U.S. funding in Cyprus is designed to help Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots chart a path to peace and reunification in line with the Congressional mandate.

The United States is committed to consultation and transparency with the government of the Republic of Cyprus on our foreign assistance program. We have and will continue to be transparent and sensitive to issues raised by the Republic of Cyprus. Likewise, we will continue to consult with and be sensitive to the concerns of the Turkish Cypriot community.

That said, for the U.S. foreign assistance program to be effective, neither side can be allowed to make funding decisions reserved for the U.S. Government. Indeed, it would contravene current Congressional report language directing that the organizations implementing the U.S. foreign assistance program, as well as the specific nature of that assistance, not be subject to the prior approval of any foreign government.

Question 4:

The Turkish Foreign Minister recently sent you a letter regarding the Cyprus question. During your recent meetings in Turkey, Mr. Secretary, did you discuss the Cyprus question with Turkish officials? Did you convey that US policy still continues to support the solution of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation in Cyprus, based on UN Security Council Resolutions?

In my recent meetings with Turkish officials, I discussed a range of pressing issues, including Cyprus. I expressed my support for the reunification of Cyprus as a bizonal, bicommunal federation, which has been the longstanding policy of the United States, consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable Matt Salmon
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

Why was there no military response to the events in Benghazi on September 11, 2012?

a. **Were military assets in the region available? If not, why not?**
b. **If so, were they alerted?**
c. **Were assets deployed to any location in preparation for a rescue or recovery attempt?**
d. **Was military assistance requested by the Department of State? If so, what type?**
e. **Were any US Army/Naval/USMC assets available to support the US diplomats in Benghazi during the attack?**
f. **What, if any, recommendations for military action were made by DOD and the US Africa Command?**

With regard to Question 1d, the Department of State requested military assistance from the Department of Defense in response to the attack on our mission in Benghazi, Libya. When requesting such assistance, the Department of State did not and does not specify the type of assistance being requested. The Department of Defense determines what response capabilities are available and how best they can respond.

For Questions 1a, 1b, 1c, 1e, and 1f, the answers are not within the purview of the Department of State. We respectfully defer to the Department of Defense.

Question 2:

What, if any, non-military assistance was provided during the attack in Benghazi?

The Special Mission Compound (SMC), where seven State Department personnel, including the Ambassador, were present, came under attack at approximately 9:42 p.m. local time on September 11. Personnel at the Annex received a call from one of the Diplomatic Security agents at the SMC alerting the Annex to the attack, and an Annex response team departed its compound at approximately 10:05 local time to render assistance.

Upon notification of the attack from a Diplomatic Security agent around 9:45 local time, Embassy Tripoli set up a command center and notified Washington. Soon after, Embassy Tripoli chartered a private airplane and deployed a seven-person security team, which included two U.S. military personnel, to Benghazi. This team arrived at the Annex prior to the second attack and rendered assistance during that attack.

At the direction of the U.S. military's Africa Command (AFRICOM), DoD moved a remotely piloted, unarmed surveillance aircraft which arrived over the Special Mission Compound. A second remotely piloted, unarmed surveillance aircraft relieved the first, and monitored the

eventual evacuation of personnel from the Annex to Benghazi airport later on the morning of September 12.

Question 3:

How many US personnel were injured in Benghazi?

In addition to the four Americans who lost their lives, two Diplomatic Security (DS) personnel were injured in Benghazi. One DS agent suffered severe injuries during the attack at the Annex. Another DS agent was injured after the blast percussion at the Annex caused him to fall from a ladder. We refer you to other agencies for information on their personnel.

Question 4:

Why have the survivors of the attack not been questioned? Where are the survivors?

The survivors have been questioned by the FBI and the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board, as well as Department officials. As Secretary Clinton indicated in her testimony on January 23, the primary concern and focus of the Department immediately following the tragic attacks on our mission in Benghazi was the safety and well-being of our personnel. Our top priorities were the evacuation of personnel to a safe location and the provision of crucial medical treatment and, as such, the Department did not debrief evacuated personnel in the immediate hours after the attacks.

The FBI conducted law enforcement interviews of four of the five evacuated agents, with a DS special agent present to support the FBI, on September 15 and 16. The fifth DS agent was unable to participate at that time for medical reasons; however, that agent was interviewed by the FBI in late September.

DS and other Department of State officials held conversations with the five DS agents in the United States starting in late September, following their initial interviews with the FBI.

All State Department employees who survived the attacks were also interviewed by the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board, and the ARB's comprehensive report has been shared with the Congress.

One of the five survivors is currently recovering in the hospital, and the other four have returned to duty.

Questions:

5. **Who was in the White House Situation Room (WHSR) during the entire 8-hour period of the attacks, and was a senior US military officer present?**
6. **Where were Leon Panetta and General Martin Dempsey during the crisis, and what inputs and recommendations did they make?**

7. **Where were Tom Donilon, the National Security Advisor, Denis McDonough, his deputy, Valerie Jarrett and John Brennan during the attacks, and what (if any) recommendations or decisions did any of them make?**
8. **Why were F-16 fighter aircraft based in Aviano, Italy (less than two hours away) never considered a viable option for disruption (if not dispersal) of attackers until "boots on the ground" (troop support—General Dempsey's words) arrived?**
9. **Were any strike aircraft (such as an AC-130 gunship) in the area or possibly overhead that would cause former SEAL Tyrone Woods to laser-designate his attacker's position and call for gunship fire support, thereby revealing his own location that led to his death?**
10. **Who gave the order to "stand down" that was heard repeatedly during the attacks?**

For these questions, the answers are not within the purview of the Department of State. We respectfully defer to the White House and the Department of Defense.

We do note for questions 8 and 10, respectively, that the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board stated in its report:

- The Board found no evidence of any undue delays in decision making or denial of support from Washington or from the military combatant commanders.
- The interagency response was timely and appropriate, but there simply was not enough time for armed U.S. military assets to have made a difference.

Question 11:

What threat warnings existed before the attack, and what were the Department of Defense and Department of State responses to those warnings? What data (which will reveal exact timelines and command decisions) is contained within the various SITREPS, records, logs, videos, and recordings maintained by the myriad of DOD, Intelligence Community and State Department Command Centers that were monitoring the events in Benghazi as they unfolded?

The independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB) found that "intelligence provided no immediate, specific tactical warning of the September 11 attacks." However, as the ARB noted, "2012 saw an overall deterioration of the security environment in Benghazi, as highlighted by a series of security incidents involving the Special Mission, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and third-country nationals and diplomats…"

Our personnel both in Libya and in Washington were monitoring the fluid security environment in Benghazi in the months preceding the attack, including the attacks and incidents directed at foreigners. U.S. personnel in both Tripoli and Benghazi convened meetings regularly to review mission security posture, including in response to the incidents that took place over the course of the year. For example, following the April attack against our compound and the June attack on our ally, the United Kingdom, we took a number of steps to enhance security at the U.S. Mission in Benghazi, including raising the walls, adding razor wire, enhancing security camera coverage, adding security lighting, and adding additional local guards at night. We also stepped up our

engagement with Libyan forces, particularly with regard to seeking an increased Government of Libya security presence outside the Mission.

Additional data, including from SITREPS, emails, and other records, can be found in the documents we have made available to your committee. Detailed timelines can be found in the unclassified and classified reports of the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board, which reflect the input of the people on the ground in Benghazi and Tripoli, and have been made available to Congress.

Question 12:

Why did the Commander-in-Chief and Secretary of State never once check in during the night to find out the status of the crisis situation in Benghazi?

As Secretary of State Clinton told the House Foreign Affairs Committee in January, she talked to the President that night and was in "constant communication" with the senior administration officials throughout the night. Like other officials, she received frequent updates during the attacks on September 11 - 12.

Question 13:

What was the nature of Ambassador Stevens' business in Benghazi at the time of the attack?

Ambassador Stevens understood that diplomacy, by its nature, must be practiced in dangerous places because U.S. interests suffer and our security is threatened when we are absent. He was in Benghazi to meet with Libyan officials and re-engage with the contacts that he had developed during his time there as Special Envoy, as well as to open an "American Corner" [library and resource center] at a local language school. He wanted to reaffirm that he and the United States recognized the importance of Libya's second city, the cradle of its revolution.

Question 14:

What guidance has been provided to survivors and family members since the time of the attack, and who issued that guidance?

In the aftermath of the Benghazi attacks, a Department-wide coordination effort was launched to support the survivors and the families of those injured or killed. The Office of Casualty Assistance in the Bureau of Human Resources (HR), in coordination with the offices of Medical Services, Logistics Management, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security Offices of Victims' Resource Advocacy Program (VRAP) and Peer Support Caring Outreach Coordinator, assisted with the repatriation of remains and medical assistance for those injured. HR's Office of Employee Relations, in coordination with the American Embassy in Tripoli, provided specific information and assistance to the families in regard to workers compensation, which is overseen by the Department of Labor.

The Office of Casualty Assistance and DS' VRAP Coordinator notified next of kin about grief and loss resources, provided information on Department benefits, issued information to assist as families arranged final details, and explained program eligibility options for help with expenses, such as the International Victim Expense Reimbursement program and federal tax relief for the year of the death and the preceding year.

HR's Office of Employee Relations and Embassy Tripoli collected and submitted the appropriate Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) claim forms to the Department of Labor, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), for benefit determinations. The Department of Labor sends final benefit decisions to the surviving family members or personal representatives.

For the officers injured in the attack, the Office of Medical Services arranged medical evacuation to the United States in coordination with DOD. Following repatriation, the Office assigned a Social Worker from its Employee Consultation Service to liaise with the employees and provide assistance as needed while receiving care at a local hospital.

