

**REVIEW OF RESOURCES, PRIORITIES AND
PROGRAMS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2017
STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN
HEMISPHERE, TRANSNATIONAL
CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY,
DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS,
AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 26, 2016

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via the World Wide Web:
<http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2018

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

BOB CORKER, Tennessee, *Chairman*

JAMES E. RISCH, Idaho	BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland
MARCO RUBIO, Florida	BARBARA BOXER, California
RON JOHNSON, Wisconsin	ROBERT MENENDEZ, New Jersey
JEFF FLAKE, Arizona	JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire
CORY GARDNER, Colorado	CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, Delaware
DAVID PERDUE, Georgia	TOM UDALL, New Mexico
JOHNNY ISAKSON, Georgia	CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, Connecticut
RAND PAUL, Kentucky	TIM KAINE, Virginia
JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming	EDWARD J. MARKEY, Massachusetts

TODD WOMACK, *Staff Director*
JESSICA LEWIS, *Democratic Staff Director*
JOHN DUTTON, *Chief Clerk*

CONTENTS

	Page
Rubio, Hon. Marco, U.S. Senator from Florida	1
Boxer, Hon. Barbara, U.S. Senator from California	2
Hogan, Elizabeth, Acting Assistant Administrator, Latin America and Caribbean Bureau, USAID, Washington, DC	3
Prepared statement	5
Palmieri, Francisco, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC	10
Prepared statement	11
Malinowski, Hon. Tomasz, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC	13
Prepared statement	15

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Responses to additional questions submitted by Senator David Perdue to Elizabeth Hogan	36
Responses to additional questions submitted by Senator Marco Rubio to Francisco Palmieri	42
Responses to additional questions submitted by Senator David Perdue to Francisco Palmieri	44
Responses to additional questions submitted by Senator Marco Rubio to Tomasz Malinowski	51
Responses to additional questions submitted by Senator David Perdue to Tomasz Malinowski	56

**REVIEW OF RESOURCES, PRIORITIES AND
PROGRAMS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2017
STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST**

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2016

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE,
TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY,
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m. in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Rubio [presiding], Gardner, Cardin, Boxer, Kaine, and Markey.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO,
U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA**

Senator RUBIO. Good morning. This is a hearing of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues.

The purpose of this hearing is to review the resources, priorities, and programs in the fiscal year 2017 budget request from the President and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, as well as the USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

We will have an official panel with three witnesses: Mr. Tom Malinowski, who is the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; Mr. Francisco Palmieri, who is the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs; Ms. Elizabeth Hogan, who is the Acting Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean at the U.S. Agency for International Development. And I want to thank all of you for being with us today, and we appreciate your time and commitment to furthering the important work of this committee. And I also want to thank your staff for working with the committee and members of my staff to making this hearing possible.

Today is an opportunity to learn more about the administration's priorities in the western hemisphere and in promoting democracy and human rights around the world.

There are many challenges that we need to collaborate on in order to make U.S. programs maximally effective. Building strong democratic institutions and promoting human rights around the world is in the moral and strategic interest of the United States and should continue to be one of our top priorities.

I believe it is important for U.S. programs to be aligned with our strategic priorities and not just in the western hemisphere but throughout the world.

It is also important that U.S. taxpayer dollars are not wasted but instead are used to address significant challenges related to our national security interests. I believe Congress can continue to work in a constructive way to enhance the Department's efforts.

I hope you address these issues today in your testimonies.

And with that, I turn it over to our ranking member, Senator Boxer.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BARBARA BOXER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA**

Senator BOXER. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much.

This is an important hearing, and I want to extend my warm welcome to our guests and witnesses. It is an opportunity to examine in more detail the Department's budgetary priorities.

Our subcommittee is a very important one. It has jurisdiction over a range of matters, including the countries of the western hemisphere, as well as global responsibility for democracy, human rights, and women's issues.

While we face numerous challenges in the western hemisphere, ranging from narcotics trafficking to assisting countries in the wake of natural disasters, the region is making tremendous progress and it is rife with opportunity, due in large part to the support of the United States.

I know my chairman and I—we are friends but we disagree strongly on Cuba. So I will just say that President Obama's decision to change a failed policy was welcome news for me, and I hope it will turn out to be so for the Cuban people and the human rights activists there. It is an unprecedented moment, and I hope the Cuban people make the most of it and that the government understands that they have got to change.

We have also witnessed progress in Colombia, due in large part to the support of the U.S. negotiations between the government and the FARC that continue to move forward.

And we can look at Argentina where the United States is poised to build stronger ties. I visited Argentina a couple years ago and was so depressed and disgusted, frankly, with what I saw in that Kirchner government, and I really have hope now. And I really believe, as we see the new government saying yes, they are going to pay back the bonds and make investors at least partially whole and maybe whole, it is an important point.

In Mexico, we continue to build upon and reinforce our relationship with our close neighbor. Our ties are very important.

And I am very concerned about threats posed by the spread of the Zika virus. And I think we are going to be heard more and more on that on the floor of the United States Senate. This is an emergency. We should not be quibbling about it. It is an emer-

gency, and our people are going to get sick, really sick. And we already have I know in Florida, I have heard, 99 cases of the Zika. And it is going to happen as sure as we are sitting here and in short order.

So we need to lead on that, and we need to lead the world. I know it is very difficult. There are no sure answers. We are going to stumble and we are going to fall, but as they say, what is important is how do you get back up. Have you learned the lessons? Are you ready to make sure that we do not repeat those mistakes? Because in any kind of human relations, let alone foreign relations, we make mistakes.

So I support funding for programs that support human rights defenders and civil society organizations, those that promote religious freedom, strengthen accountability, and the rule of law.

And I thank again my chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

We will begin with the testimony from our panelists. As you are aware, we will have a vote at 11:00. We have your statements for the record, so if you could summarize them so we can get into the question rounds, that would be great. Thank you. Ms. Hogan?

STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH HOGAN, ACTING ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN BUREAU, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ms. HOGAN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Boxer, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am pleased to present USAID's plans for fiscal year 2017.

Our request of approximately \$970 million will promote the interests of the United States while also significantly improving the quality of life for those we help.

We have identified five priorities to focus our assistance where we can have the greatest impact: prosperity, good governance, and security in Central America; promoting a sustainable and equitable peace in Colombia; long-term development in Haiti; advancing democracy and human rights across the Americas; and addressing environmental threats to livelihoods.

One of our highest priorities is Central America, particularly in the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

We see prosperity, improved governance, and security, the objectives of our Central America strategy, as interdependent. We know that opening doors for citizens, especially youth at risk of gang recruitment, will bolster our efforts in security and lead to freer, more prosperous societies. That is why our prosperity programs include efforts to support small businesses and entrepreneurs, encourage private investment, train youth in job skills, and improve agricultural productivity. These efforts to grow prosperity are only sustainable in an environment where democratic values and institutions flourish, human rights are respected, and civil society and the media can play their rightful roles.

To that end, our governance programs are aimed at reforming institutions to root out corruption, strengthening civil society's ability to hold governments accountable, fostering a culture of respect for

human rights, especially for historically marginalized groups, and improving fiscal transparency. These are important programs, but ultimately it will be difficult for our prosperity and governance efforts to take root in societies that are plagued by insecurity.

Therefore, we are using tested approaches in the most violent-prone communities to create safe community spaces, provide job and life skills training, and build trust between police and residents. With sustained commitment on the part of the United States and host governments, we will help the Northern Triangle develop into a safer, more prosperous region for all those who live there.

Such sustained commitment yields results, as we have seen with the notable strides made in Colombia. In 2017, USAID is requesting \$187 million to expand upon current programming to help the Colombian Government establish a stronger presence in former conflict zones, provide post-conflict reconciliation and justice, promote inclusive rural economic growth, and sustainably manage the country's vast natural resources. These programs will build upon current successes especially for marginalized populations.

Along with Central America and Colombia, Haiti remains a high priority for USAID. Our fiscal year 2017 request will continue our efforts to help Haiti grow into a stable and economically viable country. We remain focused on promoting economic growth, job creation and agricultural advances, providing basic health care and education services, and improving the transparency of government institutions and their responsiveness to citizens. While much more remains to be done, we are committed to supporting the Haitian people as they build a more prosperous and secure future.

Throughout the region, our democracy and human rights programs address fundamental issues, including anticorruption, promotion of press freedoms and the rule of law, and support for civil society. USAID works to ensure that government institutions are open and accountable, they use public funds responsibly and effectively, and deliver critical services to citizens. We are also committed to supporting human rights everywhere we work. Underpinning all of these efforts is support and protection for a strong and vibrant civil society that can hold governments accountable.

Another challenge facing the region is the negative impact of extreme weather events. Our mitigation and adaptation efforts help reduce devastation to life, property, and economic activity. We are also speeding the development and deployment of advanced clean energy technologies and helping to create favorable legal and regulatory environments.

We have one goal in mind with everything that we do to empower countries to assume responsibility for their own development and grow beyond the need for international assistance. We use science, technology, innovation, and private sector partnerships to find new solutions and scale up what works. For every dollar we spent in the region in 2014, we mobilized five times that in private sector resources.

We take our responsibility to the United States taxpayer seriously, and we are committed to accountability, transparency, and oversight of our programs. We use a full range of monitoring and evaluation tools to track our progress and ensure that our programs are meeting goals and delivering high impact results.

With sustained commitment from countries in the region to advance their own development goals and our government's support, we are well placed for success.

Thank you to the committee for your attention and I look forward to your questions.

[Ms. Hogan's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH HOGAN, ACTING ASSISTANT
ADMINISTRATOR FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, USAID

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Boxer, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am grateful for the Committee's support for the United States Agency for International Development's work in Latin America and the Caribbean, and am pleased to have this opportunity to present our plans for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017.

INTRODUCTION

For more than fifty years, USAID has led our nation's efforts to advance dignity and prosperity around the world, both as an expression of core American values and to help build peaceful, open, and flourishing partners for the United States. This is particularly important in those countries closest to our shores: the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. Peaceful, stable, democratic societies make for good trading partners and strong allies, helping us to be more prosperous and secure here at home. Further, when we help countries in our hemisphere reinforce basic rights and encourage civic participation, foster conditions that improve prosperity and citizen security, or protect precious natural resources, we are being good neighbors.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Many Latin American and Caribbean nations have experienced monumental growth and change in the past several decades, and USAID has partnered with these countries to make important progress. Despite the global financial crisis, the region averaged a three percent annual increase in economic growth between 2000 and 2012. Health indicators have greatly improved in the region: infant mortality has declined from 43 to 16.2 deaths per 1,000 live births since 1990; maternal mortality fell from 140 to 81 deaths per 100,000 live births in the same time period; and the number of malaria cases decreased by 60 percent between 2000 and 2012.

Spurred by unprecedented engagement by ordinary citizens demanding transparency and respect for basic freedoms and rights, governments have begun significant reforms to improve the administration of justice, enhance transparency, and promote better access to justice for typically marginalized populations. And countries that once were only on the receiving end of assistance, such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, are emerging as donors eager to share their expertise, resources, and experience with developing nations around the world.

While these are impressive gains, the region still faces significant challenges. Latin America and the Caribbean continue to have some of the highest rates of income inequality in the world and economies have slowed in the face of weaker commodity prices for key exports, reduced domestic demand and investment, and worsening fiscal balances. Severe, chronic drought threatens lives and livelihoods, particularly in Haiti and parts of rural Guatemala and Honduras. Regional progress in health masks inequalities between and within countries, with the health status in select populations matching that of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Crime and violence have risen dramatically in parts of the region over the past decade; according to the United Nations' 2013 Global Study on Homicide, seven of the ten countries with the highest murder rates in the world are in Latin America and the Caribbean. And, despite democratic progress, some countries are witnessing troubling backsliding, including constraints on civil society, limits on media and freedom of the press, and increasing executive overreach.

USAID's FY 2017 request for Latin America and the Caribbean continues our long-term efforts to help the region overcome these challenges. USAID's assistance of approximately \$970 million in FY 2017 funds—a 15 percent increase over the FY 2015 enacted level of \$846 million—promotes the interests of the United States while also significantly improving the quality of life for those we help. We actively seek out local partners who understand the context on the ground, harness the expertise of the private sector and civil society to set the stage for efforts to continue

after we are gone, and develop innovative and flexible approaches that bring new solutions to longstanding challenges. With sustained commitment, we are confident that the region will make strides that enable it to develop beyond the need for United States government assistance.

CENTRAL AMERICA

One of our greatest areas of focus is Central America, particularly the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. These countries are plagued by gang violence and transnational crime, deep-seated social and economic inequity, lack of economic opportunity, and high rates of unemployment. In addition, weak government capacity and corruption continues to undermine efforts to improve security and advance prosperity. We see the consequences of this insecurity and lack of opportunity at our own border when children and families complete the dangerous, irregular journey to the United States.

We are acutely aware that this problem requires a strategic and sustained endeavor to help Central American governments, private sector, and civil society create an environment in which all of their citizens thrive. We are grateful for Congress's support for the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America. The Strategy outlines interdependent prosperity, governance, and security efforts designed to address the root causes of migration. The State Department and USAID's FY 2017 \$750 million request is part of the Administration's \$1 billion interagency request in support of the Strategy. And we have seen promising signs of the Northern Triangle governments' commitment to this same effort, outlined in their Alliance for Prosperity. The Alliance for Prosperity lays out the governments' shared pledge to grow their economies, create employment, improve public safety and enhance access to the legal system, and improve social services for their citizens, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable. We are encouraged that the governments passed budgets totaling \$2.6 billion to support the Alliance for Prosperity in 2016.

To spur greater prosperity in the Northern Triangle, USAID plans to increase our support for successful broad-based economic growth programs designed to expand business, employment, and educational opportunities for the poor and those most likely to migrate. We plan to continue successful efforts and invest in new initiatives to promote good governance and transparency, including anti-corruption programs that address chronically low tax revenue collection, improve fiscal transparency, strengthen human rights protections for vulnerable groups, empower civil society to hold governments accountable, and expand justice sector reform throughout the region.

However, it will be difficult for our prosperity and governance efforts to take root in societies plagued by insecurity. The heart of our security work is youth-focused, as we invest in programs that reach those most at risk for gang recruitment, crime, and violence. To accomplish our goals to reduce and prevent crime and violence, USAID is partnering with communities, civil society, governments and the private sector to develop crime prevention plans, invest in municipal crime observatories, create safe community spaces, expand after-school activities, provide job and life skills training, and build trust between police and residents. In some of the most violent areas and neighborhoods of these countries, our efforts are amplified by close coordination with the Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) through our shared Place-Based Strategy, which pairs community-based prevention work with interventions to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement.

We are seeing results in these three areas of strategic focus. For example, our agriculture-related prosperity programs in Honduras have been successful in reducing extreme poverty: with USAID's help, the incomes of small-scale farmers and families have increased by nearly 55 percent for more than 180,000 of the poorest individuals between 2011 and 2015. With USAID support, the Guatemalan judicial system, Office of the Attorney General, High Impact Court, and National Forensics Lab have made progress combatting impunity. And in El Salvador, analysis of our crime prevention activities points to a drop in homicides of more than 60 percent in the 76 communities where USAID targets its programming.

With sustained commitment on the part of the United States and host governments, we will build on and expand these successes into more communities and municipalities and help the Northern Triangle develop into a safer, more prosperous region for all those who live there, not just the privileged few.

COLOMBIA

Sustained commitment on the part of the United States and host governments can be successful, as we have seen with the notable strides made under Plan Colombia.

Begun in 2000, when Colombia was plagued by an active civil conflict, corruption scandals, and widespread drug cultivation, Plan Colombia was a strategy developed by the United States and the Government of Colombia to help eradicate the drug trade and bring peace and prosperity to that country. Thanks to the gains made under this strategy, a result of years of strong bipartisan support from the U.S. Congress, committed work and strategic patience, the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) are expected to sign historic peace accords in 2016.

To provide post-accord support, in February 2016, President Obama announced Paz Colombia (Peace Colombia), a collection of programs already in progress or planned to begin when the peace accords are signed. In FY 2017, USAID will manage \$187 million—a 41 percent increase over the FY 2015 enacted level of \$133 million—to expand upon current programming to help Colombian government institutions to establish a stronger presence in former conflict zones, seek post-conflict reconciliation and justice, promote inclusive rural economic growth, and sustainably manage the country's vast natural resources.

These programs will build upon several successes achieved to date. For example, thanks to USAID-funded work to implement rule of law and human rights policies, there has been a 61 percent increase in the number of cases decided by land restitution judges, and mobile justice houses have been deployed to 95 remote communities in conflict zones. To help improve prospects for traditionally marginalized groups, USAID provided workforce training to more than 9,150 urban Afro-Colombian and indigenous persons; more than 8,150 have now graduated and begun a six-month formal employment phase. USAID programs are also improving livelihoods while reducing deforestation, including by introducing more sustainable approaches to cattle ranching, agroforestry systems, and ecotourism; our efforts have helped to improve natural resource management and protect nearly 37,000 hectares of important biodiversity and ecosystems.

We are hopeful that our programs will reach a wider group when the peace accords are signed and the Colombian people vote to approve the accords. USAID is in negotiations with the Government of Colombia to take advantage of this key opportunity and expand our presence into twenty new municipalities.

HAITI

Along with Central America and Colombia, Haiti remains a high priority for USAID. The country, which is ranked 163 out of 188 on the United Nations' 2015 Human Development Index, suffers from high unemployment, political instability, and growing food insecurity due to prolonged drought. In addition, more than half of Haitians live below the World Bank's international extreme poverty line of \$1.90 per day. These challenges are severe, but we continue to be optimistic that if we find sufficient political will in Haiti, we will be able to help the country lift itself out of extreme poverty.

Funds requested for FY 2017 will continue our efforts to help Haiti grow into a stable and economically viable country. Our assistance strategy targets key development issues and specific areas of the country where we can be the most successful. We remain focused on the long-term reconstruction that has helped the country begin to turn the corner after the 2010 earthquake by promoting economic growth, job creation, and agricultural advances; providing basic health care and education services; and improve the transparency of government institutions and their responsiveness to their citizens.

We have seen encouraging signs that our assistance is improving lives. To help build the economy from the ground up, USAID facilitates access to finance, which is one of the major constraints to economic development in Haiti. Thanks to USAID's work with local micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises, we have helped to create close to 10,000 jobs due in large part to equity financing in the form of matching grants or training in topics such as product quality control and business development services. In addition, many of these companies and others now have access to bank credit due to loan guarantees that we have provided under our \$57 million Development Credit Authority. Moreover, we have recently awarded more than \$11 million for capacity development services and small grants to local Haitian organizations.

Our progress extends into other areas, as well. The 10-megawatt power plant USAID helped build near the Caracol Industrial Park in the North connects more than 8,000 households, businesses, and government institutions to reliable power; this is the first time in history many of those affected have ever had dependable electricity, and small businesses are flourishing there. USAID is helping the Government of Haiti make this electric utility financially sustainable, which will lead

to a public-private partnership for its ongoing operation and maintenance. In agriculture, we worked with small-scale farmers and helped to double the income of 60,000 farmers through an increase in productivity, better yields, and the introduction of new technology. And we are identifying where we can successfully work with Haitian Government ministries so that they can better serve their citizens. For example, we work closely with the Ministry of Health to help them provide quality health care. One area of collaboration is the rehabilitation of critical health infrastructure. As part of this effort, USAID is helping to construct a new maternity and pediatrics ward at Justinien Hospital in Cap-Haïtien and reconstruct the National Campus of Health Sciences in Port-au-Prince.

Haiti's political environment continues to be challenging; for progress to continue we need demonstrated political will, stability, and good governance. We are eager to see the presidential elections completed as soon as possible. We will maintain our engagement with Haiti through various efforts, including by working with the Haitian diaspora who bring unique skills and knowledge to projects and technical sectors. The course of Haiti's future ultimately depends on Haitians themselves. While much more remains to be done, we are committed to supporting the Haitian people as they build the more prosperous and secure future they deserve.

ENCOURAGING DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Our programs will only be sustainable under conditions where democratic values and institutions flourish, citizens can depend on basic social services, impunity is reduced, and civil society and the media can play their rightful roles. Increasing violence and citizen insecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean have eroded citizens' confidence in democratic institutions and practices. Weak judicial institutions, often plagued by corruption, have historically contributed to impunity and public frustration. The region is host to several "closed spaces"—countries where governments generally are duly elected and populist, but ultimately prove to be anti-democratic. And illicit actors like transnational criminal organizations and gangs also limit fundamental freedoms, primarily with threats and violence against journalists, human rights defenders, and other civil society actors.

USAID's democracy and human rights programs address issues that are fundamental to democratic societies, including anti-corruption efforts, promotion of press freedoms and the rule of law, and support for civil society. To address corruption, USAID is working at national and local levels to ensure that government institutions are open and accountable, use public funds responsibly and effectively, and deliver critical services to citizens. Our assistance includes security and justice reforms, passage and enforcement of key anti-corruption and transparency legislation, and financial management strengthening. For example, in Paraguay, USAID assisted the National Procurement Agency to develop an Open Data Portal, which allows citizens to view the status of all competitive procurements, including how much ministries are spending on contracts and vendor details, thus enabling citizens to hold the government accountable. We are committed to supporting human rights everywhere we work, including in Cuba and other closing spaces where citizens are arbitrarily detained, threatened, harassed, and beaten for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights. In a region where journalists face violence and intimidation from government authorities and criminal elements, USAID runs regional press freedom programs and supports freedom of information activities across the region. To shore up the rule of law, we work with police organizations to improve effectiveness and professionalism, foster a culture of respect for human rights, and instill a community-oriented approach. Underpinning all of these efforts is support and protection for a strong and vibrant civil society that can hold governments accountable.

Despite challenges, there are notable accomplishments attributable to our work. Throughout the region, our programs have assisted journalists' efforts to expose mismanagement of Latin American government projects; nearly half of these investigative journalism reports have resulted in a government policy response. For example, in Ecuador in 2014, an investigative report on child trafficking led to a National Assembly vote to fund an awareness campaign to "Say No to Risky Migration." Thanks to our efforts to improve effectiveness and professionalism of the police in Jamaica, where USAID has worked with the Jamaica Constabulary Force for more than 15 years, reports of police soliciting bribes declined by almost 40 percent from 2006 to 2012. And to ensure that civil society remains able to operate freely, we supported the Government of Mexico's National Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, providing assistance to approximately 400 activists and journalists seeking protection from threats of violence and harassment.

ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO LIVELIHOODS

In nations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID is also working to mitigate the effects of changing climate patterns and build the resiliency of the people with whom we work by helping them implement risk-reducing practices and use climate information in their decision making. The region is home to countries that are significant greenhouse gas emitters, as well as nations with glaciers and coastal regions that are at significant risk from extreme weather events and natural disasters, and tropical forests, including the Amazon Basin, that act as valuable natural resources.

USAID programs reduce the devastation to life, property, and economic activity caused by environmental threats by helping vulnerable groups withstand and cope with catastrophic weather events, droughts, and other climate impacts. Prevention programs are also an efficient use of development resources. Indeed, evidence suggests that every dollar spent on disaster preparedness prevents an average of seven dollars in economic losses due to disasters.

We work to reduce deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions by investing in forest conservation, efforts to combat illegal logging, and promotion of sustainable land use. This kind of programming can be a helping hand that lifts people out of poverty. For example, USAID assistance in Guatemala helped small- and medium-sized enterprises and community-based organizations in the Maya Biosphere Reserve achieve environmental certification on more than 270,000 hectares, and maintain certification for nearly 500,000 hectares of forest products. At the same time, we helped these organizations foster relationships with United States and European businesses that put a premium on sustainably sourced products. These efforts reduced deforestation and resulted in nearly \$26 million in total sales of certified forest products, creating almost 4,000 jobs.

We are speeding the development and deployment of advanced clean energy technologies and helping to create favorable legal and regulatory environments. In this way, we help to attract private investors from the United States and elsewhere to maximize the use of renewable energy resources. By cutting down on imported fossil fuels, these actions will lower greenhouse gas emissions and move the region toward greater energy independence. Economic growth that is more energy efficient will be cleaner, reduce dependency on scarce foreign resources, and contribute to increased prosperity.

DOING BUSINESS DIFFERENTLY

We have one goal in mind with everything that we do: to empower countries to assume responsibility for their own development and grow beyond the need for international assistance. To this end, we are using science, technology, innovation, and private sector and trilateral partnerships to find new solutions to longstanding problems and scale up existing solutions in a more sustainable and efficient way. Our partnerships with the private sector help us to marshal the resources, innovation, technology, markets, and expertise of the business community to accelerate development. In FY 2014 alone, USAID's partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean leveraged an estimated \$189 million in private sector resources for development; for every dollar we spent in the region in 2014, we mobilized five times that amount in private sector resources. These partnerships help to connect small-scale farmers and businesses to valuable markets; provide training, education, and employment to at-risk youth; and help to increase incomes, move communities out of poverty, and improve food security for the most vulnerable.

We are increasingly employing the latest science and technology to improve health practices; introduce low-cost, high-impact seed varieties and irrigation techniques; and improve public safety. For example, in partnership with Microsoft, Cisco, Universal Service Fund, and the Jamaican Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, we are experimenting with "TV White Space," a new technology that taps unused television broadcast frequencies. This will extend high-speed, wireless internet access to remote parts of the country, improving connectivity for public service provision and training in rural areas of Jamaica.

Finally, we use innovative financing models to unlock private capital for non-traditional partners, many of which drive the region's economy. Through our Development Credit Authority (DCA), we help share risks and incentivize lending from financial institutions to micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in Colombia and Central America, for example. During FY 2015 alone, seven new DCA guarantees mobilized nearly \$140 million in private capital to support these efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean. As part of these efforts, guarantee agreements with three Colombian banks will mobilize up to \$120 million in lending to borrowers in targeted rural regions of the country.

OVERSIGHT

USAID takes its responsibility to the United States taxpayer seriously, and we are committed to accountability, transparency, and oversight of our programs. To do so, we use a full range of monitoring and evaluation tools, including survey data, performance indicators, analyses, studies, and external evaluations. Our Missions are guided by five-year strategic plans and their individual Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plans. These tools enable us to establish baselines and track the pace and status of implementation, ensure that programs are meeting goals and delivering high-impact results, and provide the flexibility needed to accommodate new needs and realities. Monitoring and evaluation tools also feed valuable data on new and effective approaches, which later inform new program designs. For example, our post-earthquake strategy in Haiti calls for port services in the North to help build viable economic centers outside of Port-au-Prince. Our initial plan was to construct a new port, but after extensive due diligence revealed economic and environmental challenges with this approach, we shifted to our current effort to rehabilitating the existing Cap Haitien port. The project is underway, with a projected completion date of 2020.

We are also helping partner governments to develop monitoring mechanisms and ensure the same oversight for assistance they receive from us. For example, our Mission in Colombia developed, and turned over to the Government of Colombia, a Consolidation Index—a combination of 41 indicators that track institutional presence, good governance and citizen participation, and regional integration—to track whether USAID and the Government of Colombia are achieving goals in increasing state presence and capacity to deliver services in critical regions. This Index provides USAID with important information related to its program performance and also provides similar relevant information directly to the Government of Colombia.

CONCLUSION

With sustained commitment from countries in the region to advance their own development goals, and our government's support, we are well placed for success. Political will, in combination with improved local capacity, leveraged resources and new partnerships, will allow us to help regional governments become more peaceful and prosperous. We would like to thank this Committee for its interest in and support for our work, and look forward to collaborating with you to address long-standing challenges and new opportunities for reform.

Thank you for your time; I look forward to your questions.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Mr. Palmieri?

STATEMENT OF FRANCISCO PALMIERI, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. PALMIERI. Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Boxer, Senator Kaine, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the fiscal year 2017 foreign assistance request for the western hemisphere. And thank you for your ongoing support of our diplomatic and assistance efforts in the hemisphere.

The administration's approach to the region improves security, strengthens the rule of law, promotes democracy and human rights, advances partnerships, and promotes prosperity and inclusive growth for all its citizens. U.S. assistance is a critical tool that supports these goals.

In our requests for Central America and Mexico, we seek to address the underlying conditions driving migration from Central America through Mexico and to the United States. The request also includes increases to support Colombia's implementation of an expected peace agreement marking the end of the hemisphere's longest running conflict. The request maintains support for key partnerships with Peru, Haiti, and the Caribbean.

The fiscal year 2017 foreign assistance request for our strategy in Central America continues support for prosperity, governance, and security, particularly for Central America's Northern Triangle, in recognition of the acute challenges these countries face. U.S. assistance through the strategy complements the investments Northern Triangle governments are making through their own development plan, the Alliance for Prosperity. They plan to spend \$2.6 billion this year on their own plan.

Continued U.S. support will be vital to Colombia's success as it seeks to implement a peace accord.

Our partnership with Mexico remains an important priority for the United States and includes a range of issues that benefit both countries, including trade and investment, energy, and security. The Merida Initiative continues to provide the framework for our bilateral security cooperation at both Federal and State levels.

Our request also includes essential democracy assistance for Cuba and Venezuela where the United States will continue to provide assistance that advances universal human rights and supports vibrant civil societies. Promotion of democratic principles and human rights remains at the core of U.S. interests in Cuba.

Our request for Haiti continues investments in infrastructure, agriculture, economic growth, basic education and health, expanded governance, democracy activities, and security. A sustained U.S. commitment is essential to build on the past gains of U.S. efforts in Haiti and to build its capacity to respond to citizens' needs.

Improving security and development in the Caribbean directly benefits U.S. interests. The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative complements Caribbean efforts to reduce crime and violence, strengthen the rule of law, and address the factors that put youth and marginalized communities at risk of insecurity.

U.S. counternarcotics assistance complements investments made by the Government of Peru and maintains our strong partnership in eradication and alternative development to coca cultivation.

I urge the U.S. Congress to fully fund this request for the western hemisphere as it advances our national security and wisely invests our resources where they can have the most significant impact.

I look forward to your questions.

And, Senator Kaine, I just wanted to point out there is a great group of students from Richmond, Virginia here today at the hearing.

[Mr. Palmieri's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRANCISCO L. PALMIERI, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF STATE, BUREAU OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Boxer, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Fiscal Year 2017 foreign assistance request for the Western Hemisphere.

The administration's approach to the region advances partnerships, seeks to strengthen democracy and human rights, improves security and strengthens the rule of law, and promotes prosperity and inclusive growth for all citizens. U.S. assistance is a critical tool that supports these goals.

In our requests for Central America and Mexico, we seek to address the underlying conditions driving migration from Central America through Mexico and toward the United States. The request includes increases to support Colombia's implementation of an expected peace agreement marking the end the hemisphere's longest

running conflict. The request maintains support for key U.S. partnerships with Peru, Haiti, and the Caribbean. The request also supports essential democracy and human rights efforts in Cuba and Venezuela.

The Fiscal Year 2017 request of \$1.7 billion includes \$750 million for the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America (the Strategy) and \$391 million for the Department and USAID for Colombia. Our request targets challenges and opportunities that impact U.S. interests. Flexibility in our assistance allows us to achieve the best return on investment for the United States. We urge the U.S. Congress to fully fund the request for the Western Hemisphere.

The Department and USAID's FY 2017 \$750 million request is part of the Administration's \$1 billion interagency request in support of the Strategy. Central America continues to have high levels of poverty, weak institutions, and heightened levels of insecurity, all of which have direct implications for the United States.

The FY 2017 foreign assistance request for the Strategy continues support for prosperity, governance, and security, particularly for Central America's Northern Triangle, in recognition of the acute challenges those countries face. El Salvador faces a skyrocketing homicide rate; Guatemala's new government is seeking to capitalize on the anti-corruption momentum that led to reform after historic elections; and Honduras is taking the first steps to implement its anti-impunity mechanism—the OAS-sponsored Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras. Addressing these challenges and achieving lasting change will require sustained commitment from the United States, the governments of Central America, and the international donor community. U.S. assistance through the Strategy complements the investments Northern Triangle governments are making through their own development plan, the Alliance for Prosperity. They plan to spend \$2.6 billion this year on the plan.

The Strategy request also includes \$305.3 million for the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) to fund models proven to improve security and prevent crime and violence. The balance of the Strategy request includes support to expand programming to improve economic prosperity and governance.