Question 15:

Why are so many agencies now requiring their personnel that were involved in or have access to information regarding the events that took place in Benghazi sign Non-Disclosure Agreements?

As part of their employment, most Department employees sign the Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement (Standard Form 312). The Department has not asked employees to sign any separate non-disclosure agreements regarding events in Benghazi.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable William Keating
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

Central Asia- The President's budget reveals an overall increase in funding for Central Asia. How does this increase apply to U.S. policy in the region? Will some of this funding go toward the Administration's Silk Road Initiative to further integrate the countries along the NDN? Will we begin to see this vision become a reality and if so, how?

The United States supports a New Silk Road vision for a peaceful, secure, and prosperous Afghanistan at the heart of a peaceful, secure and prosperous region. Improving connections across South and Central Asia is made all the more urgent as Afghanistan moves through the transition process, developing a private sector-led economy, putting its economy on a more sustainable footing.

To support this policy, the President's FY2014 budget requests additional resources for the regional economic integration (REI) of Central Asian states to support the New Silk Road vision (approximately $3 million in FY2012; $18.5 million in FY 2014). This increase reflects the importance and opportunity to use assistance resources to accelerate implementation of the New Silk Road vision. The funds will be used not only to increase trade, transit and investment, but also to counter transnational threats, increase cooperation on energy resources, develop sustainable people to people constituencies for regional engagement, and promote the rational use of natural resources across the region.

While our resources to date have been relatively modest, we have made progress. Our targeted assistance has advanced technical understanding of large-scale energy projects such as CASA-1000, and also facilitated energy trade between Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan. In partnership with the Aga Khan Development Program's Pamir Energy project, we have supported the installation of new transmission lines which are powering two villages comprising a total of 128 households, businesses and government buildings in Afghan Badakhshan. Power links to a third Afghan village will be complete this summer. Associated training of engineers to maintain the new lines is also taking place.
Women's economic empowerment has been a cross-cutting priority, and in 2011 we hosted 124 dynamic women business leaders from across Central Asia at the Women's Economic Symposium (WES) in Bishkek, including then Kyrgyz Republic President Roza Otunbayeva. The participants developed a roadmap to increase women's entrepreneurship and regional trade, and we are now supporting a range of follow-on activities including a Central Asia-Afghanistan Women's Business Association, proposed by WES participants. Through this diplomatic and programmatic initiative thus far, women have started an impressive 141 businesses and expanded 57 existing businesses. SCA is currently funding an independent evaluation of the WES and will use the results to inform the design of future programs, including building stronger links between women leaders in Central and South Asia.

World Trade Organization (WTO) membership for Central Asian countries can also facilitate greater regional trade, however for many years Kyrgyzstan was the sole member. At the end of 2012 Tajikistan's accession was also approved, and we are now providing technical assistance on implementation of WTO accession laws and regulations in the country. Kazakhstan and Afghanistan are also making solid progress on their accession bids and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have also recently expressed interest in joining the WTO. U.S. assistance to small and medium-sized enterprise development, agricultural production, water management, and vocational training are also beginning to expand Afghanistan's economic ties with Central and South Asia.

Notably, we have also successfully leveraged other resources in support of the New Silk Road vision; between Fiscal Years 2010 and 2014, estimated outlays from other donors, such as the Asia Development Bank and the World Bank, in support of energy transmission lines, hydropower plants, and reforms total more than $2 billion.

Note that the funds targeted for REI are being shifted from the South & Central Asia Regional budget to the Central Asia Regional budget in FY 2014. Taking into consideration this internal shift from one operating unit to another, the request for Central Asia, as a whole, is essentially straightlined from FY 2012, reflecting an increase of less than one-half percent.

Question 2:

Are the Magnitsky Act and following Russian retaliation efforts, including the adoption ban and the Russian list of Americans, redefining the "reset?" Can other players, like Germany, play a greater role in maintaining Russia's relationship with the West? Moreover, what international efforts are taking place to ensure that NGOs working in Russia are granted a more secure, stable place in Russian civil society?

The United States' policy towards Russia over the past four years began with the recognition that the state of the relationship as the President took office did not serve the United States' foreign policy interests. The Administration's policy has been premised on the recognition that we should cooperate with Russia in those areas that advance our mutual interests, engage Russia in a frank discussion of our policy differences, and firmly stand by our principles, our partners, and our allies.

The United States continues to have differences with Russia's leadership about human rights and growing restrictions on civil society. I and officials at all levels of the Department of State regularly and directly raise these concerns with Russian government counterparts. I am committed to having an honest and open dialogue on civil society and human rights issues with the Government of Russia and with Russian civil society. In government-to-government discussions, I voice concerns both publicly and privately about the new laws that restrict the work of civil society.

Russia and Europe are each highly important to the other, and I encourage like-minded nations, especially those in the OSCE region that share our concerns, to voice in public and private their views about the negative developments for NGOs, civil society, and human rights in Russia.

Question 3:

An election is supposed to take place for the Northern Provincial Council in the traditionally Tamil area of Sri Lanka in September, the first one in the area since the end of the war. A party meeting of the Tamil National Alliance has already been attacked while the police stood by. Will the US support sending international election observers to watch the campaign and the election, since there is likely to be violence?

Over the past several years, the U.S. government, through USAID, has strengthened the capacity of several local Sri Lankan organizations to promote election monitoring and voter education and registration. The recent elections in the Eastern, Northwestern, and Central Provinces provided an opportunity for these organizations to further develop their skills.

For the elections in the Northern Province, USAID will work with local organizations through two different programs. The Democracy and Governance office will provide grants to support election monitoring, voter education and documentation using Elections and Political Process funding. In addition, the Office of Transition Initiatives will support a range of elections-related activities through their Reintegration and Stabilization in the East and North (RISEN) program. The activities for the RISEN program are still being finalized, but will include voter outreach activities and support for domestic monitoring.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable George Holding
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

In 2010, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen rightly stated that the greatest threat to our national security is our national debt. As the House Foreign Affairs Committee begins to consider the State authorization bill, where should the Committee look to find wasteful spending and programs? What do you suggest the Department do to increase the evaluation and monitoring of assistance it implements? Will the Department start publishing and posting, potentially on the web, data in a more transparent manner, including for security assistance?

The President has made it a priority of his Administration to save taxpayer dollars, streamline operations and improve government services. To that end, he has waged an aggressive campaign to eliminate duplication and waste.

In light of fiscal constraints, the FY 2014 budget request for the Department and USAID makes tough trade-offs within their operations and assistance requests, including targeted reductions to numerous programs to focus on the highest priorities, and takes advantage of cost efficiencies in programs to continue to meet our objectives. For example, the budget:

- Reduces funding for the Frontline States reflecting current program needs and U.S. policy, including a targeted decrease in Iraq programs and presence, the transition to a civilian-led mission in Afghanistan, and the elimination of the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund;
- Reforms our food aid program to ensure the United States can respond most effectively and efficiently to humanitarian crises and chronic food insecurity. Reforms will enable the United States to reach more people in need - at less cost per person - by increasing tools available, including local and regional purchase, purchase of U.S. agricultural commodities and products, cash vouchers, and cash for work programs;
- Makes tradeoffs across regional assistance budgets, including reducing Europe and Eurasia by 21 percent and the Western Hemisphere by 14 percent (excluding Title II). The East Asia and the Pacific request sees the most significant increase - more than 7 percent above FY 2012 to support the Asia - Pacific rebalance.
- Focuses Feed the Future and Global Health Initiative programs on countries with the greatest need and capacity for sustainable progress.
- Identifies cost savings by implementing administrative efficiencies in travel, utilities, communications, supplies and equipment spending.

In FY 2013, the Department is working toward OMB's targeted spending reductions of $182 million less than FY 2010 on key operational costs, including travel, supplies, IT devices, printing and reproduction, executive fleet, and promotional items. In December 2012, leadership at all posts were advised of government-wide mandates to reduce cost, scrutinize travel, review service contract requests, and hasten adoption of cost savings within the "Top Eight Initiatives": Warehousing, Voucher Processing, Utilities, TDY International Cooperative Administrative

Support Services (ICASS) Cost Management, Regionalization of Support Services, Furniture Pool, Expendable Supplies, and Local Transportation. Leadership at posts were directed to discuss the budget and procurement implications of these orders with their section heads and regional bureau executive office, and to constrain spending.

Regarding your question on aid transparency, we strongly support the principles of aid transparency and will continue to prioritize ongoing efforts to make assistance information more transparent and available to the public. The Department of State and USAID are working with the interagency to make all U.S. foreign assistance data available on the Foreign Assistance Dashboard, which can be found at http://foreignassistance.gov.

The Bulletin on Collection of U.S. Foreign Assistance Data that the Office of Management and Budget released this fall (Bulletin 12-01) represents a significant step forward for the U.S. Government's aid transparency effort, and is a great example of interagency coordination and collaboration on this front. The Bulletin:

- Streamlines foreign assistance reporting for multiple different uses to minimize the burden on field and agencies;
- Sets a standard and builds the foundation for future reporting for all agencies that fund or execute foreign assistance funds, including defining the standard data fields for reporting to ensure standardization, coherence and comparability in our data; and
- Fulfills part of the U.S. National Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership.

The Department and USAID are fully committed to implementing evaluation practices based on U.S. and international best practices, and both have robust evaluation policies which emphasize the use of evaluations. An important element of these policies is to ensure evaluation reports are transparent and widely available. We are also working diligently to build the capacity of Department staff to perform evaluations. These efforts are growing and require that foreign assistance resources be dedicated specifically for evaluation purposes.

Question 2:

How will you and the Department work with both Kosovo and Serbia to achieve a long term solution to promote domestic and regional stability?

On April 19, the Governments of Kosovo and Serbia concluded an agreement in the context of the European Union-facilitated Dialogue on principles for the normalization of their relations. Though the Dialogue has been an EU-led process, we have engaged consistently with both countries' political and social leaders and at the highest levels in Washington, Brussels, Belgrade and Pristina in support of the EU's efforts. Deputy Assistant Secretary of European Affairs Philip Reeker traveled to Brussels numerous times and met with Prime Ministers Thaci and Dacic as well as EU counterparts on the margins of many of the Dialogue meetings hosted by EU High Representative Ashton.

The Dialogue agreement is a significant development that facilitates both countries' European integration as well as promotes stability, peace, and reconciliation in the region. Those living in northern Kosovo have the ability to help build legitimate political, justice, and administrative institutions, which the area has lacked for more than a decade. Instead of diverting large sums of

money to supporting parallel governing structures in the north, the Government of Serbia can instead focus on investing in its infrastructure and promoting investment. The Government of Kosovo can focus on building institutions in the north and ensuring that all of its citizens benefit from improving ties with its neighbor. We are encouraging Kosovo and Serbia now to fully implement all Dialogue agreements reached to date, so that citizens in both countries can build a more prosperous future, and we remain committed to working with both governments, the EU, and other international partners to help them achieve these goals.

The United States has long supported integrating the entire Balkan region into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, including Kosovo and Serbia, and we and our European partners cooperate closely with the Serbian and Kosovo governments as they work to realize that goal. Our programs, assistance, and activities in Serbia are all aimed at furthering the development of a more prosperous country that is in harmony with European standards and values. Our programs aim to strengthen the institutional capacity of key government bodies, promote transparency, combat corruption through the improvement of adherence to the rule of law, support civil society development, and create opportunities for private sector economic growth. Serbia has made great strides in strengthening its democratic institutions and practices and has the potential to become an anchor of trade and stability in the region. As a result of continued progress on implementing necessary reforms and in concluding this important agreement with Kosovo, the European Commission recommended to EU member states that negotiations be opened with Serbia on EU accession.

In Kosovo, we continue to support and encourage the necessary reform work to further Kosovo's Euro-Atlantic integration efforts. Our assistance efforts focus on strengthening rule of law, fighting crime and corruption, ensuring Kosovo can remain a diverse country, building institutions, increasing educational opportunities, and expanding private-sector led economic development. Kosovo has made significant progress in its reform agenda, as evidenced by the recent European Commission recommendation to open negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement.

Question 3:

Opportunities for new commercial shipping routes, energy exploration, and tourism are emerging in the Arctic Region. In certain Arctic areas, we are beginning to see some of these activities already underway. I am concerned however that the United States is not only falling behind in terms of being able to secure our interests, but we are also failing to fully engage in the international discussion to ensure we have a primary role in shaping the future talks and policy. China has applied for Permanent Observer status in the Arctic Council even though they are not a littoral state. Do you view this, or a potential European Commission bid for a formal role in the Arctic, as a challenge to U.S. sovereignty and interests in the Arctic? What should the U.S. be doing right now along with other littoral states to ensure we are prepared ahead of time to meet the challenges and opportunities in the Arctic? Is the current work of the Arctic Council enough?

The Department of State is fully engaged in international discussions about the Arctic. The United States is a leader in the Arctic Council, and has led or co-led all major projects since its

inception. Many of these have helped to advance our national interests such as the recent Arctic search and rescue agreement. That agreement and the ongoing work on an agreement on Arctic oil pollution preparedness and response highlight the need shared by all Arctic States in securing assets for use in emergency situations in the Arctic.

Observer status in the Arctic Council carries with it no participatory rights. Indeed, the Council is structured to ensure the observers do not participate in decision-making about the Arctic. At the technical level, including in the working groups, they are encouraged to participate where they can meaningfully contribute such as in climate change or biodiversity projects. The United States works with all Arctic States, not just littoral states, to ensure that we are all well-prepared for the rapid changes taking place in the Arctic. This is why we joined in the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996 and have played a leading role in that body. The Arctic Council is the only body of its kind in the region, focusing on environmental protection and sustainable development. We are active in the wide array of activities on-going in its working groups and task forces. The United States also participates in other organizations that play important roles in the Arctic, such as the International Maritime Organization with respect to shipping, and the International Civil Aviation Organization with respect to aviation. The United States will become the Arctic Council's Chairman in 2015-2017 and the Department of State is at present working to prepare for the U.S. Chairmanship of the Council.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable David N. Cicilline
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

What efforts are underway to ensure that Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, in particular, are making good on their commitments of aid to Syrian refugees, and what coordination is underway with donor countries to ensure that the assistance is reaching the affected individuals? Are we considering closing the Syrian Embassy here in the United States? What is the rationale for continuing the bilateral relationship? What efforts are being made with respect to protecting Syrian girls and women in the refugee camps? We are seeing reports, again, that are talking about sexual violence, etc.

The UN humanitarian appeals for inside Syria and for refugees in neighboring countries are currently 63% and 55% subscribed, respectively. International donors have provided nearly $816 million of the $1.6 billion requested in the combined U.N. appeals for Syria and neighboring countries.

Kuwait recently fulfilled its $300 million pledge and strongly urge other countries to follow Kuwait's lead and work through UN agencies and international NGOs.

The United States has urged other donors at the highest levels to fulfill pledges made at the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference in Kuwait on January 30.

We expect revised appeals for inside and outside Syria to be released at the end of May, so this is a good time to examine how the international community is doing in responding to the crisis. In our discussions with organizations we fund, like UNHCR, we are asking them to identify how they will target the most vulnerable and incorporate more robust support for over-burdened host communities.

In response to your question about the Syrian embassy, on May 2012, in response to the heinous massacre in Houla, we declared the Syrian chargé d'affaires persona non grata. This was a strong signal of our disapproval of the regime, however the embassy continues to provide visa and passport services, both of which are critical for the Syrian-American diaspora.

On the issue of what efforts are being made with respect to protecting Syrian girls and women in the refugee camps, we are very concerned by reports of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), and are working closely with humanitarian partners to strengthen protection for vulnerable refugees, particularly women and girls. Our humanitarian funding helps support programs to prevent and respond to GBV, including by providing assistance to GBV survivors and working with communities to prevent GBV.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has received over $111 million in U.S. government funding for its Syrian response thus far, provides GBV services and coordinates protection and GBV services provided by other UN agencies and implementing

partners. UNHCR also works with host governments to develop capacity to help GBV survivors. The U.S. government also supports NGO and International Organization (IO) partners to complement UNHCR's programming and activities, providing over $4 million to programs throughout the region to address GBV prevention and treatment.

In Jordan, UNHCR works in partnership with the Family Protection Department (FPD), affiliated with the Jordanian Public Security Department (PSD), to strengthen its capacity to address GBV and provide psychosocial support services in the northern part of the country (Irbid, Ramtha, Mafraq and Za'atri camp). PRM supplements UNHCR's efforts by supporting a program through a non-government organization (NGO) partner, which provides direct services for women and children in Ramtha, Mafraq, Irbid and the Za'atri refugee camp. This project will assist over 20,000 refugees through direct case management for survivors (including male and child survivors of GBV), individual therapy, group therapy, supplemental psychosocial activities, health services (including reproductive health and care for survivors of sexual assault), and referrals. Another U.S.-funded NGO program is working to educate the refugee population on GBV and to build the capacity of health workers to better identify and respond to GBV cases they encounter.

In Lebanon, UNHCR, UNICEF, and other agencies are identifying gaps in GBV programs, providing technical training to Ministry of Social Affairs workers dealing with GBV survivors, and expanding referrals for survivors to receive specialized services. Recognizing that refugees in Lebanon are not in camps and are geographically spread across the country, the United States is complementing UNHCR's efforts by funding a non-government organization to map local agencies that specialize in assisting women and girl survivors of violence in the north and Bekaa and conducting intensive GBV capacity development training for two clinics so they can appropriately receive and manage GBV cases. Syrians also access gender-based violence services provided through a separate NGO program targeting primarily Iraqi refugees.

In Turkey, the government is the primary service provider to Syrian refugees through its Disaster and Emergency Planning Agency (AFAD) with UNHCR serving in an advisory capacity on camp services. The U.S. government is funding the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to support GBV prevention and response in refugee camps, as well as reproductive health services. We are also funding an NGO for primary health care, mental health, and psychosocial support in both urban and camp environments that includes medical treatment and counseling to GBV survivors.

In Iraq, UNHCR is working with the refugee population to raise awareness of GBV and through its partners, is providing social counseling and legal support to survivors.

In addition, the United States has provided funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to support both its humanitarian response to the Syrian conflict as well as the development of a gender-based violence referral system for Palestinian refugees, including those affected by the conflict. UNRWA is working to ensure GBV survivors have access to necessary support from UNRWA staff and external medical services and to increase community awareness of this issue. UNRWA has included Palestinian refugees from Syria that are displaced in Lebanon in its GBV programming and is

currently developing a referral system for Palestinian refugees inside Syria, despite the operational challenges.

Protection is at the heart of what PRM's work and we will continue to work with partners to monitor GBV risks in refugee host countries as the situation evolves.

We work with our partners, tapping into their expertise, to determine the best way to deliver assistance in a culturally sensitive manner. For example, one of our NGO partners conducted assessments to inform their GBV programming. Although GBV is a sensitive issue, NGO representatives expressed surprise at how readily interviewees shared stories and fears. The assessments included not only female refugees but men and boys as well as service providers. The NGO noted that it was not easy to determine if participants were speaking about personal experiences, situations they witnessed or stories they heard. As a result, the NGO concluded that GBV is prevalent in the Syrian crisis; the NGO is continuing to develop relationships and gather data to understand the scope of the problem. During the assessments, the refugees indicated that they preferred to obtain GBV-related services in a location that would not identify them as a survivor. For this reason, the NGO has incorporated GBV programming into medical service provision.