During the visit of President Santos, President Obama announced a new framework for bilateral cooperation in the event of a peace accord: Peace Colombia. Peace Colombia will focus U.S. assistance under three pillars: consolidating and expanding progress on security and counternarcotics while supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; expanding state presence and institutions to strengthen the rule of law and rural economies, especially in former conflict areas; and promoting justice and other essential services for conflict victims. The \$391.3 million bilateral request will support Colombia's implementation of a peace agreement and counter-narcotics. While negotiations continue, including on the mechanism for final approval of a peace accord, Colombia has taken significant and important steps toward achieving a just and sustainable peace that ends its decades-long conflict with the FARC. The Government of Colombia has built capacity to provide security and services for its people, but continued U.S. support will be vital to Colombia's success as it seeks to implement a peace accord. In particular, rapid progress to extend civilian security and prosperity into more municipalities during the critical early post-accord phase will be key.

U.S. assistance to the government and people of Colombia will help bring meaningful justice to victims; extend the rule of law and improve government services; promote economic development in former conflict areas; and maintain security gains. The request will continue expansion of technical assistance to additional municipalities, further strengthen justice and security institutions at the national level, significantly expand demining efforts, including civilian-military coordination and address the counternarcotics threat. Strengthening respect for the human rights of all citizens in Colombia is a goal both our countries share.

Our partnership with Mexico remains an important priority for the United States and includes a range of issues that benefit both countries, including trade and investment, energy and climate cooperation, and security. The Merida Initiative continues to provide the framework for our bilateral security cooperation at both federal and state levels. The \$117.1 million Merida request emphasizes technical assistance, capacity building, and expands support to additional Mexican states, consistent with Mexican government priorities, including its transition to an adversarial justice system and its southern border strategy. The United States and Mexico continue to jointly identify projects of mutual interest that further our shared security priorities.

The FY 2017 request also includes democracy assistance for Cuba and Venezuela, where the United States will continue to provide assistance to advance universal human rights and support vibrant civil society. The request for Cuba continues direct support for civil society. Promotion of democratic principles and human rights

remains at the core of U.S. assistance to Cuba. Assistance for Venezuela supports human rights and a diverse civil society.

The \$218 million request for Haiti continues investments in infrastructure, agriculture, economic growth, basic education, health, expanded governance and democracy activities, and security. Haiti is suffering from a destabilized economy, rising food insecurity, drought, and public health threats, among other issues. A sustained U.S. commitment is essential to build on the past gains of U.S. efforts in Haiti and to build the Government of Haiti's capacity to respond to citizens' needs for services, promote economic opportunity, and advance the rule of law and security.

Improving security and development in the Caribbean directly benefits U.S. interests. The FY 2017 request includes \$48.4 million for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) to complement Caribbean efforts to reduce crime and violence, strengthen the rule of law, and address the factors that put youth and marginalized communities at-risk of insecurity. The request focuses on training and professionalization within the police, security services, and rule of law institutions, and builds on prior year investments. CBSI emphasizes regional cooperation with our Caribbean partners, and seeks to increase the capacity of Caribbean countries to more effectively work together to define and meet current and emerging regional security challenges.

The \$81.1 million bilateral request for Peru supports continued counter-narcotics and alternative development cooperation in strong partnership with the Peruvian government. Peru remains one of the world's largest cocaine producers and the largest source of counterfeit U.S. currency. U.S. counter-narcotics assistance complements investments made by the government of Peru. The United States anticipates continuing this cooperation with the next president of Peru, whomever Peruvian voters choose.

We also continue to maintain and expand important cooperation with other countries of the hemisphere, such as Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil. While bilateral assistance levels to these countries may be small, our partnership with these nations is an important tool to advancing our shared priorities in the hemisphere, of prosperity, democracy and human rights, and security for all.

I look forward to your questions.

Senator KAINE. Can I ask are they Maggie Walker students?

VOICES. Yes.

Senator KAINE. Hey, congratulations on "We the People!" You guys are fantastic. Two of my boys went to that high school.

Senator RUBIO. Secretary Malinowski?

STATEMENT OF HON. TOMASZ P. MALINOWSKI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Senator Rubio, Senator Boxer, Senator Kaine. It is a pleasure to be here. I will say a few words about our global programs to support people who are struggling for advances in democracy and human rights around the world.

And I will start by acknowledging that this is obviously not an easy time to be doing this kind of work. It is a time, as we can all see from the headlines, when authoritarian governments beginning with big powers like Russia and China are striking out with great ferocity against freedoms of expression, association, and the press. There is the horrible war in Syria and the terror of ISIL, the mass migrations of refugees, and the fear that all of this insecurity creates even in democratic countries with all of the impact on our politics that we have seen.

Now, all of that should disturb us. I do not think it should surprise us. After all, freedom has advanced in waves over the last few decades. It has been followed by the advances in the Internet and the global civil society, which have allowed people in just about every closed society in the world to know exactly what they are

missing and to connect with each other and with people around the world to build effective movements for social change.

People often say to me that human rights is a soft issue. I think it is the hardest hard power issue there is because its advance is a threat to some of the most dangerous people in the world. If you are trying to steal an election or to stay in office for life or to profit from corruption, then of course you are going to be threatened by NGOs and by journalists who try to expose those abuses of power. Of course, you are going to fight back and you are going to fight hard and you are going to fight dirty. And that is what we are facing in many parts of the world.

But as I look around the world, I find that the good guys are still winning as many victories as they are losing, particularly when we are there to help them. Just in the last year, look at the historic elections that took place in Burma, in Nigeria, in Sri Lanka, even in Venezuela where the people have not won but they were able to manifest their enormous desire for change through an election.

So the lesson I take from that is that if we have patience and determination, if we stick with these efforts and with these programs, we are going to win more victories than the defeats that we face.

And that is where the funding that you provide my bureau, DRL, through our human rights and democracy fund comes in. It is not a lot of money. It is about \$85 million this year. We like to think of it as our venture capital fund for freedom. We are using it to get news, knowledge, and even entertainment into North Korea, an effort that we know is changing minds and awakening expectations in the most closed society on earth.

We are using it to support the legal defense of activists and dissidents in multiple countries where they are being persecuted.

We are using it to support former political prisoners in Burma so that they can contribute to building democracy there and to fight the religious hatred that threatens their democracy.

We are using it to develop and deploy cutting-edge technologies that break through China's great firewall and to protect activists in dozens of countries from cyber attacks and cyber intrusions.

We are using it to help organizations defending freedom of expression in Latin America. One of our programs recently supported a campaign that saved Ecuador's number one press freedom watchdog.

We are using it to keep civil society organizations alive in Syria where groups we funded have negotiated ceasefires, documented the crimes of the Assad regime, and organized communities to stand up to ISIL and Al Nusra.

We are using it to prevent atrocities, for example, setting up early warning systems in remote areas of the eastern Congo so that people there can call for help when they are threatened by armed groups and in Nigeria, to protect people from Boko Haram.

We are using it to help women who have escaped ISIL captivity in northern Iraq.

We are using it to support organizations that try to build trust between Muslim communities and the police in eastern Kenya so that they can unite against Al Shabaab.

We are using it to get help to people who need it faster than I think any other agency in the U.S. Government. Our emergency grant programs can get small but sometimes lifesaving amounts of money to activists and NGO's under threat in as little as 48 hours. We are using these programs right now to provide protection and assistance to some of the bloggers and others who have been threatened in Bangladesh, one of many examples.

And to save the best for last, from a fiscal standpoint at least, let me say that we also use it to support the work of NGO's and journalists that expose corruption around the world. This work has contributed to almost \$3 billion in confiscations and fines, including over \$1 billion in Justice Department seizures, which is a petty good investment for your DRL funds I would say.

So I want to thank you for the very strong support that this committee and the Congress has shown our programs over the years. And I pledge to you that with continued support, we will continue to do work that I think not only does our country proud but that makes us safer, more secure, stronger in the long run. Thank you very much.

[Mr. Malinowski's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TOM MALINOWSKI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR BUREAU

Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Boxer and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to describe how the Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Bureau (DRL) works to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in closed societies. We are grateful for the continued encouragement and support from this committee.

As you know, Secretary Kerry recently released the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, which provides an assessment of human rights conditions in countries around the world. When releasing the report, Secretary Kerry noted that we have seen important democratic gains in such countries as Vietnam, Tunisia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and Burma, though in each there are challenges that still need to be overcome. He also pointed out, however, that in many countries in the world, there are still major challenges. Seventy-two countries saw increased persecution of civil society, crackdowns on freedom of expression, and restrictions on the rule of law. Members of religious minorities are persecuted for their faith. Human rights activists are harassed, detained, abducted, and even killed for speaking out. Physical threats by state and non-state actors against journalists and editors reporting on corruption and other abuses are on the rise.

As daunting as these challenges are, countless human rights defenders and civil society organizations are courageously working to push back. We must continue to support them. DRL supports these efforts in large part through the Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) within the Democracy Fund account. HRDF has grown from \$8 million in FY 1998 to \$88.5 million in FY 2016 thanks to the generous support of Congress, including this committee. Our annual global HRDF budget request is not broken down by region. That is deliberate. DRL reacts to target democratic opportunities and challenges as they arise. By looking at our funding historically, you can see that we do operate in closed or restricted societies in all regions of the world. This past year we managed nearly 350 grants totaling almost \$500 million that benefit civil society and activists around the world in their struggle for freedom and dignity.

DRL has adjusted operating procedures and applied lessons-learned to our approach in light of ongoing repression of civil society worldwide. Doing so has enabled us to continue our work even in the least hospitable environments. We employ methods aimed at protecting the identity of our beneficiaries. Our programs are overt, are notified to Congress, and we acknowledge them publicly. But what we try to avoid is doing anything that would help an authoritarian government take repressive actions against or punish our partners or beneficiaries.

Our key priorities in FY17 include work in authoritarian states such as Russia and China, and in transitioning countries such as Burma and Tunisia. We promote freedom of religion and conscience, fight corruption and cronyism, work to break

strangleholds on access to free and credible information, combat threats against labor activists and journalists, promote worker rights and inclusive economic growth, respond to gender-based violence, promote citizen participation in electoral processes, and address the shrinking space for civil society. These initiatives are an important tool to promote long-term stability.

The majority of DRL programming is implemented in repressive, authoritarian, or transitioning countries, including where the United States has no diplomatic presence. The HRDF functions like a “venture capital fund for freedom.” DRL administers programs that enable us to be flexible, adaptable, and responsive to complex and changing situations on the ground.

Thirty governments and private sector donors now help to fund our human rights initiatives, including aiding embattled frontline NGOs, countering cyber-attacks on activists, and assisting vulnerable populations. These unique partnerships not only expand available funding, but generate broader, coordinated diplomatic support for activists. We also make sure that our programs are well coordinated with USAID and NED. USAID participates in DRL’s proposal review panels.

Some of our key programming efforts include:

Internet Freedom

One of our major HRDF programming areas is Internet freedom. Governments in countries such as China, Cuba, and Russia devise new ways of tracking and blocking online expression. In response, we support programs to assist those seeking to exercise their rights online with the tools and capacity to communicate securely and freely with one another and the outside world.

Since 2008, DRL has programmed over \$105 million in grants that defend and promote a free and open Internet worldwide. These Internet freedom programs have helped millions around the world. The battle for Internet Freedom is now being waged on a global stage between those who support an open Internet and those who see it as a tool of control. In recent months, the cold war between these two sides has reached a critical tipping point. Those who oppose a free and open Internet are devoting extraordinary technical and financial resources to further exert their control over cyberspace.

DRL has developed a high impact, low cost approach to increase the free flow of information and to deny a government’s ability to track, censor, and disrupt communications. We support the development and distribution of technology that provides uncensored access to content, tools that increase the digital security of activists, advocacy resources for human rights defenders, and research on where and how Internet controls are being applied. This approach also helps to hold accountable those who perpetrate and facilitate abusive activities.

Supporting Marginalized Populations

DRL has programs that provide direct assistance to members of religious minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and the LGBTI community.

In Nigeria, DRL supported the creation of a network of religious leaders from among the Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim communities who collaborate to encourage peaceful, interfaith coexistence and reconciliation. Through media campaigns, trainings, performances, and town hall events, the program has empowered thousands of community members to become active leaders with knowledge of conflict de-escalation strategies. As a result, former partisans with a history of engaging in sectarian violence have become peer educators and advocates for intercommunal tolerance. These young men and women have documented cases in which their action has prevented the kind of violent interactions that lead to loss of life, community instability, and reprisal attacks.

We also support efforts to combat anti-Semitism. For example, our funding supported coalition building and advocacy training with Hungarian NGOs to create a consolidated voice in advocating against anti-Semitism. This coalition was part of a broad, successful effort to oppose the erection of a statue to honor Balint Homan (the notorious anti-Semitic minister of religion and education, who co-sponsored legislation that stripped Hungarian Jews of their citizenship rights leading to mass deportation to Auschwitz). They continue the fight against anti-Semitism and all forms of hate.

The Gender Based Violence Emergency Response and Protection Initiative (GBVI) provides urgent assistance to survivors of egregious forms of gender-based violence. It helps provide critical medical, psychological, and social support as well as shelter and legal assistance. The Initiative also supports integrated training for governments, the judiciary, and key elements of civil society in implementing laws that address GBV. In 2016, trainings will be conducted in Thailand, the Philippines, South Africa, and Turkey.

In response to the kidnapping of 276 girls by Boko Haram, through the GBVI we funded an Early Warning System in Northern Nigeria, which uses communications technology to reduce response times to rebel attacks on villages from several days or weeks to within hours of threats and outbreaks. In Iraq, the GBVI provided emergency assistance, including medical, psychosocial support, and livelihood assistance to 145 survivors, including Yazidi, that were formerly held captive by Da'esh.

Our work through the Global Equality Fund is also supported by 20 like-minded governments and private sector partners to support civil society organizations promoting the human rights of LGBTI persons around the world. This support has helped over 120 LGBTI human rights defenders who are under threat be able to continue their courageous work. Nearly 500 activists received training to enhance their ability to respond to the violence affecting LGBTI communities.

Rapid Response

DRL has the ability to respond to issues in a matter of days. We have vastly expanded our capacity to assist threatened human rights activists and organizations by providing them small infusions of support—to allow them to continue their work in safety. Emergency assistance to human rights activists attacked or under threat includes paying the costs of temporary relocation, installation of surveillance cameras, and medical, legal, psychosocial, and other support services. Since 2007, DRL rapid response/emergency assistance programs have assisted more than 3,300 people and organizations in more than 98 countries.

Five years ago we launched the Lifeline: Embattled Civil Society Organizations Assistance Fund to offer emergency grants to civil society organizations advancing human rights. Sixteen other governments and two foundations have since provided support for the Lifeline Fund. It has provided emergency assistance to more than 800 civil society organizations in 88 countries and territories. For example, in Kunduz, Afghanistan, the Taliban specifically targeted independent radio stations. The fund provided emergency assistance to stations that had been looted and destroyed, allowing almost ten stations to get back on the air and continue their broadcasts.

Anti-Corruption

People around the globe demand greater governmental transparency and accountability. In partnership with USAID, DRL supports the Open Government Partnership, which is a global initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. Since 2011, OGP has grown from eight countries to 69, including Sri Lanka and Tunisia where new governments are developing national action plans in partnership with civil society to advance public sector integrity and key reforms.

DRL is also supporting transparency and anti-corruption watchdogs and cross-border investigative reporting that exposes emblematic cases of corruption. Our programs operate at both the national and the regional levels, connecting activists and journalists to facilitate the flow of best practices.

In Central America, a regional program trains journalists' to investigate failures of government accountability and instances of corruption. Journalists who participated in this program went on to expose embezzlement and had their stories picked up by several media organizations.

In Pakistan, we support the efforts of courageous journalists who work in the tribal areas, where the most extreme militants are active. Our program has trained journalists on how to conduct credible national security investigations, while at the same time protecting their personal security. In addition, we have been able to help local human rights organizations expand their documentation of egregious human rights abuses by security forces. As a result of our efforts, local efforts to hold Pakistan security forces accountable for human rights violations stand on firmer ground.

Transitional Justice & Atrocity Prevention

Around the world, legacies of atrocities cast a shadow on transitions from repressive regimes to participatory and democratic forms of governance. As part of the Department's commitment to Presidential Study Directive 10 and the interagency efforts on Atrocity Prevention, DRL has developed a number of tools to contribute to U.S. efforts in this regard. To address impunity for past atrocities, DRL created the Global Consortium for Justice, Truth, and Reconciliation (the Consortium). The Consortium creates programs to address local needs. For example, a \$1.6 million project enables Iraqi civil society to document human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed by all sides of the current conflict with Da'esh. It establishes protocols and a repository that collects, organizes, preserves, and analyzes evidence gathered to serve a wide range of future transi-

tional justice purposes. It also connects local documentation efforts with the Iraqi judiciary and traditional justice practices. To date, 29 representatives from Iraqi civil society organizations participating in the project have collected over 600 narratives from victims and witnesses of atrocities committed in Iraq. The Consortium can also respond rapidly to emerging needs in post-conflict contexts. For example, partners have responded to requests for rapid technical assistance to address issues of missing and disappeared persons in Ukraine and now Colombia.