The U.S. government partners incorporate protection, in this case GBV education and support to survivors, as a component of a wide range of assistance programming including health, education, psychosocial, economic, and water, sanitation and hygiene assistance. Programs are designed to protect those most at risk and prevent violence.

Question 2:

What is your assessment of what is likely to happen on the Korean Peninsula? What might we do, as Members of Congress, to help bring stability to that region of the world and to protect American national security interests on the Korean Peninsula?

North Korea remains one of the most opaque countries in the world. The United States continues to closely monitor developments there, but our insights are limited. We remain vigilant against North Korea's threats and continue to prepare for any and all contingencies. We remain steadfast in our commitment to defend our Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japanese allies, through the full range of capabilities, and we continue our close coordination with our other Six-Party Talks partners as well, as we pursue our shared goal of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.

To achieve this goal, we use a dual-track approach of employing pressure to compel North Korea to choose a different path while offering Pyongyang the option for an improved relationship with the United States and integration into the international community should North Korea demonstrate a willingness to fulfill its denuclearization commitments, cease its provocative actions threats, and comply with its international obligations.

Congressional interest in the DPRK demonstrates the commitment of the American people to addressing threats to the United States and international security, and the global nonproliferation regime, and to working toward a better future for all of the people on the Korean Peninsula. Congress demonstrated its strong commitment to the North Korean human rights issues by passing the 2004 North Korea Human Rights Act and its reauthorizations in 2008 and 2012.

Continued bipartisan Congressional support for our policy and request for resources to support the Department of State's rebalance of diplomatic activity to the Asia-Pacific region – as outlined in the President's Budget request – will increase our ability to respond appropriately to developments on the Korean Peninsula.

Question 3:

What is the status of the implementation of the recommendations of the Accountability Review Board following the attack in Benghazi, as they relate to diplomatic security?

The independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB) made 29 recommendations in key areas such as training, fire safety, staffing, and threat analysis. To hold ourselves accountable for implementation, we divided the recommendations into discrete tasks, and then assigned bureaus with these tasks and deadlines.
To date, the Department has taken action to substantially address all of the ARB's recommendations, insofar as resources and staff training cycles permit. Some of this work – such as enhancing language and security training or constructing facilities – requires a multi-year commitment. Others – such as expanding the presence of Marine Security Guard – require ongoing interagency cooperation and continued funding. In support of these efforts:

- The Department reviewed our presence and staffing footprint at high-threat posts; and established a High Threat Board to review our presence at High-Threat, High-Risk posts every 6 months.
- We are improving training for our employees headed to high-threat posts, and have expanded the number of posts where such additional security training is required;
- We surveyed fire and life safety equipment, and have procured needed equipment for posts.
- All posts performed a review of tripwires to determine if any had been breached in the past year. The Department developed and issued revised guidance on responding to tripwires, and established a Washington-based "Tripwires Committee" to review tripwires upon breach.
- With Congressional support, we are creating 151 new DS positions; 113 are expected to be hired this fiscal year. The remainder will be hired in FY 14.
- The Department is working with the Department of Defense, and the Congress, on increasing the number of Marine Security Guard Detachments deployed to U.S. diplomatic posts overseas.
- We developed a concept for "Support Cells" for opened/reopened posts; the process is being incorporated into the Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH).
- The Department established a six-person panel to thoroughly review DS' organization and management structure; the panel has developed draft findings.

The Department will never be done when it comes to security. The stark fact is that we can never truly eliminate the risks that our diplomats and development experts face as they advance America's national interests abroad. But we must always be working to find ways to minimize that risk.

Following through on our progress will, of course, require continued support from the Congress. Your support for our FY 2013 funding request to enhance embassy security – as recommended by the ARB – has been invaluable. To truly address the findings of the ARB, we hope Congress will continue to be a partner, in terms of providing resources and oversight. The FY 2014 budget requests the resources necessary to carry on this important work.

Question 4:

What is the status of the U.S. visa waiver program for the country of Portugal?

Portugal is currently a member of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). It was designated as a member participant in 1999. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in consultation with the Department of State, is required under law to review the designation status of a VWP country at least once every two years. The evaluation looks at the effect that each program country's continued designation has on the law enforcement and security interests of the United States, including its interest in the enforcement of U.S. immigration laws. Portugal is currently undergoing a formal VWP review, which is scheduled to conclude in September 2013. We refer you to DHS for further information about the VWP review process. Congress will be notified of the results of this review.

Question 5:

Is the State Department considering taking action to fund the Azores Cooperative Initiatives Program (ACIP)? The Lajes Air Base on Terceira Island in the Azores has proven useful to the United States and has been a source of friendship between the United States and Portugal, especially the Regional Government of the Azores. If the U.S. proceeds with cuts to Lajes Field, what does the State Department intend to do to mitigate the impact that such cessation may have upon U.S.-Portugal relations?

Founding NATO member Portugal is one of our oldest and closest allies. One of Secretary of State Kerry's first calls in office was to Portuguese Foreign Minister Portas, and the U.S.-Portugal Bilateral Commission (SBC) meets twice yearly for high-level strategic discussions. The most recent SBC meeting on April 17 showcased our robust engagement with Portugal, both current and envisioned.

The U.S. Air Force (USAF) presence at Lajes Airfield in the Azores is but one facet of this engagement. The impending USAF force reduction at Lajes is a result of Department of Defense (DoD) budget considerations and operational needs and is not a reflection of our commitment to Portugal. To mitigate the political and economic impact of the decision and strengthen the partnership with Portugal, DoD recently organized a Business Executives for National Security

(BENS) visit to the Azores. We encourage the Azorean government to study closely BENS' comprehensive report on the islands' economic potential.

The State Department and U.S. Embassy Lisbon also are attempting to mitigate the effects of the Lajes downsizing. U.S. Ambassador to Portugal Allan Katz recently led a Portuguese delegation to Boston and Kansas City to explore mutually beneficial business opportunities. The Embassy has hosted a series of innovation and entrepreneurship roundtables to encourage economic growth in Portugal and the Azores. Embassy-funded public diplomacy projects in the Azores have supported the arts and culture, sustainable economic development, scientific research, education, and mutual understanding.

The Azores Cooperative Initiative Program (ACIP) was a Department of Defense effort that was suspended in 2011. At that time, DoD reviewed ACIP requests and concluded that there was no legal authority under which it could fund ACIP activities. DoD's decision was not based on policy grounds, but rather on whether ACIP activities could be supported with DoD appropriations.

Question 6:

President Obama has identified genocide prevention as a "core national security interest and core moral responsibility" of the United States. Can you foresee any circumstances in which you, or any official of the U.S. government, should be anything less than fully honest and forthright in condemning any known instance of genocide, including the Armenian Genocide? Would you discipline, penalize, or otherwise take action against a U.S. Embassy employee simply for speaking truthfully about the Armenian Genocide?

The U.S. government clearly acknowledges and mourns as historical fact that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. These horrific events resulted in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century, and the United States recognizes that they remain a great source of pain for the people of Armenia and of Armenian descent as they do for all of us who share basic universal values. As President Obama said in his April 24 statement, on Armenian Remembrance Day, we remind ourselves of our commitment to ensure that such dark chapters of history are not repeated.

Question 7:

In light of the priority that the President has attached to moving Turkey toward an honest reckoning with its past, will any representatives from the State Department be participating in any commemorations of the Armenian Genocide that will be taking place in either Washington, DC or Turkey? If not, please explain.

A senior representative from our Consulate in Istanbul attended the April 24 commemoration event in Istanbul, where the vast majority of ethnic Armenian citizens of Turkey live. This was the largest and most public event held in Turkey on Remembrance Day itself. In addition, Ambassador Heffern participated in a Remembrance Day event in Yerevan.

Question 8:

On April 22, 2009 just two days before the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, President Obama did not acknowledge the Armenian Genocide because of the Turkey-Armenia protocols. They sought to end Turkey's blockade of Armenia and establish diplomatic and economic relations. In response to Senator Menendez's question during his confirmation hearing in March 2009, Assistant Secretary of State Gordon indicated that he hoped Turkey's blockade of Armenia would have been lifted by October 2009. It's been nearly four years and Turkey has reneged on its agreement to end its blockade. Former Secretary of State Clinton stated numerous times that the ball was in Turkey's court, but the reality is that Turkey has not made any progress on ratifying these protocols. Would the Administration criticize Armenia if it withdrew its signature from the Protocols, considering that, in the Secretary's own words, the ball has remained in Turkey's court for nearly three years?

The Obama Administration strongly supports the efforts of Turkey and Armenia to normalize their bilateral relations. We continue to use our interactions with senior Turkish officials to urge ratification of the protocols. We have also called on Turkey to take unilateral measures, such as re-opening the border with Armenia, which would facilitate trade and commerce. The United States maintains an ongoing dialogue with Turkish and Armenian officials at all levels on these issues, and we will continue to support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges the history they share in common.

Question 9:

The Nagorno Karabakh Republic was one of the three parties to negotiate and sign the cease fire agreement, which stopped the war in 1993 and they were full parties to the Minsk Group negotiations until 1998, when Azerbaijan succeeded in excluding them. Do you support the reinstatement of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic as a full participant in all aspects of the Minsk Group peace process? If yes, what is the Administration doing to reinstate Karabakh into the negotiations?

As a Co-Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group along with Russia and France, the United States remains committed to helping the sides find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As part of that effort, the Co-Chairs routinely meet with senior officials from the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments, as well as the de facto authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh. The United States, Russia, and France are actively working to help the sides reach agreement on a way forward.

Question 10:

In August 2012, Azerbaijan's President pardoned, praised, and promoted a confessed axe-murderer Ramil Safarov, who was convicted of killing a sleeping Armenian at a 2005 NATO English language training program in Hungary. Moreover, Azerbaijan continues to reject the international community's and Armenia's calls to pull back snipers and President Aliyev has repeatedly stated that "only [the] first stage" of the war is over, that Azerbaijan is prepared to attack Nagorno Karabakh, and that "Our main enemies are Armenians of the world". In light of Azerbaijan's public acts and threats of aggression,

what are you doing to urge Azerbaijan to re-incarcerate Ramil Safarov? Why does the Administration support allocating military assistance to Azerbaijan, when it continues such belligerent and provocative policies? Azerbaijan has threatened to shoot down civilian aircraft that fly into the Nagorno Karabakh airport. What warnings have we given Baku about threats against civilian airliners, and what consequence would Azerbaijan face if it were to shoot down civilian aircraft?

Mr. Safarov was tried and convicted of a brutal murder. The United States was extremely troubled to learn that he would not serve the remainder of his sentence, as were many of our Allies. Immediately after learning of Azerbaijani President Aliyev's pardon of Ramil Safarov, the United States raised its concerns directly and forcefully with the highest levels of the government of Azerbaijan. In addition, both the White House and the State Department released strong public statements of concern over Mr. Safarov's transfer and subsequent pardon.

As a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States continues working to help the sides reach a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I have discussed the issue of civil flights to Nagorno-Karabakh with the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan at the highest levels. The Minsk Group Co-Chairs are working to help the sides find a means of resolving this issue diplomatically, and have received assurances from the sides that they will reject any threat or use of force against civil aircraft. The United States condemns any action or rhetoric that fuels tensions in the region or threatens to damage the peace process.

Security assistance for Azerbaijan is carefully reviewed to ensure it does not undermine efforts for a peaceful settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh. Such assistance is focused on counterterrorism and maritime security.

Question 11:

Can you give us an update on efforts to protect Armenian and other minority populations in Syria? Out of all the countries that have accepted refugees from Syria, Armenia has the least amount of resources to provide for them. Would the Administration be willing to provide funds to Armenia to help manage this humanitarian burden?

The State Department is closely tracking the situation inside Syria including the status of minority populations. The U.S. government is providing funding to the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and non-governmental organizations to meet the humanitarian needs of all those affected by the crisis inside Syria. These agencies are a key part of the international humanitarian system, governed by humanitarian principles, that brings technical expertise and operational capacity to respond to a large-scale crisis such as this. Of the nearly $410 million in humanitarian assistance that USAID and the State Department are providing in response to the Syria crisis, the State Department's contributions total nearly $185 million. Our contributions provide life-saving emergency assistance to meet basic humanitarian needs, such as shelter, water, sanitation, and health both inside Syria and in host countries.

Humanitarian need is not solely concentrated in areas held by one side of the conflict or the other, and it is not dependent on political affiliation. Humanitarian partners provide aid in a

neutral and impartial manner. The United Nations is seeking access to all communities in need on a regular basis. It is unacceptable and a violation of humanitarian principles for the Syrian regime to deny this access.

On the issue of assistance to Syrians in Armenia, the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration's (PRM) contribution to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also supports assistance programs for refugees and asylum seekers in Armenia, including Syrians. The Armenian government estimates that approximately 6,000 to 8,000 Syrians have fled to Armenia since the start of the conflict. Of those, only 10% (or approximately 600 individuals) have applied for asylum. Most of the Syrians who have fled to Armenia are of Armenian descent and are thus able to obtain Armenian citizenship. In cooperation with the Armenian Red Cross Society, UNHCR has provided winter clothing and footwear to a total of 343 Syrian asylum seekers (225 adults and 118 children). A number of families have received support to cover utility costs. With funds provided by UNHCR, the UNHCR mission in Armenia has procured and distributed household items to 422 Syrians. Some of the most vulnerable families also received food packages and sanitary items. UNHCR supports a medical assistance program, through which over 200 individuals have received medical treatment and/or medication. Finally, UNHCR is supporting a newly-established NGO, the Center for Coordination of Syrian Armenian Issues, with some office equipment, furniture and capacity building. Similar support has also been extended to the Cilicean School No. 14, which many Syrian children attend.

Question 12:

Mr. Secretary, as you know, the spiritual head of the second largest Christian Church in the world, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, has a number of his religious freedoms withheld by the government of Turkey. Secretary Hillary Clinton put particular effort into urging Turkey to allow the Church's seminary at Halki to reopen. Please describe any steps you plan to undertake to further this effort. On a number of occasions during her term as Secretary of State, she was led to believe that the seminary was on the verge of being reopened. The Bush Administration was also led to believe this through public statements made by Turkish government officials. What do you plan to do to move the reopening of Halki from rhetoric to reality?

The United States fully supports efforts to reopen Halki Seminary, a vital institution of spiritual learning for Orthodox Christians around the world. We will continue to urge the Government of Turkey at the highest levels to reopen the seminary as a symbol of its commitment to religious freedom. Secretary Kerry raised this issue with Foreign Minister Davutoglu during his most recent visit to Istanbul April 21. He also met separately with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I to underscore our commitment to Halki's reopening and the rights and status of the Patriarchate in Turkey. The Ambassador and officers from the U.S. Embassy and Consulate General also engage on this issue on a regular basis.

Though incremental, some progress has occurred. The Turkish government's return of property surrounding the Seminary to the Church in January was a positive step, and the current constitutional redrafting process is encouraging an unprecedented dialogue on individual rights

and religious freedom. We will continue to encourage the government of Turkey to work cooperatively with the Ecumenical Patriarchate to pass legislation and overcome political roadblocks that are hindering the reopening of this historic institution. We will also encourage Turkey to take additional steps to promote religious freedom, such as allowing more religious communities to own property, register their places of worship, and train their clergy.

Question 13:

Mr. Secretary, as you know, Greece, like Great Britain, Australia and few others nations, fought as our ally in every international conflict during the 20th Century. Greece continues that valuable cooperation through permitting our military's extensive use of its strategically crucial Souda Bay facility during our operations in the Middle East. Do your frequent trips to Turkey and absence of trips to Greece indicate a lessening of Greece's importance to America?

Relations between Greece and the United States are excellent. Our two countries share deep ties of friendship and cooperation based on our mutual commitment to liberty and democratic values. These bonds are further cemented by the millions of Americans who trace their ancestry to the Hellenic Republic. We appreciate Greece's important contributions to NATO, from its stabilization efforts in the Balkans to its assistance in improving maritime security. We also very much value our bilateral military cooperation, especially at the Naval Support Activity on Souda Bay, Crete. I met with Foreign Minister Avramopoulos on April 23 and had an excellent discussion on the full range of bilateral, regional, and global issues on which we cooperate. I look forward to further strengthening our relationship with Greece, and to continue working together on common challenges.

Question 14:

Mr. Secretary, as you may know, unlike its brother Church, the Catholic Church, which chooses its Pope by a vote of the College of Cardinals, the Christian Orthodox Church is prohibited by the government of Turkey from selecting succeeding Ecumenical Patriarchs by the Church's gathering of Metropolitans in their Holy Synod. Turkey insists that its Prime Minister, who is of the Muslim faith, select a succeeding Ecumenical Patriarch from a list submitted to him by the Holy Synod. As you know, the Ecumenical Patriarch is the spiritual head of millions of Americans and 300 million other Orthodox Christians around the world. Is this matter of Turkish interference in the selection of Ecumenical Patriarchs on your agenda of issues you plan to encourage Turkey to change?

The Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church selects the Ecumenical Patriarch, and the current Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomeos, was elected Patriarch by the Church's Holy Synod in 1991. The Government of Turkey does not recognize the ecumenical nature of the Patriarchate, or the Patriarch's "first among equals" status among the leaders of the world's 300 million Orthodox Christians. The Government of Turkey, citing decrees by the Governor of Istanbul dating from 1923 and 1970, has held that only Turkish citizens may vote in the Church's Holy Synod or be elected Patriarch. The decrees also hold that if a patriarch cannot be elected within eight days,

the Governor of Istanbul can appoint a patriarch – though this aspect of the decree has never been tested.

The United States supports the Church's right to choose its own Patriarch, its efforts to obtain citizenship for Church Metropolitans, as well as gain recognition of the Patriarch's ecumenical status from the Turkish government. We will continue to urge the Turkish government to work cooperatively with the Patriarchate to resolve these and other matters of importance to Orthodox Christians and other religious minorities in Turkey to demonstrate its respect for religious freedom.

Question 15:

Mr. Secretary, in light of Turkey being of significant value to the United States, particularly with respect to Syria, do you believe that American policy should stay silent on Turkey's actions against other American allies, like Cyprus? Specifically, Turkish-Cypriots strongly oppose Turkey's transfer of what they claim are hundreds of thousands of Turks to Cyprus in an apparent effort to alter the demography and western orientation of that country. Assuring Cyprus remains a western society and democracy and an always-reliable ally of America and Israel is in America's long-term interests. Are those interests important enough for America to urge Turkey to stop these efforts on Cyprus?

Any comprehensive settlement plan will need to take into account issues of citizenship and residency on the island. I believe that a settlement plan dealing with these and other questions needs to be worked out between the communities, with United Nations support, and needs to be acceptable to majorities in both of the island's communities. I strongly support the settlement process, which is the only practical way to resolve the many critical issues between the communities.