DRL's grantee focusing on mass graves excavation has designed a refresher training course to strengthen the ability of partners from the Iraqi Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs, the Medico-Legal Institutes, criminal investigative and judicial agencies to recover and process human remains in accordance with international standards. This training package has been delivered in Erbil, allowing the relevant Kurdistan Regional Government officials to deploy to Sinjar, where many of Da'esh's atrocities took place, and begin work. DRL grantee staff will mentor and support the process.

In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a DRL-supported Early Warning System received reports that helped foil rebel attacks on villages that are home to approximately 150,000 people. The early warning system demonstrates how communications technology can reduce response times from several days or weeks to within hours of threats. It can also ensure that responders deliver coordinated and comprehensive assistance. The provincial government in this area of the DRC is now funding and managing the system on its own.

China

In China, the Communist Party's monopoly on power remains absolute. Growing numbers of people seek justice, an accountable and transparent government, and the ability to express themselves freely and to peacefully assemble and associate. The Chinese government has expanded its crackdown on human rights lawyers and their associates, civil society organizations and activists, friends and relatives of activists, everyday people expressing themselves online or seeking to practice their faith free of state control, and even foreigners and foreign organizations working on human rights issues. In Tibetan and Uighur areas, authorities have increased restrictions on fundamental freedoms.

DRL funds targeted projects that bolster civil society organizations seeking to improve respect for human rights in China. For example, DRL programs build the capacity of public interest lawyers. Other programs work to protect persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities, and those pressing for government adherence to international human rights. Additionally, DRL programs in China strengthen the advocacy skills of grassroots civil society groups, and take advantage of technological developments to enable greater freedom of expression.

Russia

The United States' commitment to engaging Russian civil society remains firm despite the enactment of laws and practices in Russia that restrict fundamental freedoms. Although the Russian government imposed restrictions on civil society organizations receiving international support, Russian organizations continue to express a desire to engage with the United States. As a result, the Administration is developing new ways to increase direct interactions between Russians and Americans. These include establishing peer-to-peer and other regional programs that support exchanges of best practices on civil society development. We remain committed to supporting the people of Russia in their pursuit of democracy, justice, and human rights, including fighting corruption and creating a more pluralistic and participatory society with viable, independent, and accountable institutions.

As part of our government's efforts to counter Russian intervention in Eastern Europe, DRL programs assisted people in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine by facilitating their access to objective and accurate information about Russia's occupation of Crimea, Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, attempts to destabilize the new Ukrainian government, and the elections. Over 200 Ukrainian and foreign journalists working on Crimea had better access to impartial and accurate information about the situation in the peninsula. They also had a safer workplace for preparing their materials and filing them to their editors. In addition, 59 media outlets in the eastern and southern regions received small grants and produced 857 media reports; 105 journalists received needs assessments and digital security training to allow them to continue their work safely and securely.

Burma

The United States policy of principled engagement in Burma encouraged leaders to undertake democratic reforms. Since May 2013, DRL support has enabled the As-

sistance Association of Political Prisoners to provide mental health counseling to more than 1,000 released political prisoners, family members, and victims of torture in Burma. Helping these courageous people reintegrate into Burmese society has furthered their continued participation in Burma's political transition. A strong civil society must serve as Burma's moral compass as the country confronts challenges of bigotry and prejudice. These lessons apply to other authoritarian environments. The dividends from our assistance may not show immediately, but can deliver meaningful long-term change.

Tunisia

During my trip to Tunisia last year, one of the key needs my interlocutors identified was strengthening the parliament. Parliamentarians, who have no staff, sought access to the resources and expertise they need to draft and review legislation. We are in the process of establishing a new program to provide members of parliament non-partisan and credible resources to further democratic reforms, including in the areas of human rights and rule of law. The program will ensure that parliamentarians have access to a library of country-specific materials, including fact sheets, briefing materials, research papers, statistical profiles, and other forms of short, written analyses, to enhance their ability to effectively engage on key reforms.

The 2015 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, comprised of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, the Tunisian Human Rights League, and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers. The award cited its "decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy in Tunisia in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011." The Quartet's work demonstrates the important role trade unions can play in helping to build and maintain democratic institutions. The labor movement in Tunisia, and UGTT in particular, played a critical role moving Tunisia from dictatorship to democracy. It effectively promoted and mediated peaceful dialogue between citizens, political parties, and authorities. DRL supported the UGTT's Women's Committee campaign and its efforts to increase women's representation in decision making union structures. UGTT women activists played a prominent role in get out the vote campaigns for the national elections. A current DRL supported program in Tunisia aims to formalize Tunisia's large informal sector so that workers might access decent work and government-mandated protections.

Western Hemisphere

The Western Hemisphere presents new opportunities as well as longstanding challenges. Throughout the region, despite restrictions on freedom of expression and association, citizens have used the democratic process to change the status quo. The people of Argentina chose a new government committed to supporting human rights and democracy in the hemisphere. We look forward to working with the new government of Argentina on the most pressing issues in the region. The Venezuelan people used their parliamentary elections to overwhelmingly reject the course their ruling party had set. We urge the Maduro administration to cease its efforts to restrict the powers of the National Assembly and instead to enter into a dialogue with it. The release of political prisoners would be a welcome preliminary step. The people of Bolivia voted to reject removing term limits from the constitution. We believe these democratic manifestations have been possible in part due to the strong support the United States has shown for those in each of these countries who have worked to counter efforts to undermine democratic institutions. And that effort must continue, including in Ecuador, where criminalizing dissent is a frequent strategy for silencing opposition.

Across the hemisphere, people have also exercised their right to peacefully assemble and demand an end to corruption and impunity. In Guatemala, public outcry supported the efforts of the Public Ministry and the Commission to Combat Impunity in Guatemala that led to criminal corruption charges against the now former president and vice president. Current corruption and impunity challenges in Guatemala are intrinsically linked to past human rights violations and abuses. A DRL program supported the identification of 97 victims of Guatemalan atrocities. This information was used as principal evidence in the unprecedented arrest of 14 military officers for crimes against humanity, including those involving enforced disappearance, murder, and torture.

DRL strengthens the capacity of local organizations to record and report threats and violence against human rights activists, including labor leaders. In Guatemala and Honduras, DRL programs have bolstered national networks of labor unions, rural worker organizations, and non-governmental organizations. This has generated coordinated mechanisms for identifying violent incidents and demanding government responses. A DRL-supported project in Guatemala is assisting a major cof-

fee company in mapping its supply chain. After conducting over 300 interviews of internal migrant workers, the project implementer is providing the company with increased visibility into the coffee supply chain, its associated workforce, and recruitment abuses by tagging “red flags” that will be linked to specific labor brokers and suppliers.

We are also committed to supporting the people of Cuba as they seek the basic freedoms that their government denies. During his visit to Cuba in March, President Obama spoke openly to Cubans about the importance of freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. He called for free and fair elections, and pledged U.S. support for these aims. He also met with many brave activists who are struggling to promote democracy and human rights on the island. He emphasized that Cuba’s future is for the Cuban people to design.

Consistent with this message, DRL programs in Cuba respond to the needs and wishes of the Cuban people, by promoting human rights, facilitating the flow of uncensored information, and strengthening independent civil society. Cuban government restrictions on civil and political rights increase the degree of difficulty of program implementation. But despite these challenges, DRL has been able to sustain consistent support to Cuban civil society for the past 10 years, and we will continue to do so with your support. As the President has made clear our new approach to Cuba is not based on the premise that the human rights situation there has improved; rather it is based on the belief that we will be better able to support the demands of the Cuban people if we keep the focus on the Cuban government’s policies rather than allowing the regime to blame American policies for its problems.

Conclusion

When taking stock of the challenges at hand, some fear democracy is in retreat. I would argue, however, that these challenges are a reaction to the rising demands of people from every culture and region for governments that answer to them.

Governments that protect human rights and fundamental freedoms are more stable, successful, and secure than those that do not. American workers are better off when their counterparts abroad can stand up for their basic rights. The United States finds its strongest partners in governments that act in the broad interests of their own people, rather than the narrow interests of the few.

We must continue supporting civil society and pressing governments to halt arbitrary detentions and uphold freedom of expression.

This is the work of decades, not days. But, we must also seize opportunities to make an immediate difference for democracies under threat or in countries in transition. As the 2015 National Security Strategy affirms, “America is uniquely situated—and routinely expected—to support peaceful democratic change.” Careful stewardship of the resources allocated to DRL enables us to advance U.S. foreign policy priorities in this regard, and we stand ready to do our part.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Secretary Malinowski, my first question is on the issue of human rights and the President’s visit last week to Saudi Arabia. There are in particular two cases: Raif Badawi and Waleed Abu Al-Khair. Do you know if either one of these cases were raised in those meetings, and what are we doing to pressure? There was a bipartisan letter—a group of Senators—last week urging the President to make human rights a priority during his meeting with the king. Were these cases raised during that meeting, and if not, what else are we doing regarding these two people that are jailed unjustly?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. These cases have been raised, including at the very highest levels, more than once with the Saudi Government. And I know that the President in his meeting with the king had an extensive conversation about human rights in Saudi Arabia. I think you may have seen some stories about how intensive that conversation was.

We will, I can pledge to you, continue to raise those cases and others both privately with the Saudi Government and publicly where appropriate until people who are unjustly detained for peaceful expression, as these individuals are, are released.

Senator RUBIO. Recently the administration made its countries of particular concern designations. Notably absent from the list was Pakistan. A recent example of religious intolerance was the horrific Easter attack in Lahore. What would have to happen in your view for Pakistan to be designated as a country of particular concern?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I think there are a lot of tough calls when the Secretary makes these decisions. I think the test is not simply whether there are significant abuses of religious freedom in a particular country but whether we feel that there is a commitment within the government to try to something about it. And it is an evaluation that the Secretary makes on a case-by-case basis. We added a country this year. We added Tajikistan because after a lot of diplomatic efforts with the government, we were simply not getting a sufficient or acceptable response from that government to our requests for action on certain issues. With respect to Pakistan, the Secretary made the judgment that the government is committed to trying to deal with this violence.

Senator RUBIO. The Secretary recently made his genocide designation. What steps has the Department taken to prioritize especially vulnerable communities like the ancient Christian or Yazidi communities which have found themselves in the crosshairs of ISIS?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. This has been a burning priority for many of us since this conflict with ISIL began. I was in northern Iraq about a month ago, Mr. Chairman. I visited the main Yazidi religious shrine in Lalish just a few miles north of the front line with ISIL. As I mentioned in my testimony, we have a lot of programs that we are funding to provide direct support, not just humanitarian assistance, but also psychosocial support for people who have faced violence, escaped captivity on the part of ISIL. As you know, the first shots that we fired in this war to liberate territory in Iraq from ISIL were fired to protect the Yazidi people on Mount Sinjar when they were surrounded by the terrorists. And I think that this is something that we need to think about with particular focus in the next stage of the military campaign as it focuses more closely on Mosul and the Ninawa plain.

I think many, many Members of Congress rightly urged us to look at the genocide determination and to call what was happening to the Christians, to the Yazidis, to other minorities by its name, but using the terminology is the easy part. The important thing is that we find a way to liberate these historical home lands of these people in a way that not only defeats ISIL, not only drives away the terrorists, but that enables these communities to go home with dignity and with security. And frankly, that is going to take resources, and I think we are going to be working with you and reaching out to you to talk about what it is going to take to do this in the right way so those people can go home.

Senator RUBIO. When you say it takes resources, what additional budget resources are necessary to—

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I am probably not the best person to ask what the total cost of the—

Senator RUBIO. What kind of programs?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. It is going to require support for, in the short term, IDPs. For example, as Mosul is squeezed, there will almost

certainly be hundreds of thousands of people fleeing that city. There are 2 million people in Mosul, as you know. Those people are going to need to be cared for somewhere by somebody. It is going to require stabilization funds after the liberation of that area for rebuilding, for restoring institutions of justice. It is going to require training and support for local security forces, including I would say some of the local security forces that communities, including the Christian communities, have been forming in that area. We are already beginning to work with those folks. But I think if you look at the various appeals, including the U.N. appeal just for the humanitarian support, you will find that a lot more is needed.

Senator RUBIO. Secretary Palmieri, last year there were over 8,600 documented political arrests in Cuba. Cuba remains the only country in the Americas to be classified as not free by Freedom House, and groups such as Human Rights Watch provide details on the myriad of ways that basic rights and liberties are still not respected in Cuba. In light of all of this, why then would the administration request a reduction from the \$20 million that is provided annually in recent years in funding to democracy assistance for the Cuban people?

Mr. PALMIERI. Thank you for the question, Senator.

The fiscal year 2017 request seeks to establish a sustainable level of democracy support in Cuba. We believe the human rights situation there merits continued attention, and our assistance is designed to work with independent civil society, promote democratic values, human rights, and advance fundamental freedoms. The level of funding is one that we believe we can execute on the ground there.

Senator RUBIO. So you are saying that we do not think we can spend \$20 million. We cannot find programs to fund with the \$20 million. So that is why you are asking for less? It is very unusual for a government agency to ask for less. That is why I am bringing up this point. Why would we ask for less?

Mr. PALMIERI. We believe that is the sustainable level of programming that we can carry out inside Cuba.

Senator RUBIO. But what does that mean "sustainable"? The amount you can get funded in the future or sustainable like that is how much you can handle?

Mr. PALMIERI. It is a combination of the amount of money that we believe can be absorbed inside Cuba at this time.

Senator RUBIO. That was not the feeling 2 years ago? Is that a change in position? Because a couple years ago, the funding was at \$20 million. So what happened with the additional money that was appropriated in those past years?

Mr. PALMIERI. I will have to get back to you on what happened to the previous funding, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Well, my point is you are saying that you do not believe the island can sustain \$20 million of spending on democracy programs, there is not enough precedent to fund or that we can sustain \$20 million. So that is why you are asking for less. But in past years, there has been more money. Are you saying that money was not spent? If you are spending less this year than you were in the past, something that you funded in the past is not getting funded now. Is that not correct?

Mr. PALMIERI. I am sorry, sir.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Yes, we have spent slightly more than \$15 million in the past.

I mean, I think what we face every time we make these requests, to be honest, is overall, as you well know, a diminishing pool of resources to do almost everything that we want to do around the world. The way I look at this, Senator Rubio, obviously, as the head of the Democracy and Human Rights Bureau, I always welcome as much spending as we can do in any country in the world that needs it. I have got, as I have mentioned, about \$85 million globally for every single country, every single continent in the world to spend on democracy and human rights programs. And I could probably spend more in every single country where we are doing this kind of work. Cuba at this point, I think next to Iraq, is the country that receives the most human rights and democracy support of any country in the world. And it merits it, given the challenges, given the importance that this issue has to the United States.

But I sometimes look at it and say, gosh, I would love to have more. Sometimes I look at it and say, you know, I would rather have more than \$200,000 for a country in Africa or a country in Asia where that is all we have got to deal with these issues. So those are some of the choices I think—

Senator RUBIO. So this is basically a part of a reallocation of resources to be spent somewhere else within a limited budget.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I think we have a very limited budget, I would say too far limited for democracy and governance around the world. You know the challenges that we have had overall in trying to maintain an adequate level of spending for democracy and governance in a lot of places that we all care about greatly. Cuba is one of them. So it is certainly not a reallocation away from supporting democracy and human rights, but we have hard choices to make within the limited amount of money that we have for that. Obviously, I would love us to be able to do more in a lot of places.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Boxer?

Senator BOXER. Well, I would like you to be able to do more. I watched you do it in the nonprofit sector, and I think you could do it here as well.

I want to get back to the Zika virus because I think this is an absolute threat to this country. So, Ms. Hogan, I am going to direct this question to you. There is no doubt the Zika virus is a public health emergency. It has infected thousands people in the western hemisphere, including over 300 Americans. It causes severe birth defects in newborns, including brain damage and blindness. In adults, it is linked to Guillain-Barre syndrome which can cause paralysis.

In the last few months, the World Health Organization described the Zika threat as, quote, one of alarming proportions. And earlier this month, an official from the Centers for Disease Control described the virus as, quote, scarier than we originally thought. Unquote.