Question 16:

Mr. Secretary, as you may know, in 2004 American foreign policy was focused on helping Turkey begin EU accession talks by overcoming the obstacle of Turkey's military occupation of one third of a EU country, Cyprus. You will recall that America had a major hand in drafting a new Cyprus constitution and pressing Cyprus very hard for a referendum on it. If adopted, it gave Turkey the constitutional right to keep troops on Cyprus. And, if the Greek-Cypriots rejected the constitution, as became the case, it could make them appear responsible for the continuing division of that country. Today, Cyprus is the only country in the Eastern Mediterranean, other than Israel, that is energy rich, western oriented and a traditional democracy. As well, it has a very close relationship with America and Israel. Do America's interests today suggest that we treat Cyprus in this way again with another round of settlement talks?

I continue to support the reunification of Cyprus as a bizonal, bicommunal federation, which has been the longstanding policy of the United States, consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The best way to achieve a just and lasting settlement is for the Cypriot parties themselves to negotiate their own solution, with strong support from the international

community, including the United States, whenever the parties seek such support. The U.S. government is not a participant in the negotiations, but we have offered to provide any help that both sides would find useful. As a friend to all the people of Cyprus, I will continue to urge the leaders of both communities to engage constructively in the negotiations and support this process as the best way to reach an agreement.

Question 17:
Secretary Clinton showed great leadership in protecting the human rights of LGBT individuals around the world, especially at the UN and at the OAS. How will you continue and build upon this legacy?

I fully support continuing and expanding the work begun by Secretary Clinton to promote and protect the human rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
(LGBT) individuals globally. Human rights are a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy and have been central to American leadership through both Republican and Democratic administrations. U.S. leadership on advancing human rights for all people, including LGBT individuals, is consistent with this Administration's policy of principled engagement with the world and its commitment to uphold universal human rights. By supporting the inherent dignity of each person we help to foster a just world for all people and we lead by example, enhancing U.S. strategic interests as we advance our values.

The Department of State is continuing efforts to implement our strategy to promote and protect the human rights of LGBT persons. This strategy calls for a six pronged approach: (1) combating laws that criminalize LGBT activity or status, (2) protecting vulnerable refugees or asylum seekers who are LGBT, (3) supporting human rights and non-discrimination of people who are LGBT through relevant foreign policy contracting and grant-making activities, (4) developing an urgent response mechanism to expedite our response to the human rights abuses abroad of people who are LGBT, (5) advancing the human rights of LGBT people through multilateral mechanisms, and (6) identifying, developing, and promoting international norms that can reinforce human rights protections for LGBT people. We remain fully committed to the goals of this strategy and are heavily focused on what more we can do to combat violence against LGBT individuals. We are also actively working to increase contributions to the Global Equality Fund, which strengthens our capacity to support civil society organizations and programming seeking to advance and protect the human rights of LGBT people globally. We are engaging foreign governments and private donors to contribute to this important effort.

Finally, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), which leads our monthly LGBT Task Force meetings, is continuing to work with our regional and other functional bureaus to develop ideas, share best-practices, and institutionalize this policy priority throughout the Department of State and within the interagency. As our missions abroad do more, the results of our actions continue to demonstrate the strength of U.S. actions to promote and protect the human rights of LGBT individuals globally.

Question for the Record
Submitted by the Honorable Scott Perry
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question:

With regard to the Benghazi attack, in her January 23 testimony before this Committee, Secretary Clinton noted that she wished the ARB had "more leeway" in recommending disciplinary action against 4 State Department employees whose actions resulted in an inadequate security posture at the U.S. consulate in Benghazi. I have worked with my colleagues on this Committee to introduce a bipartisan bill, which would specifically address this issue by amending the ARB authorizing statute. Are you in favor, as was your predecessor, of giving the ARB "more leeway?" My understanding of the personnel process is that a recommendation by an ARB is not a prerequisite for disciplinary action taken by the State Department. It is just that: a recommendation. Why does the Department refuse to fire these individuals? What can you tell us about the status of these employees?

I am in favor of amending the Accountability Review Board (ARB) statute to reflect the ARB's recommendation – to specify unsatisfactory leadership as a ground for disciplinary action.

The status of the four individuals cited by the ARB is under review by the Department. In December 2012, former Secretary Clinton accepted Eric Boswell's decision to resign his position as Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security. The other three individuals were relieved of their duties. All four individuals have been placed on administrative leave pending further action.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable Douglas A. Collins
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

What conditions has the State Department put on foreign assistance to the Egyptian government? What are the qualitative or quantifiable results we are expecting from Egypt? What is the measurable return tax payers are guaranteed for this level of investment?

Our assistance to Egypt serves U.S. national interests of promoting regional peace and security, ensuring regional stability, and encouraging economic, democratic, and security sector reforms to help shape and support Egypt's democratic transition. For over 30 years, Egypt has been an important partner for the United States in maintaining Middle East peace - a role it continues to this day. The United States relies on Egypt to maintain peace with Israel, implement critical counterterrorism and nonproliferation initiatives, and support mutual strategic goals in the region. Egypt has witnessed dramatic change; yet in the midst of this instability, the Egyptian government has remained committed to peace with Israel. Our assistance is a critical factor in sustaining that role.

While the State Department does not support political conditions on our assistance, several of our assistance programs that directly support the Government of Egypt include mutually-agreed to benchmarks. We continually review our assistance, using qualitative and quantitative measures, to ensure that our contributions serve U.S. interests in Egypt and the region, while also shaping and creating a stable and secure country for all Egyptians.

Our military assistance to Egypt funds border security and counters weapons smuggling efforts, including along the border with Gaza; helps ensure overflight privileges for military aircraft; allows Egyptian forces to provide secure transit of the Suez Canal; and enables Egypt to participate in peacekeeping operations. We also see signs that the military is placing a greater priority on counter-terrorism and border security responsibilities – a focus that we strongly support and that our assistance encourages.

Our economic and development assistance encourages private sector growth and employment; improves access to education; empowers youth and women; and promotes democratic principles, human rights, and civil society. For example, USAID is working with Alexandria's Chamber of Commerce to help entrepreneurs open more than 3,700 small and medium sized businesses through streamlined procedures. USAID's education programs have improved early grade reading nationwide, improving literacy by 91% in pilot schools, and after 6 months of implementation this program will reach 1.4 million students. USAID voter education initiatives have reached over 40 million individuals, helping develop electoral reform policies and the issuance of over 40,000 ID cards for marginalized women, providing them with voter education to support their participation in upcoming elections.

In addition to our strategic security, economic, and political interests, we often receive direct and indirect returns on investment to the U.S. Treasury, institutions, and private sector. For example, the United States has launched the Egyptian-American Enterprise Fund, a private, non-profit corporation seeded with U.S. Government funds. After ten years, the Fund will be liquidated and 50 percent of the proceeds will be returned to the United States Treasury. Additionally, through our signature U.S. – Egypt Higher Education Initiative, which we will launch this year, the U.S. will invest in scholarships, most of which will fund students' attendance at U.S. colleges and universities, and in higher education partnerships between U.S. and Egyptian institutions. Lastly, the U.S. private sector realizes direct and indirect benefits of assistance to Egypt through increased opportunities for foreign investment in Egypt, trade between our two countries, and clear efforts to maintain security in the region.

Question 2:

In FY11 and FY12, the Administration responded to the Arab Spring with the Middle East Response Fund (MERF). These funds where reallocated from existing funds, $135 million in FY11 and $166 million in FY12. In both years these funds were spent at the same pace or slower than normal appropriations, even though they were designated as "rapid response funding." The MERF funds have been renamed Contingency Fund which functionally operates under the MENA-Incentive Fund. The State Department is asking for $580 million for the MENA-Incentive Fund; $150 million which is allocated for the Contingency Fund or MERF. The Contingency Fund is categorized as "rapid response funds." If "rapid response funds" aren't being spent rapidly, why are they necessary?

The Department plans to make just one-third of the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund (MENA-IF) available for support to interim governments and emerging civil societies as they address immediate stabilization, security and early transition needs. Such activities are short-term in nature. Examples of such contingency needs include elections support, short-term security sector support, weapons abatement, and deployment of additional staff. This is distinguished from the two-thirds of the MENA IF that we would provide for longer term programs in support of democratic reform, which will be designed through joint analysis and planning with the governments and civil societies of recipient countries.

Some funds may be needed urgently and true emergency funds have moved quickly. However, the key need for such contingency funds is to fill gaps and meet needs that emerge that we could not identify at the time we submit our annual budget request. Timing of the actual delivery of assistance is due to a number of factors, including host country capacity. Often the initial commitment and the beginning of planning for the program is the critical point of our engagement with transitioning countries, sending an important signal of U.S. commitment and providing an avenue of discussion with key interlocutors. Or, we may need to make a commitment to a multilateral effort that leverages others' funds, while the actual program is initiated later. We cannot take those steps without having funds available.

The FY 2011 – 2012 Middle East Response Fund (MERF)-designated funds were simply a set aside of funds that normally we would have allocated to regular bilateral programs. We were unable to make specific decisions at the outset given the ongoing transitions, but anticipated we

would need to provide additional funding to the region when needs became apparent. Doing this reduced funds available for the rest of the world, but ensured they were available and could be provided for anticipated needs. Once programs were identified, the funds were provided via regular processes.

Our ability to respond to emerging opportunities and to cement our support for the transitions depends on our ability to identify funds quickly that will allow us to meet short-term needs. Initial transition support commitments in FY 2011 through FY 2013 have totaled over $1.8 billion, spanning the range of humanitarian, economic stabilization, security sector reform, and political reform requirements in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Syria. These funds were reallocated from programs in the region or by reducing funding available in regional/global accounts for other needs; and carried with them real opportunity costs to other programs. Without the creation of the MENA-IF, needs arising from democratic transitions will further erode existing programs that remain a priority and impact our ability to respond to emergent needs in other regions.