We also have learned that Zika is sexually transmitted.

Now, in our country, the most endangered Americans are those who live in the Gulf States. It is clear that these types of epidemics know no boundaries. So we have to respond quickly.

In February, the President requested a \$1.9 billion emergency supplemental for Zika. A portion of this request would go to USAID to help fight the spread of the virus within the western hemisphere. Unfortunately and sadly and inexplicably, Congress has not provided the administration with the funding it needs to respond to this outbreak. And those who oppose it are going to be held accountable. It is as simple as that.

Time makes a big difference in these kind of epidemics. The longer we wait, the more people get infected, the more lives are painfully altered forever. We have seen it. It is coming as sure as I am looking at you.

So I am asking you with your limited funds what efforts is USAID already undertaking to combat the spread of the Zika virus in the western hemisphere.

I am told by some of my Republican friends, some of whom support this, a lot of whom do not, take the money from Ebola. Well, swell. That is a whole other problem, and that is not the answer.

So I want to know what you are doing with your limited funds and do you agree we have a great need for the funds the President asked for.

Ms. HOGAN. Thank you for that question and we share your deep concern about the potential impact of Zika in the region, including in the United States.

As you know, in addition to the \$1.8 billion supplemental that the President has requested, he has also sent forward a CN to repurpose \$295 million from our Ebola account to deal with immediate needs. Thus far, USAID has conducted assessments around the region, particularly in those countries where health systems are weak, and we have developed a strategy which we are ready to launch. Our strategy would include social behavior change, communications, vector control, investing in new diagnostic techniques, investing in research and development.

Senator BOXER. Excuse me for interrupting. Can we diagnose it? Is it easy to find out if someone is carrying the virus?

Ms. HOGAN. CDC is the expert in this area, but I know that they can diagnose it. To do it more rapidly and more inexpensively is what we are hoping to bring about through a grant challenge that USAID just issued last week to the private sector for \$30 million to invest in innovative technologies and innovative approaches to do the kinds of things that I just mentioned in terms of diagnostics.

Senator BOXER. Okay. So to sum it up, you are doing everything you can with limited resources, but it is a race against time. You know, Mr. Chairman, from my understanding, we have so much—and I know you are supporting taking action on this. I am so grateful to you. We do not even know how long the virus stays in your system, and since it is sexually transmitted, you know, couples planning to have children—they better know the situation, whether the man is infected and can pass it on. It is very problematical.

I raise it here because it is one of those unusual situations where there is a direct impact for Americans that is going on in another part of the world. We have got to connect the dots. This is not some foreign policy matter. This is a health emergency. And I will be continuing to speak about it.

Mr. Malinowski, over the last 14 years, Afghan women have made progress in education, health, and political representation. I have been engaged every time I can in meeting with the women. And while President Ghani is a strong partner on women's issues, it is clear that women continue to face grave barriers, especially in regard to their legal rights.

Last year, for instance, a mob brutally killed a woman falsely accused of burning the Koran. This horrific murder happened in central Kabul in broad daylight in the presence of security officials. Disturbingly, the Afghan supreme court recently vacated the death sentences of four men charged with this murder and reduced the sentences of nine others. This is but one example of ways in which Afghanistan's legal system continues to fail Afghan women.

How will the U.S. continue to work with Afghanistan to bolster the legal rights of Afghan women?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, thank you for that question. I am sure I will not do justice to every aspect of it or everything that we are doing.

With respect to the Afghan judiciary, one of the steps that President Ghani intended to take was to appoint the first woman or women to the Afghan supreme court. When I saw him last, I urged him to do that. He said that he was committed to it. He has been unsuccessful. His appointments there have been blocked.

Senator BOXER. Well, wait a minute. Where are they learning how to block appointments to the supreme court?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Their system I think—

Senator BOXER. I am only kidding.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Oh, sorry.

Senator BOXER. That was a bad joke.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I was heading toward the same joke.

Senator BOXER. Okay. Never mind.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I am resisting all kinds of ways of—

Senator BOXER. Resist.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. At a lower level, but at a very important level, we have done a lot of work with local justice institutions in Afghanistan through training and other assistance programs to help them implement the new violence against women law, which has been one important advance in that country.

We have a program out of my bureau which supports sending talented young Afghan women to a university for women in Bangladesh. We have established a really interesting and important program there. And the women who graduate from that program often then go back to Afghanistan and enter government, enter the justice system. So at a grassroots level, just encouraging more and more women to take up positions in the justice system has been an important priority for our programming.

Senator BOXER. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you to all the witnesses for your time and testimony today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

Just a couple questions for you, Mr. Malinowski. I wanted to start with North Korea, if I could. The legislation that the Senate and House passed, signed by the President just a couple months

ago requires designation of human rights violators in North Korea, an investigation of those human rights violators.

Our of curiosity, how are those investigations going, and do you have any intention of naming people under the legislation passed by Congress? And if so, who and when?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. We are working very hard on identifying people. I have often spoken publicly about this. I think one of the most important things that we can do for human rights in North Korea is to send a message inside the system there to the mid-level people, to the camp commanders, to the people in the public security ministries who are responsible for the worst abuses that, guess what, we know who you are. We know your names. And some day when there is change on the Korean peninsula, you are going to be on a list that you do not want to be on if you are associated with those abuses.

Figuring out who those people are is not always easy for reasons that I am sure you will understand. We are working with our partners, including with the South Koreans, to try to figure this out. We have made some progress.

Yes, we do intend to use the sanctions authority. In fact, as you know, the President's executive order before the legislation passed created a human rights sanctions authority for the same purpose. I cannot tell you who because we are not there yet. The "when," hopefully as soon as possible.

Senator GARDNER. Will you be looking at the highest levels of government, though, for these sanctions?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. We will be. We can look at individuals. We can also look at ministries. I will tell you my preference in terms of effectiveness, because I do not want to just say Kim Jong Un is a bad guy. We all know that. My preference would be to try to identify some of the people who are less well known in order to send that message that actually we do know who they are and there may be some consequence in the future if they are associated, for example, executions in the prison camp system and the rest.

Senator GARDNER. We did provide additional authorities under the legislation in order to communicate with the North Korean people to find ways to build cheap and efficient and effective communication channels in order to get the message out about the atrocities of the Kim Jong Un regime. And hopefully those authorities—Senator Rubio, Chairman Rubio, was a critical part of that—will be utilized and helpful in getting the word out about the acts that these people are carrying out.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Absolutely, and I am grateful for that. We already have some very interesting and creative programming from old-fashioned methodology like radio broadcasting to newer ways of getting information to people in the North. There are about 3 million cell phone contracts amazingly in North Korea right now. So people are communicating with each other and also with people outside the country in surprising ways. And there are a lot of folks working on delivering content that will raise awareness, that will bring information to people in North Korea about simple things like what life is like outside of the country. We fund some of that out of my bureau, and I think there is room for a lot more.

Senator GARDNER. China in the past has had a policy of returning North Korea defectors to the regime. Are you in conversation with China about changing that policy? Is China still intending to change that policy? And how is that dialogue taking place?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. We have raised this many times with the Chinese Government, as have some other countries in the region. It has been a difficult conversation. I would note that there are some cases recently in which China has allowed people to move on who have sought asylum. I think there were some North Korean workers in Beijing recently who managed to get themselves to South Korea without objections from the Chinese Government. So we will have to see. But it is an important issue and one we continue to raise.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Malinowski.

And a couple more questions. According to news reports, the week after President Obama visited—I will give you the quote from the news reports. The week after U.S. President Barack Obama's visit, things in Cuba have returned to normal. More than 150 activists were arrested on Saturday in demonstrations demanding the release of political prisoners. Is that an accurate assessment? How many political prisoners are there today in Cuba that we are aware of, and has there been an increase or a decrease in the number of these arrests and jailed since our policy change toward Cuba?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. The big distinction here is between long-term political prisoners, most of whom have been released, and the short-term harassment, often violence that is inflicted on people who try to hold meetings, organize rallies, discussions to engage in the politics of the island. That has absolutely not let up. I think there were a couple of thousand of those short-term detentions in the first 3 months of this year. And I think it reflects both the highly repressive tendencies of this government which we know extremely well, but also I think their nervousness about the changes that are taking place in our relationship and the hemisphere.

I think it was very interesting to see the reaction of the Cuban Government to President Obama's visit after the fact. Fidel Castro basically left his bed to deliver a speech denouncing President Obama. He said we do not need any gifts from the empire. President Obama's syrupy words about brotherhood and shared history were enough to give Cubans a heart attack he said. Raul Castro made similar statements. You know, it seems like the only argument these guys had for the last few years is the myth of American hostility towards Cuba, and we have completely destroyed that myth in the eyes of the Cuban people. And they have got nothing else, and I think they are extremely nervous and insecure as a result of that.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And if I could, I will just introduce you to these students who are here. Maggie L. Walker High School in Richmond is a school for governmental and international studies. It is in the neighborhood where I live. It was a vacant and abandoned building when I got elected to the city council in 1994, and over the course of about 7 years, we worked with governments in the region to build it into

this high school that is now commonly ranked as one of the 25 best public high schools in the United States. And these students are here as part of a constitutional competition that they have been participating in, and I am really happy to have them here. And with the school's focus on governmental and international studies, this is a good hearing to be at.

I had the opportunity last week to ask some questions of both Ms. Hogan and Mr. Palmieri with respect to the Northern Triangle. And I am going actually focus more of my questions to Secretary Malinowski today on human rights issues.

Yesterday, I had a wonderful meeting with Senator Baldwin and Senator Coons with an inspirational city council woman in Istanbul, Sedef Cakmak, who is here. She founded the Istanbul Pride Parade in 2003, and there were 30 marchers. By 2014, there were over 80,000 marchers, and last year the Turkish Government used water cannons to shut the march down and disperse everyone after it had grown so large.

She was here visiting us to talk about ways in which the United States could be helpful. And when Senator Coons asked her, tell us how we can help human rights in Turkey, this was her answer. And I wanted all of you to hear this because it is about your colleagues. She said the help that we have had that has enabled us to do what we have done has been the United States. The support of the U.S. ambassador, the support of the U.S. consul in Istanbul has enabled the LGBT community in Turkey to not avoid persecution and hostility, as my story about the Pride Parade being dispersed suggests, but they have enabled us to finally at least come out of the shadows to some degree and organize. And she really said that there had been no greater friend.

So when we asked what we could do to help, she said the main thing you can do to help is just thank our diplomats and folks with the State Department who have been our allies.

Talk to me a little bit about the work that you are doing in your bureau with respect to LGBT rights around the world because whether it is in Turkey or Russia or Africa or other countries, we see serious, serious challenges. Please tell a little bit about how we factor that into our diplomacy.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Of course. Well, first of all, it is a very heartening story that you just told and I will pass that on personally to Ambassador Bass, who is one of our best ambassadors on so many different scores. And I know that he has been particularly principled in reaching out to the LGBT community and to the broader activist community in Turkey, which is facing a lot of challenges right now.

I would say, first of all, it begins with recognition of the legitimacy and dignity of people around the world who are working for the human rights of LGBT people and simply asserting their own rights to live in safety and in dignity and simply reaching out, meeting with these folks, as you mentioned, in Turkey is an important part of it. I try to do it on all my trips. Other senior U.S. officials do as well or are seen doing it. That makes a difference.

We provide material support to people who are on the front lines of the struggle. We have in our little DRL budget something called the Global Equality Fund, which we have now gotten other govern-

ments to contribute to as well. It is one of those emergency funds that I mentioned in my opening statement and that we can deliver \$3,000 in 48 hours to someone who needs help for security, for travel, for basic support for an NGO that is doing good work, sometimes for legal support. There have been successful legal challenges in various countries around the world to highly restrictive, repressive anti-gay laws that we have provided some support to.

And then just at a rhetorical level. And we are very, very careful in our public statements not to suggest that this is about carving out special rights for special kinds of people. What we are talking about is simply basic human rights that everybody in the world enjoys. Whether they are straight or LGBT, no one should be discriminated against, no one should be subject to violence, no one should be persecuted because of who they are. And I think that message increasingly resonates in countries even where there is nervousness about the advance of this issue.

Senator KAINE. We met Sedef Cakmak—a number of us—in Istanbul in early January. We were with her right in the heart of the city near the Blue Mosque about two days before the bombing there that occurred in early January. A very wonderful advocate. And she definitely connects the feelings of government persecution of the LGBT community to the worries that other religious minorities or political opponents are feeling in Turkey. This is not a hearing about Turkey. I would like to delve into that further at another moment.

Let me switch to another area within your bailiwick and that is press freedom. Again, around the world, we are seeing—Turkey is a good example. Russia is a good example. Honduras, sadly. I lived in Honduras, a journalist at Radio Progreso, which is a Jesuan radio station in El Progreso, Honduras where I worked with the Jesuit community there 35 years ago. Carlos Mejia Orellana was killed 2 years ago and a number of other journalists have been killed as well.

I think the chair alluded to some freedom of press questions in his opening comments. This is so fundamental. And again, if you see a government cracking down on a free press, you can pretty much bet they are going to be cracking down on political opponents. They are going to be trying to engage in other authoritarian activity. As much as we in politics sometimes rankle under a free press that is free and robust and challenging, we sure would not trade it for anything else.

Tell us how the State Department through your bureau tries to advance the notion of protecting freedom of the press around the world.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. First of all, when a government cracks down on free press, we speak out about it and we talk to them about it in our high level diplomatic engagements. We have done it with Turkey. We have done it with Egypt where we have worked really, really hard to get journalists out of prison. We have done it in China. Sometimes we are successful. Sometimes we are less so. But journalists are persecuted because they are doing effective, hard-hitting work, and I think particularly at a time when the issue of anti-corruption is coming to the fore in many countries around the world, it is making a lot of governments that are corrupt nervous

about the work of a free press that is uncovering their secrets. And oftentimes you will find that we are supporting that kind of work not just rhetorically because we have an interest in accountable, good governance, and without a free press, we are not going to get one.

More generally, we also have programs that are specifically designed to help train journalists in difficult environments to stay safe, programs in digital safety, physical safety that obviously do not provide 100 percent protection, but I think are very helpful to journalists who are facing very real danger in the work that they do.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator RUBIO. Just a quick question. You asked about the LGBT community in Istanbul. Is that criminalized under Turkish law? You were talking about government persecution. Under what form?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I will have to get back to you on that. I do not know if it is one of the countries where it is criminalized, but I will get back to you on that.

[The information referred to above was not received in time to be included in this publication.]

Senator RUBIO. Okay.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me thank all of our witnesses for their extraordinary work that they do every day on behalf of human rights.

Mr. Malinowski, I want to ask you a couple questions, if I might. First, the Russian media has been very actively engaged to try to rewrite history as to what happened in Sergei Magnitsky and his tragic arrest, torture, and death. The United States—the administration has used its inherent authority to grant certain types of sanctions against those who perpetrated those crimes in Russia and has also used the authority under the Magnitsky law that was passed.

Can you just comment as to the basis for imposing those sanctions as it relates to the allegations that have been made by the Russian press?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. One thing I have learned about our sanctions programs in this job is how high the bar is for our lawyers, our investigators, the folks who determine whether a particular individual meets the criteria that Congress has laid out for application of a particular sanction. And I can tell you in the Magnitsky case, we rely on multiple sources of information in making these determinations. It is reviewed by many people in the United States Government who have to be confident that the information is credible before we put somebody's name on that list. The Justice Department is involved. The Treasury Department is involved, in addition to the State Department. And we are very, very confident that the people who are on that list deserve to be on that list based on hard evidence.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for that. There have been several people who have been sanctioned as a result of it, and there has

been congressional involvement working with the administration on this issue. It is clear with the information that we have received the type of conduct that they perpetrated in Russia to a person who was trying to bring to the attention of the authorities a corrupt situation and in fact became a victim, arrested, tortured, and lost his life. I thank you for clarifying that point.

I want to move on to a tragic situation in Azerbaijan. We are seeing an increase in the number of political prisoners in that country and their oppression against those who differ with the government. One of those cases, Khadija Ismayilova, a political prisoner and Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty reporter, is currently serving a 7 and a half year sentence in Azerbaijan on charges many human rights organizations regard as politically motivated. She has been a tireless reporter on corruption in the country and it is widely believed that she was targeted for her work.

Could you just comment as to what diplomatic tools we have available in order to raise this issue?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, I would say, first of all, that we have called and will continue to call for the release of Khadija Ismayilova. We are very well aware of her case.