Questions for the Record

Submitted to the Honorable Mark Meadows
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

Recently, Iran has stepped up its aggressive actions and rhetoric toward Azerbaijan. It is very concerning to see the Iranian Parliament discussing annexing Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, being a steadfast partner of the U.S. and Israel, is one of a few countries in the region we can count on. There is no question that most of the Iranian pressure is in response to Azerbaijan's commitment to partnership with the U.S. How does the Administration work with Azerbaijan to make sure that Iranian pressure does not destabilize Azerbaijan and the whole region?

The U.S. and Azerbaijan have clear, shared interests in building regional security, diversifying energy supplies, pursuing democratic and economic reforms, combating terrorism, and stemming the flow of illegal narcotics and weapons of mass destruction. The government of Azerbaijan has played a critical role in enforcing international sanctions against Iran, while cooperating closely with our ally, Israel.

Caspian maritime domain awareness, border security, combating illegal trafficking, and NATO interoperability remain top priorities for U.S.-Azerbaijan security cooperation. To that end, we convene the U.S.-Azerbaijan Security Dialogue each year to review progress, raise important bilateral issues, and pursue additional areas of cooperation. We also work closely with Azerbaijan on counterterrorism measures.

We continue to support Azerbaijan's independence by cooperating closely with Azerbaijan to diversify energy routes and resources for European markets. Our work with Azerbaijan on advancing democratic and economic reforms also remains a key priority, including promoting respect for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, and the development of a vibrant civil society, which we believe are essential to Azerbaijan's long-term prosperity and success.

Question 2:

After Vladimir Putin took over last year, Russia has been pursuing a much more assertive foreign policy in its neighborhood. Russia is trying to subordinate small nations in its neighborhood under the cover of artificial integration into a "Eurasian Economic Union". This policy is particularly visible in the South Caucasus. For instance, Moscow has recently forced Armenia to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Russian-led Customs Union and reinforces its military presence in Armenia and the North Caucasus. Azerbaijan is facing huge pressure too, as it is resisting Russia's attempts to increase its influence in Azerbaijan. After the shutdown of the Gabala Radar Station, which was the last vestige of Russian military presence in Azerbaijan, Russia has become increasingly more aggressive vis-à-vis Azerbaijan. Under these circumstances, it is essential that the US should actively engage with regional partners to boost their independence. What is the Administration's

policy regarding assertive Russian policies in the region? How do you work with regional partners to make sure that they don't yield under Russian pressure?

The United States' support for the independence of the states that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union is unwavering and non-negotiable. The United States stands for the right of every independent country to choose its alliances and associations – political, military, economic, or otherwise – according to its own interests and free from coercion of any kind. We also stand by the principle that states have the right freely to choose whether to allow foreign forces to be stationed on their territory and that forces that do not have the consent of the host state should be withdrawn.

The United States has consistently articulated this policy since the breakup of the Soviet Union. We have put this policy into action by developing durable, individually tailored relations with each of these nations based on the interests and values we share with each one. In the cases of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the United States has robust bilateral relationships with both countries in all areas, including ongoing dialogues on democracy and human rights, increasing bilateral trade and investment, and security cooperation.

Questions for the Record

Submitted by the Honorable Luke Messer
To Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Question 1:

There have been discussions on the Hill and elsewhere that call for a re-examining of U.S. aid to Egypt given the change in leadership since the aid package was instituted. In light of the regime change in Egypt, is there a need to reevaluate how the U.S. provides aid to Egypt?

Our aid does not support any one party or individual in Egypt; it supports our national security interests and the Egyptian people. We continue to focus our assistance to Egypt on addressing the profound changes underway there while also supporting our enduring security interests. At a time when Egypt most needs assistance to aid its poor, create new jobs to employ its educated, energetic youth, and prevent it from heading toward a disastrous economic collapse, the United States can play a significant role in assisting Egypt on its path toward democratic reform, economic stabilization, and security.

Following the revolution, the United States realigned over $190 million in support of critical economic recovery needs and democratic development. We are now focusing our economic assistance on preventing a destabilizing economic crisis; encouraging private sector growth and employment; improving access to education; empowering youth and women; and promoting democratic principles, human rights, and civil society.

As I stated in my testimony, our support to the military has been a strong investment. Our assistance continues to advance shared security interests such as border security, countering terrorism and weapons smuggling, and creating more professional Egyptian forces. This assistance helps ensure over-flight privileges for military aircraft and allows Egyptian forces to provide secure transit of the Suez Canal. In response to emerging needs, we are partnering with Egypt to further target our assistance in crucial areas such as border security and counter-terrorism efforts.

By having a place at the table, we can continue to engage our partner, Egypt, on implementing the necessary reforms in their economic, security, and political sectors to keep Egypt stable. This stability is necessary to allow Egypt to further its democratic transition and continue its long-standing role of maintaining regional peace and stability. Our assistance is a critical factor in sustaining that role, especially now when the Egyptian people are looking for a sign of U.S. support during this critical political transition.

Question 2:

What is your assessment of the transition to democracy? What strategic leverage is available to the United States to encourage the Egyptian government for progress in the democratic transition?

Egyptians enjoy greater freedom today than prior to the January 2011 revolution, but freedom of expression, association, and assembly; women's rights, religious freedom, and rule of law remain areas of concern. Healthy democracies require appropriate checks and balances, and while the judiciary and citizen movements have been essential sources of accountability and checks on executive power, we look forward to parliamentary elections and the establishment of an empowered legislative branch as called for in the Constitution. We hope to that all Egyptians will participate in these important elections. Egypt's prosperity and stability will hinge on these factors—an engaged citizenry; accountable public institutions with appropriate checks and balances; and the advancement of fundamental freedoms and protection of human rights; and these are therefore the factors we track and promote in our programs and diplomatic engagement.

We have repeatedly raised these issues, including on individual rights cases, at the highest levels of the Egyptian government. President Morsy has professed his commitment to govern for all Egyptians. President Obama, our Ambassador in Cairo, and I have consistently made clear to our Egyptian counterparts the need to follow through on this commitment. We support a number of programs on the ground that reinforce these principles and help create strong democratic institutions to sustain them.

Question 3:

Does the Administration believe that a negotiated solution is possible in Syria? If so, what would that look like? Do you see any solution in which Assad remains in power to be either possible or acceptable? If Assad does manage to stay, would the United States deal with him and his government?

We believe that the best way to end the Syrian crisis is through a negotiated political solution. The regime and its supporters will fight to the last person standing. To get to a sustainable peace, Syrians need a political solution that assures all citizens of their rights.

The opposition and members of the regime without blood on their hands must come together to negotiate a deal like the framework laid out in the Geneva communiqué. This framework – agreed last June by the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, Turkey, and Arab League states – calls for a transitional governing body formed on the basis of mutual consent of the opposition and the Syrian regime to be given full executive powers and guide the country to elections.

This means that Asad, who has long lost his legitimacy and whom the opposition will never accept, will not play any role in that transitional governing body. If he is unwilling to decide that he should transfer executive authority, we will continue to find ways to pressure him to think differently about what lies in the future.

While this administration continues to take a hard look at every available, practical, and responsible means to end the suffering of the Syrian people, we do not believe at this time that it is in the United States' or the Syrian people's best interest to provide lethal support to the Syrian opposition. The judgments we make must pass the test of making the situation better for the Syrian people and must also take into account the long-term human, financial, and political costs

for us, Syria, and the region. We continue to believe that a political solution to the crisis is the best way to save the Syrian people further suffering and to avert further destruction of the country, for which the regime bears overwhelming responsibility.

As President Obama told the Syrian people in a recent message, "More Syrians are standing up for their dignity. The Asad regime will come to an end. The Syrian people will have their chance to forge their own future. And they will continue to find a partner in the United States of America."

We look forward to working with Congress throughout this process as we seek to protect the interests of the United States in the region and support the needs of the Syrian people in their struggle to create a free, stable, and democratic Syria.

Question 4:

I was pleased that you publicly spoke out against the imprisonment of U.S. citizen Saeed Abedini, who has been detained for nearly six months and was sentenced to eight years in prison in Iran on charges related to his religious beliefs. His family recently visited him and reported that he has suffered new attacks and beatings, making his physical condition more serious than ever. Is there anything that the U.S. – unilaterally or with our allies – can do to pressure the Iranian government to act and free Saeed?

I share your deep concern for the serious human rights abuses faced by U.S. citizen Saeed Abedini, unjustly imprisoned in Iran on charges related to his religious beliefs and activities. I also share your concern about reports that Mr. Abedini has suffered physical abuse by Iranian authorities, and of his deteriorating health condition while in prison.

The Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Suzan Johnson Cook and other senior State Department officials met with Mrs. Abedini March 15 and conveyed our commitment to resolving this case and reuniting Mr. Abedini with his family.

On March 22, I issued the following public statement on this case: "I am deeply concerned about the fate of U.S. citizen Saeed Abedini, who has been detained for nearly six months and was sentenced to eight years in prison in Iran on charges related to his religious beliefs. I am disturbed by reports that Mr. Abedini has suffered physical and psychological abuse in prison, and that his condition has become increasingly dire. Such mistreatment violates international norms as well as Iran's own laws. I am also troubled by the lack of due process in Mr. Abedini's case and Iran's continued refusal to allow consular access by Swiss authorities, the U.S. protecting power in Iran. I welcome reports that Mr. Abedini was examined by a physician and expect Iranian authorities to honor their commitment to allow Mr. Abedini to receive treatment for these injuries from a specialist outside the prison. The best outcome for Mr. Abedini is that he be immediately released."

We raised this case at the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva on March 22. We have also raised this case with the office of UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in

Iran, Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, whose recent report to the HRC cites Mr. Abedini's case as an example of Iran's violation of human rights, including religious freedom.