In the last several weeks, we have engaged very intensively with the Government of Azerbaijan on human rights issues. It has, I think, contributed to actions by the Government of Azerbaijan to release a number of people who we consider to be political prisoners, including Intigam Aliyev, an internationally recognized human rights lawyer, Rasul Jafarov, and Anar Mammadli who is the chairman of their election monitoring and democratic study center. We have seen some, I think, very positive steps by the Government of Azerbaijan in response to our engagement.

But we would certainly agree with you that the good news that we have seen is not yet enough. There are still others in detention who should not be, including Khadija Ismayilova, and we very strongly believe that releasing the remaining political prisoners and more broadly expanding freedom of expression and freedom of the press in Azerbaijan would be good for that country's future and good for our relationship with Azerbaijan.

Senator CARDIN. And lastly, let me just raise the tragic death that we saw in Bangladesh just a few days ago of a USAID employee, Xulhaz Mannan, who founded the Bangladesh first LGBT magazine. That murder is still being investigated from the point of view of responsibility. We know that an ISIL-related group claimed responsibility. But this is just outrageous, and I would hope that the administration will keep a bright spotlight on this tragic death and make sure that we have full accountability as to who are responsible and that we hold the government to doing everything possible not only to hold the perpetrators responsible but to protect the civil society. The civil society in Bangladesh is challenged, and clearly this murder will have an impact on that country.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. It is absolutely horrific. We are outraged by it. It is the latest in a series of killings as you mentioned. This one cuts particularly close. We will do everything we can to encourage the Government of Bangladesh to investigate this and bring the perpetrators to justice. We will support them in doing so. And as I mentioned in my opening remarks, we also can use and are using

some of our emergency assistance programs to provide support in getting people who are still threatened in Bangladesh to safety if they want to avail themselves of that kind of support.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I thank all the panelists for their commitment to these issues.

Senator RUBIO. Senator Markey?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Ms. Hogan we have a fentanyl epidemic in the United States. Sources now say that it is very clear that China and Mexico are the two principal means by which fentanyl is coming into the United States. The number of opioid deaths in our country has escalated dramatically with the single largest new addition to that plague being fentanyl as a killer in our country.

What is our government saying to Mexico about the importation of fentanyl? It comes up right from Mexico and it winds up in Lawrence, Massachusetts where people die, but that is the story for most of our country. What is it that we are telling the Mexicans about this importation of fentanyl?

Ms. HOGAN. Thank you for the question. Actually it is the State Department that has the lead on that dialogue, so I would ask my colleague from the State Department to respond.

Senator MARKEY. Mr. Palmieri?

Mr. PALMIERI. Senator, thank you.

We are engaged in a broad-based effort with Mexico to improve counternarcotics interdiction and to improve their ability to eradicate poppy cultivation inside Mexico, as well as strengthen our border and law enforcement cooperation to prevent those kinds of drugs from leaving Mexico and entering—

Senator MARKEY. Are you talking specifically about fentanyl? Fentanyl is the new addition. It is like a chemical concoction that is put together. What are you saying about fentanyl specifically to the Mexicans? It is a killer.

Mr. PALMIERI. We have a broad-based conversation with Mexico on counternarcotics. Our law enforcement agencies are engaged with Mexico across the full range of drug trafficking that emanates from Mexico into the United States.

Senator MARKEY. No. I am asking are you having specific conversations about fentanyl with them. It is much more deadly than heroin or anything that has ever been seen before. What are you saying to them about this one specific, new addition to the opioid death spiral that too many families in America have now fallen?

Mr. PALMIERI. We are pressing the Mexican Government to do all it can to prevent illegal narcotics from entering the United States and to work collaboratively with our law enforcement agencies, and fentanyl is definitely one of those substances that we are focused on, sir.

Senator MARKEY. Well, I would just urge you as strongly as I can to elevate fentanyl to the top priority which you have. It has the potential to kill tens of thousands—tens of thousands—of Americans over the next several years. And the route in is through Mexico. So this is something that I just urge you to elevate to the level of intense dialogue between our two countries so that they know that we mean business on that issue. It is of critical concern not just in urban America but in every city and town in our country.

Fentanyl is the new drug that is killing people, and we have got to stop it. And the Mexicans must be our aggressive partner in this.

On human rights in Mexico, the security forces have been implicated in repeated serious human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and torture, and that the government has made little progress investigating or prosecuting those responsible for abuses.

What is happening in Mexico defies belief. In September of 2014, 43 students disappeared in Mexico. That was nearly 2 years ago. At the time I wrote a letter urging the Secretary of State to do everything possible to support the Mexican Government by making additional investigative and forensic resources available. My letter also urged assistance to the Mexican Government in its efforts to bring all those responsible to justice and to ensure positive post-mortem identifications that allow families to begin their grieving and healing process. This the Mexican Government has not done.

In 2015, an interdisciplinary group of experts appointed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights went to Mexico to investigate the case and worked for about a year to uncover the truth. But then the Mexican Government refused to extend their mandate prematurely ending their work.

This past weekend, they released their final report and found serious abuses and inconsistencies in the Mexican Government's investigation. The report throws the government's version of events into serious question and suggests that the government did not seek to discover the extent of official culpability for these crimes.

Last Friday, the "New York Times" reported that the group of experts has endured carefully orchestrated attacks in the Mexican news media, a refusal by the government to turn over documents or grant interviews with essential figures and even a retaliatory criminal investigation into one of the officials who appointed them.

What is our government doing to persuade the Mexican Government to allow the group of experts to continue its investigation, and what will we do now in response to their report?

Mr. PALMIERI. Senator, we did take note of the April 24th report of the independent experts from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. We commend the commission's work, and we do urge Mexico to consider the report and respond to the report's recommendations, specifically to provide assistance to the families and the victims, to bring the perpetrators to justice, and to evaluate the suggested actions to address the forced disappearances associated with that incident.

Senator MARKEY. Well, what additional actions can we take in order to impress upon the Mexican Government how serious we are about this issue?

Mr. PALMIERI. Well, we do have an ongoing human rights dialogue with the Mexican Government. This is a topic that has been raised at many different levels and will continue to be raised directly with the government, sir.

Senator MARKEY. I think that we have got, obviously, a huge problem here. 27,000 Mexicans have disappeared over the last 10 years, that the government has done little to investigate. And I think that this is just an escalating problem inside of their country,

and I think it is up to the United States, since they are our partner on so many other issues, to use every bit of leverage we have to let them know that we are dead serious about this issue and it just cannot be allowed to continue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

I know there is a vote called, so we are going to wrap.

I just have one more question, Mr. Palmieri, I wanted ask you. There has been a significant up-tick in the number of Cuban migrants just, for example, from October of last year through February. So just a 5-month period, 18,500 Cubans arrived at the Texas Laredo field office. We are also getting kind of similar reports from the Coast Guard. They say since October of last year, 2,700 Cubans have attempted to enter the U.S. by sea.

But what is more concerning is the number of people—we talked about this briefly last week at another hearing—coming in I think through Ecuador and Panama and Costa Rica. And if you read the press reports, some of these governments—their body language or attitude is we are going to put them on a plane and fly them as close as possible to the U.S. border so they can cross. In essence, we do not want this problem. This is a major developing issue here, and much of this upsurge has occurred since the deal.

What is driving this new migration? What is driving this new migration? What is our position towards those countries that are talking about moving these people? Their attitude is our job is to kind of facilitate them, get them through, so they can get to the U.S. which is where they want to go. Second, are we confronting that attitude that they have? And third, what is the best way to stop this?

Mr. PALMIERI. Thank you for that question, Senator.

The engagement with the countries in the region focuses on encouraging them to ensure safe, legal, and orderly migration. Much of this migration is undocumented and irregular as it passes through the Central America region. There is no question that earlier this year Costa Rica and Panama worked with the Government of Mexico and did airlift almost 8,000 Cuban migrants from both countries to the northern part of Mexico where they crossed into the United States.

Costa Rica took the step at that time of making clear that after that backlog was addressed, that they were going to be more aggressive in enforcing their immigration laws and returning people to their last point of origin. We now see an additional backlog of these migrants in Panama, and there is now, at least as reported in the press, talk of another possible airlift between Panama and Mexico.

We continue to urge the countries to enforce their migration laws, to strengthen their border controls, and to address undocumented and irregular migration by returning people to their last point of origin. We think that is the best way to—

Senator RUBIO. Well, have we pronounced ourselves against these airlifts? Have we pronounced ourselves against these airlifts whether it is the one that Costa Rica did or the one that Panama is now doing? Because the minute the word gets out that if you can get into this country, they are going to put you on a plane and fly

you close to the U.S. border so you can get it, you are encouraging more people to do this. So have we said to them do not airlift people? We have significant potential leverage over these countries.

Mr. PALMIERI. We have worked with all three countries to ensure that they are going to strengthen their border controls and put in place better mechanisms to prevent this undocumented and irregular—

Senator RUBIO. That is future, but what about the current backlog? Have we told them do not airlift these people?

Mr. PALMIERI. We have encouraged the countries in the region themselves to figure out the best solution to this surge of migration. And we believe the best solution is stronger enforcement of their own immigration laws—

Senator RUBIO. But we have not told them not to do the airlift.

Mr. PALMIERI. We have not told them not to do the airlift, sir.

Senator RUBIO. What is driving this? I mean, Cuba has been repressive for 60 years. What is the difference now? Is it the fear that the Cuban Adjustment Act is going to go away that is driving people to try to get in here before it goes away?

Mr. PALMIERI. We have no plans to change the Cuban Adjustment Act at this time, Senator. There continues to be a large migration flow out of Cuba. It reflects the difficult economic and human rights conditions in the country.

Senator RUBIO. And I understand that the administration has no plans to advocate for a change in the Cuban Adjustment Act, which was an act of Congress. But my question is, is there fear? What I hear is that people in Cuba think the Cuban Adjustment Act might go away, and now that the situation has been normalized, so they are trying to get into the U.S. before that happens.

Mr. PALMIERI. I do not know and cannot comment directly on the individual motivations of these Cuban migrants. But I can make clear that the administration is not entertaining any idea of a change to the Cuban Adjustment Act, and so that should not be a factor in their decision calculus.

Senator RUBIO. All right. Well, I want to thank all of you for being here today. I appreciate you participating in this, and I think it was informative. And I am pleased as well that we have so many members attend and ask great questions. Again, we always thank you for the work that you all do on behalf of our country.

And with that, I just wanted to end by noting that the record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday, April 28th.

And with that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:18 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAVID PERDUE
TO ELIZABETH HOGAN, ACTING ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN, USAID

Question 1a. Despite almost \$4 billion in U.S. assistance to Haiti, the nation suffers from high unemployment, political instability, and growing food insecurity due to prolonged drought. Haiti ranks 163 out of 188 on the U.N.'s 2015 Human Development Index. More than half of Haitians live below the international extreme pov-

erty line of \$1.90 per day. For FY 2017, the President has requested \$79.9 million in Economic Support Funds and about \$129.2 million in funding for global health programs for Haiti. The President's budget request describes this funding as supporting long-term growth, but Haiti is still struggling to bounce back from the devastating earthquake that struck in 2010.

- What portion of this \$209.1 million will be dedicated to reconstruction efforts specifically?

Answer. Although Haiti remains an extremely poor and fragile country with substantial development needs, USAID has strategically modified its areas of focus and assistance shifting from reconstruction to more effectively address Haiti's needs and build the capacity of the Haitian government and local Haitian institutions to tackle development challenges. For example, with FY 2017 ESF, \$3.1 million will be allocated towards sustaining and expanding electricity generation in the north of Haiti and \$5.5 million will be used to continue to support improved livelihood opportunities in areas where the U.S. government's shelter related programs are operating. The remaining \$200.5 million will contribute to USAID's longer-term development programs focusing on economic growth, agriculture, health, democracy and governance, and basic education.

Question 1b. In what areas will these reconstruction funds be concentrated?

Answer. In general, FY 2017 funds will support activities in Haiti that advance democracy and human rights, nurture economic opportunity in areas of private sector growth and sustained agricultural development for food security, prevent the spread of infectious diseases, improve basic health services especially for women and children, and strengthen basic education. As referenced in part (a) above, in FY 2017, \$3.1 million will be allocated towards infrastructure activities. With these funds, U.S. assistance will support the Government of Haiti's efforts to engage the private sector to take over the operation and maintenance of the mini-utility power plant in northern Haiti. In addition, U.S. assistance will continue to support improved livelihoods in geographic zones in which USAID has previously invested in improved shelter and community development.

Question 1c. Can you speak about the FY 2017 request for improving food security in Haiti?

Answer. The FY 2017 request of \$9 million will allow USAID to advance gains made through the Feed the Future Initiative. Agriculture is central to the Haitian economy, employing approximately 60 percent of the population and serving as the primary source of income in rural areas. Under FTF, the U.S. government has introduced improved seeds, fertilizer, and technology, as well as improved access to irrigation and markets for almost 83,000 Haitian farmers. USAID has also linked farmers directly with buyers, and improved farmer access to micro-credit. Women have been involved in the entire value chain of agricultural products and represent around 30 percent of direct beneficiaries. USAID plans to continue to support these households and to expand these efforts to another 30,000 farmers by 2018.

USAID's work to address environmental degradation in Haiti is closely linked to efforts to improve the country's food insecurity. More than half of all land in Haiti is steeply sloped, and approximately 85 percent of the country's watersheds are degraded, causing frequent flooding, erosion, reduced availability of groundwater for irrigation in the fertile plains, and depletion of the basic soil nutrients required for increased food production. As part of a larger effort to stabilize watersheds, increase tree cover, and promote sustainable agricultural practices in disaster prone regions of the country, from 2009 to 2014, USAID supported reforestation efforts through the planting of over 5 million seedlings with a survival rate of about 70 percent throughout the country. USAID plans to fund additional community-based reforestation and related policies.

Question 2. In their June 2015 report on Haiti reconstruction progress, the GAO reported that 3 of 17 key non-infrastructure activities were reduced, including providing access to basic healthcare. In light of the outbreak of cholera that Haiti has dealt with since the earthquake, what led USAID to decide to reduce basic health initiatives?

Answer. USAID/Haiti takes its response to cholera very seriously, and is responding in coordination with the Ministry of Health, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other donors. The Agency has several projects addressing cholera, including the Quality Health Services Project (SSQH), Sustaining Health Outcomes through the Private Sector (SHOPS) Plus, and the Supply Chain Management System (SCMS). These projects procure and distribute water treatment products, and support education and community-based activities to raise awareness

around hygiene precautions to prevent and treat diarrheal diseases, including cholera. Since the peak of the cholera outbreak, there has been an 89 percent decrease in the number of cholera cases from 352,033 reported cases in FY 2011 to 36,644 cases in FY 2015. The case fatality rate for hospitalized persons remained under 1 percent in 2015.

Our support for improving access to primary health care services continues to be the core of our health sector strategy and programming. In instances where projects ended early or were reduced in scope, USAID's support for access to basic health care continued at the same level through other projects. USAID's robust health portfolio, outlined below, aims to both improve access to quality health services and strengthen the health system nationwide, with a particular focus on three key departments—the North, the West, and Artibonite.

Health services delivery: USAID support is increasing access to essential primary health, nutrition, family planning, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis services to underserved communities. Currently, USAID supports 164 health facilities that provide access to primary health care services for nearly half of the population.

Health systems strengthening: To ensure sustainability of these investments, efforts are underway to build needed leadership, managerial and administrative skills within the Ministry of Health. These leadership and management skills will improve oversight and allow the Government of Haiti to manage healthcare assets more transparently and effectively.

Improving services and focused support for persons with disabilities: USAID health activities increase access to quality services for persons with disabilities by establishing systems and programs within key Ministry of Health units and non-governmental organizations to ensure that government and civil society have the capacity to provide care, rehabilitation and support for their reintegration into society.

Rebuilding public health infrastructure: Working alongside other international donors, USAID is helping to rebuild Haiti's main public tertiary and teaching hospital (the General University Hospital), to construct a new maternity ward at St. Justinien Hospital in Cap-Haitien, and to reconstruct the National Campus of Health Sciences. Additionally, USAID is renovating 12 smaller health care centers and schools, and improving infrastructure and accessibility for people with disabilities.

Question 3. A GAO report was issued in June 2015 on the Haiti Reconstruction effort (report no: GAO-15-17), which reported that USAID extended the timeframe for its strategy to reconstruct Haiti from its January 2010 earthquake by three years, to end in 2018. At the same time, GAO had reported that USAID projects under the Haiti reconstruction effort had achieved mixed results, with many projects not fully meeting their intended results and some infrastructure projects in particular years behind schedule. Almost a year has gone by since this GAO report. And as a whole, we've invested almost \$4 billion in Haiti reconstruction and relief.

- Have any improvements been made in the results projects are achieving and in moving infrastructure projects forward?
- What are the major achievements that USAID expects to have completed by the end of the Haiti reconstruction strategy in 2018?

Answer. Haiti has historically been a challenging environment, with chronic weaknesses of governance and recurring periods of political uncertainty. Despite these challenges, USAID's pace of programming in Haiti has seen improvements overall. For example, USAID's Cap-Haitien Port Rehabilitation and Public-Private Partnership Project now has an approved Master Plan in place. The project has begun breaking ground on renovations and building new warehouses. The port rehabilitation work and framework for a public private partnership for port operations are also in process. The Government of Haiti (GOH), with USAID assistance, conducted pre-solicitation meetings in Miami during the last week of April 2016, and the transaction documents are scheduled to be released by the GOH in July 2016. USAID released the draft request for proposals and expects to award the contract for replacement of piers and dredging of channels in spring 2017, with works expected to be completed by the middle of 2020. USAID has also awarded contracts for customs and regulatory reforms. Work on these items will continue for the next 24 months.

There has also been significant progress in health infrastructure activities. During the 2010 earthquake, Haiti's largest teaching hospital in the country, the Hospital of the State University of Haiti (HUEH), suffered severe damages and collapsed buildings. At the request of the GOH, USAID and the Agence Française de Develop-

ment engaged in supporting reconstruction activities as co-donors. While the full reconstruction project is moving forward, USAID has already renovated temporary facilities (emergency and maternity wards) of HUEH so the hospital could continue to operate while under construction. Reconstruction of the main hospital campus is progressing; all foundations and structural steel have been erected and the main four-story logistics building is nearing completion.

The construction of a modern medical teaching facility in Port-au-Prince is also being funded by USAID. This facility will replace and combine the former Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, School of Nursing, and Lab Technician School, which were all destroyed in the January 2010 earthquake. Reconstruction activities completed so far include temporary space for the School of Nursing, which will be converted into a permanent dormitory hall upon completion of the main project site. Significant progress has been made on the main campus, and construction is scheduled to be completed by July 2016.

USAID is also funding the reconstruction and expansion of St. Justinien Hospital. The current facility is significantly overcrowded and badly deteriorated with multiple roof leaks and cracks in walls and floors. The new facility will consist of approximately 2,070 square meters of new space including a neonatal ward, infant ward, children's and adolescent wards, two isolation rooms, exam rooms, and a triage area. The old ward has been demolished and the new foundation is constructed. The structural steel is being erected now, and project completion is expected in 2017.

While the Agency has been involved in renovation and construction of larger health facilities, a series of small renovation projects have been initiated to help rebuild smaller scale health care infrastructure and improve accessibility for people with disabilities in schools. The project involves 12 health care centers and schools in the North, Northeast, West, and Artibonite Departments and will be completed in 2016. So far, six schools have been retrofitted; pre-construction and construction activities are ongoing at additional sites.

As part of the original post-earthquake strategy, in the housing sector, USAID has constructed over 900 permanent homes with running water, modern sanitation, and electricity. The construction of another 574 units is currently in process. Of these 574, USAID is partnering with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on 426 units that will be completed by the end of 2016 and 148 units with the Qatar Haiti Fund that are scheduled to be completed by Spring 2017. For the 574 homes, USAID's role is limited to site preparation, for example land leveling, water and sewer systems, roads and walkways, and street lighting, whereas the IDB and Qatar Haiti Fund will cover the costs of housing construction. USAID is promoting sustainability of the new settlements by supporting training for local residents to maintain their homes and building the capacity of the GOH's social housing unit to manage settlement areas, collect lease payments, and maintain the utilities and common areas. USAID has since revised its strategy to focus on housing finance and improvements in existing communities.

USAID continues to see progress in non-infrastructure sectors as well. More than 80,000 rural households have benefited directly from Feed the Future interventions and the Agency will continue to work with these farmers into 2018. USAID is also committed to improving the quality of, and access to, education for Haitians through the Ann ALE education program, which aims to directly support 300 schools and improve 100,000 students' reading and writing skills through interactive teaching methods and community-based activities by 2019.

Question 4. Based on three GAO reports on Haiti reconstruction (GAO-12-68, GAO-13-558, GAO-15-517) and the GAO's previous work on disaster reconstruction, the GAO had found multiple cases of cost overruns and delays for such reconstruction projects.

- What lessons has USAID learned from its previous disaster work to be able to make better projections for the funds it needs to respond to future disasters and to better plan the uses for that funding?
- How are these lessons-learned incorporated into the FY 2017 budget request for USAID programs in Haiti?

Answer. Generally, in the event of natural disasters, USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is responsible for leading and coordinating the United States government's (USG) response to disasters overseas. As part of standard procedures, OFDA began the After Action Review (AAR) process for the 2010 Haiti earthquake while the response was still ongoing. The AAR process included soliciting information and recommendations from people involved in the response through "hotwashes" (immediately after the response, group discussion and evalua-

tion of what worked, what did not and why), interviews, and an online survey. To build upon the information gathered, USAID/OFDA also held two AAR workshops involving USAID and USG interagency partners.

USAID/OFDA identified several thematic areas for attention during the AAR process, including defining USAID/OFDA's role within the USG Interagency when USAID is named the lead federal agency, and optimizing internal structure and staffing processes.

As a result, USAID/OFDA has focused on collaborating with and operationalizing USG Interagency partners through the expansion of the Humanitarian Policy and Global Engagement Division (HPGE) within USAID/OFDA. The HPGE division leads the mapping of international response capacity across USG agencies, has developed an Operational Response Framework to guide USAID/OFDA doctrine and policy related to disaster response, and is continuing to collaborate with interagency partners on the development of an International Response Framework aimed at aligning expectations in an international response context. USAID/OFDA has also increased efforts to build relationships and awareness with potential USG response partners through continuous engagement and training programs.

USAID/OFDA has addressed recommendations related to response staffing through the implementation of a strategic growth plan and of a Multiple Response Staffing Strategy. To further support consistency and preparedness, USAID/OFDA has developed a competency-based position management system for response teams, as well as targeted response-based training curricula to ensure staff readiness for response assignments.

In Haiti, USAID activities were implemented in accordance with the USG's larger strategy for reconstruction in Haiti. There have been some lessons learned throughout the creation and implementation of this strategy. For example, the USG's initial housing reconstruction strategy included efforts to develop new settlements to replace housing stock lost during the earthquake. In particular, the majority of USAID shelter funds were dedicated to construction of permanent detached single-family homes on land provided by the Government of Haiti in the Cap-Haitien and Port-au-Prince development corridors.

After initial projects fell short of expectations, USAID recognized that this approach is not cost-effective and that the need far exceeded what all donor efforts could meet. To achieve greater cost efficiency and sustainability, USAID shifted away from new construction and has put a greater emphasis on providing low-income households with access to housing finance and better infrastructure, working in existing neighborhoods, and helping the private sector play a more prominent role in housing construction.

USAID also shifted its approach on its port development efforts when final feasibility studies indicated a new port was not economically viable. The Agency redirected assistance from constructing a new "greenfield" port to the rehabilitation of the existing port of Cap-Haitien to meet the near-to medium-term demand for port services in northern Haiti. An approved master plan is now in place. The port rehabilitation work and public-private partnership for port operations are also in process, with replacement of piers and dredging of channels expected to be completed in 2020. USAID has also awarded contracts for customs reform and regulatory strengthening that will result in a more efficient and competitive port operation. This reform work is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

These lessons learned were incorporated into the Post-Earthquake U.S. Government Haiti Three-Year Extension Strategy To Support Reconstruction and Development: January 2015 to January 2018. The FY 2017 budget request reflects these lessons learned, as the budget builds upon previous fiscal year budgets that take into account strategic shifts.

Question 5. This year's request of economic support funds (ESF) for Haiti is \$79.9 million. This amount is almost half of the \$134.25 million that was allocated for Haiti in FY2009, before the earthquake occurred.

- Can you explain the ESF budget trend for Haiti since FY2009, and why this year's requested amount is less than the pre-quake funding level?

Answer. The FY 2017 request levels are sufficient for this year, given remaining unexpended funds that are available under the USG post-earthquake strategy, and our commitment to achieving lasting results and ensuring responsible investment of U.S. taxpayer dollars. However, USAID has made tremendous progress in accelerating its pace of awards in Haiti, having increased its staff and provided additional procurement resources. As a result of these changes, last fiscal year, for example, USAID/Haiti sub-obligated \$400 million into grants and contracts to contribute to meeting USAID's strategic objectives for Haiti. These and other efforts

have led to a 30 percent increase in monthly expenditures. USAID/Haiti expects to reduce pipeline in line with Agency best practices by the end of FY 2017.

Question 6a. A range of governments, NGOs, and international organizations work to promote democracy around the world.

- How does the State Department and USAID coordinate democracy promotion efforts with these groups in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID coordinate to ensure assistance efforts of Washington and overseas operating units involved in democracy promotion abroad are complementary and non-duplicative. In 2006, the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources was established to provide leadership and coordinate foreign assistance planning and management across the Department and USAID. The relevant Chief of Mission coordinates all assistance awards obligated overseas and assistance awards obligated in Washington are coordinated by the responsible operating unit with relevant stakeholders, including the mission's staff. The U.S. government regularly engages with other funders and entities involved in promoting democracy and human rights in the Western Hemisphere and around the world in efforts to ensure complementarity.

In partnership with governments, USAID promotes democracy by addressing issues of systemic transparency and corruption in governments.

- ◆ In Paraguay, USAID works with public institutions including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Finance, and the Supreme Court to install mechanisms for accountability and anti-corruption that are necessary for a responsive democracy. The project focuses on institutionalizing key reforms in the areas of civil service, public financial management, and internal controls in collaboration with the Civil Service Secretariat, the Procurement Agency, the Executive Branch Audit body, and the General Controller's Office of Paraguay.
- ◆ In Peru, USAID provides specialized training to judges, prosecutors and advocates to strengthen the administration of courts and prosecutors' offices specialized in anticorruption. USAID provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights to design a model of institutional integrity and a Code of Ethical Behavior for its officers and employees, which are complemented by trainings. USAID has also helped develop a manual for the Public Corruption Prosecutor to calculate the compensation for damage caused by crimes of corruption.

USAID also consults with NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) to inform program design and implementation. For example, through a procurement mechanism known as the Broad Agency Announcement, USAID can co-create and co-design responses with CSOs to jointly-identified challenges. In Guatemala, over 200 civil society representatives participated in the design of a program with the goal of fostering greater socioeconomic development through improved governance and local ownership in the Western Highlands region of the country. USAID also works directly with small CSOs to help them become viable institutions to advocate for democratic practices. In Mexico, USAID works with the Mexican government and civil society to address human rights concerns through the government's National Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists; in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, this program provided assistance to approximately 400 journalists and human rights defenders seeking protection from threats of violence and harassment. Because of USAID's technical assistance and training, provided through Freedom House, the National Protection Mechanism has been able to process an increased number of requests for assistance.

- ◆ USAID programs in closed space countries in the Western Hemisphere have demonstrably increased the effectiveness of local civil society organizations that monitor and report human rights abuses, perform vital roles in watchdogs when public interest information is restricted, and defend remaining democratic processes and spaces. Closed space programming is closely coordinated within Embassies and with the Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Finally, USAID works with various international organizations, including other development agencies, United Nations organizations, and the World Bank, to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and to leverage comparative advantages in the region.

- ♦ For example, in Honduras, USAID coordinates with the Organization of American States to support the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity (MACCIH, Spanish acronym).

Question 6b. How do DRL assistance programs to promote democracy differ from those of USAID?

Answer. While there is commonality between USAID and the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor programming in some areas of focus, differences in approach demonstrate the added value of each entity. Centrally located in Washington, DC, State/DRL's global emphasis enables it to provide grants to organizations all over the world while maintaining a broad, worldwide overview and approach to its programming. By contrast, with an on-the-ground presence of approximately 400 democracy, human rights, and governance officers, USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance supports DRG offices worldwide to provide support for activities in field Missions. USAID's local staff are on the ground full-time to continually engage with local actors, monitor program implementation, and make necessary adjustments as country conditions change and programs generally support long-term development linked to larger country and regional development strategies and objectives.

USAID and State/DRL programs are both suited to be implemented in closed and closing spaces. USAID's DRG programs are increasingly based on rigorous monitoring and evaluation components proven successful in other development programs, incorporating best practices and evidence-based research into the project design such as those from robust impact evaluations and high-quality surveys. This is particularly important in difficult political environments. State/DRL manages global initiatives that can rapidly respond to deteriorating situations and emerging opportunities, and provide emergency assistance to human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and individuals under attack or threat of attack.

Question 6c. Does USAID work with the National Endowment for Democracy for democracy promotion? If so, how?

Answer. USAID, the Department of State, and the National Endowment for Democracy staff interact to discuss and determine priorities in the DRG sector, including ways to analyze, understand and respond to new challenges. Most recently, USAID organized a trilateral meeting between the three organizations to discuss a strategic approach to a number of topics. USAID continues to look for ways to further enhance its collaboration with these entities through regular briefings on regions, countries or topics of interest, and on issues of mutual concern. This includes discussions on institutionalizing the Stand with Civil Society initiative, global governance initiatives, and the Open Government Partnership. USAID also meets periodically with the NED to discuss and coordinate programming, especially in countries with closed or closing political spaces.

Question 6d. How does DRL work with the regional bureaus in the Western Hemisphere regarding democracy monitoring and oversight? In your view, how can these efforts be more effective?

Answer. DRL works closely with the regional bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs regarding democracy program monitoring and oversight. For example, regional offices participate in proposal review panels which includes monitoring and evaluation criteria. In addition, DRL coordinates site visits with posts to do oversight of programs and shares feedback on program progress with the offices. DRL's current level of coordination is effective but is always looking for ways to improve processes.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO TO FRANCISCO PALMIERI, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS

Question 1. Please clarify the current number of U.S. Personnel allowed at U.S. Embassy in Havana. If the answer is 76, then:

- What are the current restrictions placed on putting more U.S. personnel at the U.S. Embassy in Havana to get close to the 76 cap?
- If more American personnel were placed at the Embassy, would there be a reduction in the number of Cuban locally employed staff?
- How much would it cost to replace the supervisor positions occupied by Cubans with Americans?

Answer. As a result of negotiations to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba, the number of accredited personnel allowed at U.S. Embassy Havana is 76. We look forward to working with Congress to secure the necessary funding and approvals in order to add additional staff. Our ability to significantly increase staffing is restricted by the limited expansion possibilities in the current Embassy building.

Adding American staff to our footprint at the Embassy would not result in a reduction in the number of Cuban locally employed staff. Cuban employees fill primarily support roles in the Embassy. The additional needed American staff would fill positions requiring a security clearance, which Cuban employees cannot obtain.

All supervisory positions at U.S. Embassy Havana are held by cleared U.S. citizens, in accordance with longstanding personnel practice and law, those positions with authority to supervise direct-hire federal employees, including the authority to make final personnel decisions such as hiring, firing, and issuing formal disciplinary action with respect to the federal employees. While some Cuban staff may be administratively organized so that certain more experienced Cuban staff direct less experienced Cuban staff, even these experienced Cuban staff do not exercise the supervisory authority and responsibilities described above and typically associated with supervisory positions; they do not hire, fire, or take formal disciplinary actions, even with respect to other Cuban staff. Instead, all Cuban staff are ultimately managed and supervised by a U.S. direct hire employee.

It costs approximately \$220,000 to establish a new overseas U.S. direct hire position, with yearly costs amounting to approximately \$430,000. The average annual cost to employ a Cuban at the Embassy is approximately \$12,000.

Question 2. Since our last briefing, what has the State Department and the Cuban government agreed to allow equipment and personnel into the Embassy unmolested by the Cuban government?

Answer. We are in regular communication with our Cuban counterparts on a number of issues that are important to the normalization of diplomatic relations between our two countries. To date, we have no concerns about the ability for equipment and personnel to enter the Embassy unmolested.

Question 3. How would U.S. Assistance change if the Colombian public chose not to approve what's in the final agreement?