Acting Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Uzra Zeya highlighted the case of Mr. Abedini and others imprisoned for their beliefs when she and I held a press conference April 19 to release the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012.*

We appreciate H.Res. 147 calling for Mr. Abedini's release. We commend you and other Members of Congress for elevating this case, and we want to work closely and constructively with you to raise awareness and secure his release.

The Department of State's highest priority is the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens overseas, and we remain deeply concerned about Mr. Abedini's detention and the conditions he faces in prison. We are committed to doing all we can to ensure Mr. Abedini receives the medical attention he urgently needs. We will continue to use diplomatic engagement to apply international pressure on Iran to secure his release. We have reached out to numerous allies and our friends in civil society to urge them to press the Iranian government to release Mr. Abedini. Moreover, I will continue to use all the appropriate tools at the Department's disposal to promote and protect human rights, including religious freedom, for all people in Iran and around the world.

We have been in frequent contact with Mrs. Abedini and her attorney since we became aware of this case last year, and we will remain in touch as we work to achieve our common objective of securing his freedom.

Question 5:

When America provides foreign assistance to countries around the globe, American taxpayers want and deserve to know that their money is being invested wisely, in projects that are successfully improving life for people on the ground. Timely, comprehensive and transparent information on how aid dollars are spent, and the results of aid projects, allows Americans to hold their government accountable and also lets citizens of aid recipient countries provide feedback on the quality of that aid.What initiatives do you support to make the foreign assistance process more transparent?

We strongly support the principles of aid transparency and accountability, and will continue to prioritize ongoing efforts to make assistance reporting more readily available to the public.
The Foreign Assistance Dashboard (www.ForeignAssistance.gov) managed by the Department of State is one easy-to-understand and accessible tool for providing detailed foreign assistance budget, financial, and programmatic data to the public.

The Dashboard currently contains budget data for the Department of State, USAID, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), as well as financial data for USAID and MCC. The Dashboard will continue to make foreign assistance data more available with the goal of publishing more granular activity level information and data on programs from additional agencies this coming year, including the U.S. Treasury, Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Defense.

In accordance with OMB Bulletin 12-01 on the Collection of U.S. Foreign Assistance Data, which mandates data collection from all U.S. Government agencies implementing foreign assistance, the Dashboard will expand the availability of robust foreign assistance data.

The Department has also implemented a rigorous evaluation policy requiring that all large programs be evaluated. Unclassified evaluation reports will posted to a new Department web site (under construction) to assure transparency.

We will continue to prioritize aid transparency and accountability efforts to ensure U.S. taxpayers can have easy access to information showing how U.S. foreign assistance is spent.

Question 6:

The transition to electoral democracy taking place in the Arab Spring countries presents an opportunity for millions of women to be liberated from harmful practices and political disenfranchisement, yet women of the Arab Spring continue to struggle for equality, and political and social tensions are increasing. Many of the affected countries are embracing religious extremist leaders who support polices that obstruct women's equality and freedom. What should the U.S. do about the role of women in Islamist governments?

We support the aspirations of women throughout the Middle East and North Africa who seek opportunities for political and civic participation, live free from violence, and receive equal economic opportunities and civil rights. The U.S. government regularly meets with civil society, entrepreneurs, teachers, politicians and women activists to hear their concerns and priorities and appropriately integrate them into our policy and programming efforts. We regularly encourage political parties, governments, police and security forces, religious leaders and other civil society groups to include more women in their organizations and to hear from women's rights advocates. We seek to engage actors from across society, both secular and religious, who wish to build a peaceful and prosperous future consistent with democratic values. We judge political parties by their deeds and words not by their origins. We expect all parties to uphold universal values.

There have been many troubling instances of new politicians in transition countries making anti-women statements and proposing laws which would restrict the rights of women and girls. We have also witnessed troubling acts of violence against women attempting to exercise their rights to peaceful assembly and association. We strongly disagree with these positions and have made our views known publically and privately. The participation of new political parties in governance means that there are opportunities for women to shape their roles. For example, when some members of Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly proposed language to make women "complementary" to men in the draft constitution, Tunisian women and men as well as civil society leaders and women's rights advocates strongly protested. Tunisia has a long history of some of the most progressive rights for women in the region. Politicians from both Islamist and secular parties reacted to the protests by amending the statement, and the current draft now uses "equality" to define women's status.

We note that whether in republics with secular or Islamist parties or in monarchies, women across the region are very often excluded from political decision-making positions. For example,

in Morocco, the Islamist Justice and Development party is in a coalition government with three secular parties and only controls 12 of the 31 cabinet positions. Yet they were the only one to put forth a woman for a ministerial slot. Ending the discrimination women experience requires the commitment of all – political parties as well as civil society and entrepreneurs.

The United States is making a number of significant efforts to support the economic and political empowerment of women. For example, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) funds numerous initiatives to support women's empowerment, including the Arab Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI). AWLI trains female elected officials and women seeking government positions on good governance and coalition building to support their efforts to lead constituent-driven reforms. Numerous AWLI trainees have gone on to win public office and play active roles in developing gender-based advocacy efforts.

In addition, at the 9th Forum for the Future, 21 regional governments (including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen), along with the G-8, agreed by consensus to the Tunis Declaration. The U.S. co-hosted the Forum with the Republic of Tunisia and women's empowerment was one of the priorities. In the Declaration, the Ministers agreed that the full and equal participation of all people regardless of race, sex, or religion is critical for political and economic development. Ministers, in particular, recognized the critical role women play in the transformations underway in the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) region, and underscored the importance of progress on long-standing BMENA objectives related to gender equality, with a view to achieving women's full political, social, and economic empowerment. They also reaffirmed the ongoing need for further progress in addressing a range of issues affecting the condition of women, including gender-based discrimination and violence; forced and early forced marriage; low rates of women's participation in economies, public service, and decision-making institutions including parliaments; and barriers to women's access to education. Ministers also acknowledged the importance of integrating international commitments into their national laws, including comprehensive national family policies to encourage women's participation in public life. We are following up with civil society this year to encourage them to continue to dialogue with their governments around these commitments.

Question 7:

In the coming year, what role will the State Department play in pressuring the Arab Spring governments to reject policies that discriminate or perpetuate harmful practices against women?

In every single country in the world, the United States supports full and equal citizenship without qualifications based on gender, creed, culture, ideology, or religion. There are no acceptable reasons to have second-class citizenship for anyone based on these factors. Women and girls in the region will define their own roles in their societies, and we will continue supporting and empowering them through civil society capacity building and public diplomacy programs, political and economic reform efforts, long-standing development assistance, and diplomatic interventions. We strongly support reform as the basis for stability in the region, including peaceful and meaningful democratic transitions throughout the region. As we assert our national interests in promoting democracy and stability, we remain mindful of each circumstance's uniqueness and tailor our engagement accordingly.

Early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, acid-related violence, honor killings, and other harmful traditional practices are all great concerns to the United States. We know that many of these practices, including early and forced marriages occur in transition countries such as Egypt and Yemen. Other harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting are prevalent in Egypt and other parts of the Middle East, although data is scarce. The United States considers violence against girls and women a policy imperative and we work with our international partners and other stakeholders to do the same. T he problem of these harmful traditional practices is, at its root, a manifestation of the low status of women and girls around the world. Ending harmful traditional practices requires elevating their status in our dialogues and freeing women's potential to be agents of change in their community. We support awareness and prevention programs to address some of these practices by working with local partners to ensure men and boy's engagement in preventing violence against women and girls. We also promote women's economic and entrepreneurial opportunities which are integral to any sustainable approach to ending violence against women and girls.

One example of such a program will be supported by USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance. The program will work with the Government of Jordan to develop an awareness-raising campaign working with Syrian refugees and host communities to reduce or prevent early marriage, human trafficking, child labor and gender-based violence among vulnerable populations within the Syrian refugee community and host communities.

Several Middle East Partnership Initiative projects support civil society-led campaigns to address the practice of early and forced marriage and raise awareness in rural areas on the dangers of early and forced marriage, including the Access to the Constitution in Morocco project with the American Bar Association (ABA) which engages civil society in advocacy campaigns that focus on the implementation of constitutional articles. Outreach activities that raise public awareness of constitutional developments include advocacy "caravans," radio public service announcements, and social media tools to invite citizen participation and feedback. Another example of a successful program working with community leaders to address a harmful traditional practice is a project the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues funded which supported public awareness programs to reduce violence against women and female genital mutilation/cutting with influential community leaders in Egypt.

Question 8:

The State Department claims to be interested in how religious freedom impacts U.S. foreign policy, but the annual International Religious Freedom report has failed to make any new designations. Is the State Department considering adding any new designations to the annual International Religious Freedom report?

I am a strong believer that advancing religious freedom is essential to a successful foreign policy, and I support the use of designations under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 as a tool to advance that objective. I would note, however, that we do not typically make Country of Particular Concern (CPC) designations at the same time as we release the annual report. We will

designate CPC countries when criteria are met. That designation can come at any time. A CPC designation for particularly severe violations of religious freedom is one of a number of possible actions that can be taken as part of a broader strategy to improve respect for religious freedom in a country. We do not wait until a country reaches the level of a CPC to encourage broad systemic reforms. We publicly catalog failures to adhere to international human rights commitments in our annual religious freedom report. We raise specific cases of religious freedom violations and abuses. We press for reforms bilaterally and multilaterally. We also fund programs to address international religious freedom concerns.

Diplomatic engagement is an essential component to achieving lasting improvements in international religious freedom and can be used to convey the consequences – including the prospect of sanctions – if a government does not take steps to rectify its violations of religious freedom. Our goal is to work constructively with foreign governments to help them improve religious freedom and to avoid conditions leading to a CPC designation.

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