Answer. We strongly support President Santos' efforts to reach a just and lasting peace with the FARC. The negotiations are in the endgame. We are hopeful the parties will reach a final accord soon, leading to the FARC's disarmament by the end of this year.

The President's Peace Colombia strategy focuses U.S. assistance on three broad pillars: (1) security, including counter-narcotics, counter-transnational organized crime, demining, and demobilization of former fighters; (2) expanding state presence and public institutions; and (3) justice and other assistance for victims. The President's strategy is flexible. A guiding principle is to focus our assistance on special U.S. capabilities that can catalyze Colombia's efforts to end the conflict, secure a just and durable peace, consolidate public support for the peace process, and address the conflict's long-term underlying drivers. Building on the success of prior year programs, the FY2017 \$391 million State/USAID request will fund programs critical to strengthening Colombia's security and development, regardless of when the parties reach a final peace accord. Adjustments to U.S. assistance, if the Colombian public failed to approve the final accord, would take into account the Colombian government's plans to consolidate their many security and development gains in support of a lasting peace.

Question 4. A substantial increase in aid to Colombia is requested under a new framework referred to as Peace Colombia. A recent report by the Economist says that the FARC may have around \$11.4 billion worth of assets—yet its leadership is reportedly claiming that they will be unable to contribute to material reparations for their victims due to lack of funds. In the meantime, serious human rights violations in areas controlled by the FARC, including severe restrictions on religious freedom, continue. In the same vein, the ELN, which announced its entry into new peace dialogues with the government, is not winding down its violent operations but rather has been moving aggressively into areas formerly controlled by the FARC and in some cases engaging in violent conflict with illegal criminal groups in an effort to consolidate its power. They continue to be responsible for serious violations of human rights, including attacks on church leaders, as do illegal groups like the Urabeños which have grown rapidly in terms of geographic presence and power in the last few years.

- Given these unpromising developments, will the administration review its decision to transition to a Peace Colombia framework in the absence of a peace agreement?

Answer. The negotiations are in the endgame. We are hopeful the parties will reach a final accord soon, leading to the FARC's disarmament by the end of this year. The President's Peace Colombia strategy is flexible. If the negotiations continue or the parties fail outright to reach a final accord, the Colombian government will continue to combat illegal armed groups, drug-trafficking, and transnational organized crime; remove landmines; strengthen public institutions and foster licit economic opportunities in areas where the state's presence has historically been weak; and provide assistance to conflict victims. U.S. assistance for Colombia's efforts will continue to be critical and advance U.S. interests in regional security, counter-narcotics, law enforcement, economic development, justice, and human rights.

Question 5. If not, how does it expect to implement some of these goals, such as "expanding state presence and institutions to strengthen the rule of law and rural economies, especially in former conflict areas" even as the conflict continues and in some parts of the country has actually intensified due to the actions of the ELN and illegal criminal groups?

Answer. Colombia's efforts and U.S. support for them will continue to be flexible. Certain Colombian efforts, such as reintegrating demobilized combatants, could be deferred or deemphasized if the peace accord is delayed. Colombian military and law enforcement operations might intensify in regions where illegal armed groups continued to pose threats. Colombian efforts to strengthen the state's presence, build public institutions, promote economic opportunity, and deliver victims assistance would likely concentrate on more permissive areas.

Question 6. Please provide this committee with an update on the current economic situation in Venezuela. I would respectfully ask that you also include an update on the health care situation in the country.

Answer. Venezuela faces serious economic challenges, including significant economic contraction, triple-digit inflation, widespread shortages of food, water, electricity and medicine, and depleted international currency reserves. Low global oil prices have exacerbated the economic challenges facing the Maduro administration. Waning domestic production, low oil prices, and government-imposed economic distortions are principal drivers of the overall contraction. Any turnaround will depend heavily on economic policy adjustments by the Venezuelan government.

We continue to monitor the availability of food, medicines, and other essentials. We are concerned by credible and independent reports that upwards of 85 percent of medicines on the World Health Organization's list of essential medicines are not available at pharmacies and hospitals, while many other essential medicines are scarce or hard to find, such as antibiotics, aspirin, anti-seizure medicines, and chemotherapy drugs. There are also reported shortages of surgical supplies and medical equipment in clinics and hospitals. The Venezuelan people, including vulnerable populations such as children, the disabled, and the elderly, are not able to access the basic medicine and medical services they need.

The United States frequently provides humanitarian assistance to countries around the world at the request of receiving countries. Venezuela has made no such request. There are appropriate mechanisms for international support to Venezuela. The international community and the United States stand ready to assist but efforts should be carefully coordinated.

We stand with the international community in expressing our concern about the difficult conditions the Venezuelan people are facing. We believe the solutions in Venezuela will be found through meaningful dialogue among Venezuelans.

Question 7. The FY 2017 Economic Support Fund (ESF) of the budget request for Venezuela is currently at \$5.5 million.

- With the current political and economic instability the country faces, do you think \$5.5 million is enough to help defend and strengthen democratic practices, institutions and values that support human rights and Venezuela civic engagement and democratic governance?
- How does that number compare to the assistance provided to other countries in the hemisphere?

Answer. U.S. assistance to Venezuela seeks to defend and strengthen democratic practices, institutions, and values that support respect for human rights, access to information, and civic participation and engagement. It supports diverse civil society actors who promote those democratic checks and balances mandated by the Ven-

ezuelan constitution. U.S. assistance, on a nonpartisan basis, inclusively promotes the basic values of representative democracy and respect for human rights.

The FY 2017 bilateral assistance request will support the diverse civil society actors who promote constitutionally-mandated democratic checks and balances. The request provides the level of resources needed to support civil society and human rights in Venezuela which expands funding by \$1.2 million, or 28 percent, from the FY 2015 level of \$4.25 million to support activities that defend democratic processes and human rights in Venezuela by: enhancing the public's access to information; encouraging peaceful debate surrounding key issues; providing support to democratic institutions; and promoting civic participation. ESF funding is part of a broader approach towards supporting democracy and human rights in Venezuela. There is robust cooperation and coordination among U.S. recipients of assistance, including the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, the National Endowment for Democracy, and USAID.

The urgent importance of the United States working to advance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Venezuela, including freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly must also be balanced by the need to be prudent and careful in our engagement of local Venezuelan partners.

Regionally, the bilateral request for Venezuela for this programming is a significant level reflecting the human rights challenges in Venezuela, as compared with other countries in the hemisphere.

Question 8. The political crisis seems to be deepening in Brazil. The economy is in its worst recession in more than three decades, and Brazilians are protesting the high levels of corruption in the government. What are the implications of this current political and economic climate in Brazil for Brazil-U.S. Relations?

Answer. As the two largest democracies in the hemisphere, Brazil and the United States are committed partners. The bilateral relationship between our countries remains strong, and we engage with the Brazilian government as part of our normal, routine diplomatic work. For instance, we continue to coordinate with Brazil to ensure a safe and successful 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. We are also advancing our robust collaboration with Brazil on combatting the Zika virus, including by conducting joint research on vaccines and links to associated disorders. Even as Brazil works through its political and economic challenges, we expect to continue cooperating closely with Brazil on these issues and other matters of mutual interest.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAVID PERDUE TO FRANCISCO PALMIERI, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS

Question 1a. Despite almost \$4 billion in U.S. assistance to Haiti, the nation suffers from high unemployment, political instability, and growing food insecurity due to prolonged drought. Haiti ranks 163 out of 188 on the U.N.'s 2015 Human Development Index. More than half of Haitian's live below the international extreme poverty line of \$1.90 per day. For FY 17, the President has requested \$79.9 million in Economic Support Funds and about \$129.2 million in funding for global health programs for Haiti. The President's budget request describes this funding as supporting long-term growth, but Haiti is still struggling to bounce back from the devastating earthquake that struck in 2010.

- What portion of this \$209.1 million will be dedicated to reconstruction efforts specifically?

Answer. Although Haiti remains an extremely poor and fragile country with substantial development needs, USAID has strategically modified its areas of focus and assistance shifting from reconstruction to more effectively address Haiti's needs and build the capacity of the Haitian government and local Haitian institutions to tackle development challenges. For example, with FY 2017 Economic Support Funds (ESF), \$3.1 million will be allocated towards sustaining and expanding electricity generation in the north of Haiti and \$5.5 million will be used to continue to support improved livelihood opportunities in areas where the U.S. government's shelter related programs are operating.

The remaining \$200.5 million will contribute to USAID's longer-term development programs focusing on economic growth, agriculture, health, democracy and governance, and basic education.

Question 1b. In what areas will these reconstruction funds be concentrated?

Answer. Although Haiti remains an extremely poor and fragile country with substantial development needs, USAID has strategically modified its areas of focus and assistance shifting from reconstruction to more effectively address Haiti's needs and build the capacity of the Haitian government and local Haitian institutions to tackle development challenges. For example, with FY 2017 ESF, \$3.1 million will be allocated towards sustaining and expanding electricity generation in the north of Haiti and \$5.5 million will be used to continue to support improved livelihood opportunities in areas where the U.S. government's shelter related programs are operating. The remaining \$200.5 million will contribute to USAID's longer-term development programs focusing on economic growth, agriculture, health, democracy and governance, and basic education.

Question 1c. Can you speak about the FY 2017 request for improving food security in Haiti?

Answer. The FY 2017 request of \$9 million will allow USAID to advance gains made through the Feed the Future (FTF) Initiative. Agriculture is central to the Haitian economy, employing approximately 60 percent of the population and serving as the primary source of income in rural areas. Under FTF, the U.S. government has introduced improved seeds, fertilizer, and technology, as well as improved access to irrigation and markets for almost 83,000 Haitian farmers. USAID has also linked farmers directly with buyers, and improved farmer access to micro-credit. Women have been involved in the entire value chain of agricultural products and represent around 30 percent of direct beneficiaries. USAID plans to continue to support these households and to expand these efforts to another 30,000 farmers by 2018.

USAID's work to address environmental degradation in Haiti is closely linked to efforts to improve the country's food insecurity. More than half of all land in Haiti is steeply sloped, and approximately 85 percent of the country's watersheds are degraded, causing frequent flooding, erosion, reduced availability of groundwater for irrigation in the fertile plains, and depletion of the basic soil nutrients required for increased food production. As part of a larger effort to stabilize watersheds, increase tree cover, and promote sustainable agricultural practices in disaster prone regions of the country, from 2009 to 2014, USAID supported reforestation efforts through the planting of over 5 million seedlings with a survival rate of about 70 percent throughout the country. USAID plans to fund additional community-based reforestation and related policies. Questions for the Record Submitted to Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Francisco Palmieri Senator David Perdue (#2) Senate Foreign Relations Committee April 26, 2016 Question:

Question 2. GAO report was issued in June 2015 on the Haiti Reconstruction effort (report no: GAO-15-17), which reported that USAID extended the timeframe for its strategy to reconstruct Haiti from its January 2010 earthquake by three years, to end in 2018. At the same time, GAO had reported that USAID projects under the Haiti reconstruction effort had achieved mixed results, with many projects not fully meeting their intended results and some infrastructure projects in particular years behind schedule. Almost a year has gone by since this GAO report. And as a whole, we've invested almost \$4 billion in Haiti reconstruction and relief.

- Have any improvements been made in the results projects are achieving and in moving infrastructure projects forward?
- What are the major achievements that USAID expects to have completed by the end of the Haiti reconstruction strategy in 2018?

Answer. Haiti has historically been a challenging environment, with chronic weaknesses of governance and recurring periods of political uncertainty. Despite these challenges, USAID's pace of programming in Haiti has seen improvements overall. For example, USAID's Cap-Haïtien Port Rehabilitation and Public-Private Partnership Project now has an approved Master Plan in place. The project has begun breaking ground on renovations and building new warehouses.

The port rehabilitation work and framework for a public private partnership for port operations are also in process. The Government of Haiti, with USAID assistance, conducted pre-solicitation meetings in Miami during the last week of April 2016, and the transaction documents are scheduled to be released by Haiti in July 2016. USAID released the draft request for proposals and expects to award the contract for replacement of piers and dredging of channels in spring 2017, with works expected to be completed by the middle of 2020. USAID has also awarded contracts for customs and regulatory reforms. Work on these items will continue for the next 24 months.

There has also been significant progress in health infrastructure activities. During the 2010 earthquake, Haiti's largest teaching hospital in the country, the Hospital

of the State University of Haiti (HUEH), suffered severe damages and collapsed buildings. At the request of the Government of Haiti, USAID and the Agence Française de Développement engaged in supporting reconstruction activities as co-donors. While the full reconstruction project is moving forward, USAID has already renovated temporary facilities (emergency and maternity wards) of HUEH so the hospital could continue to operate while under construction. Reconstruction of the main hospital campus is progressing; all foundations and structural steel have been erected and the main four-story logistics building is nearing completion. ?

The construction of a modern medical teaching facility in Port-au-Prince is also being funded by USAID. This facility will replace and combine the former Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, School of Nursing, and Lab Technician School, which were all destroyed in the January 2010 earthquake. Reconstruction activities completed so far include temporary space for the School of Nursing, which will be converted into a permanent dormitory hall upon completion of the main project site. Significant progress has been made on the main campus, and construction is scheduled to be completed by July 2016.

USAID is also funding the reconstruction and expansion of St. Justinien Hospital. The current facility is significantly overcrowded and badly deteriorated with multiple roof leaks and cracks in walls and floors. The new facility will consist of approximately 2,070 square meters of new space including a neonatal ward, infant ward, children's and adolescent wards, two isolation rooms, exam rooms, and a triage area. The old ward has been demolished and the new foundation is constructed. The structural steel is being erected now, and project completion is expected in 2017.

While the Agency has been involved in renovation and construction of larger health facilities, a series of small renovation projects have been initiated to help rebuild smaller scale health care infrastructure and improve accessibility for people with disabilities in schools. The project involves 12 health care centers and schools in the North, Northeast, West, and Artibonite Departments and will be completed in 2016. So far, six schools have been retrofitted; pre-construction and construction activities are ongoing at additional sites.

As part of the original post-earthquake strategy, in the housing sector, USAID has constructed over 900 permanent homes with running water, modern sanitation, and electricity. The construction of another 574 units is currently in process. Of these 574, USAID is partnering with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on 426 units that will be completed by the end of 2016 and 148 units with the Qatar Haiti Fund that are scheduled to be completed by Spring 2017. For the 574 homes, USAID's role is limited to site preparation, for example land leveling, water and sewer systems, roads and walkways, and street lighting, whereas the IDB and Qatar Haiti Fund will cover the costs of housing construction.

USAID is promoting sustainability of the new settlements by supporting training for local residents to maintain their homes and building the capacity of the Government of Haiti's social housing unit to manage settlement areas, collect lease payments, and maintain the utilities and common areas. USAID has since revised its strategy to focus on housing finance and improvements in existing communities.

USAID continues to see progress in non-infrastructure sectors as well. More than 80,000 rural households have benefited directly from Feed the Future interventions and the Agency will continue to work with these farmers into 2018. USAID is also committed to improving the quality of, and access to, education for Haitians through the Ann ALE education program, which aims to directly support 300 schools and improve 100,000 students' reading and writing skills through interactive teaching methods and community-based activities by 2019.

Question 3. This year's request of economic support funds (ESF) for Haiti is \$79.9 million. This amount is almost half of the \$134.25 million that was allocated for Haiti in FY 2009, before the earthquake occurred.

- Can you explain the ESF budget trend for Haiti since FY 2009, and why this year's requested amount is less than the pre-quake funding level?

Answer. The FY 2017 request levels are sufficient for this year, given remaining unexpended funds that are available under the U.S. government post-earthquake strategy, and our commitment to achieving lasting results and ensuring responsible investment of U.S. taxpayer dollars. However, USAID has made tremendous progress in accelerating its pace of awards in Haiti, having increased its staff and provided additional procurement resources. As a result of these changes, last fiscal year, for example, USAID/Haiti sub-obligated \$400 million into grants and contracts to contribute to meeting USAID's strategic objectives for Haiti. These and other ef-

forts have led to a 30 percent increase in monthly expenditures. USAID/Haiti expects to reduce pipeline in line with Agency best practices by the end of FY 2017.

Question 4. The administration's FY 2017 budget request for State and USAID includes more than \$1.7 billion in foreign assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean, a 10% increase over FY 15 levels. This includes a 92% increase in development assistance (DA) funding, primarily to support development efforts under the U.S. strategy for Engagement in Central America. It also includes a 102% increase in nonproliferation, anti-terrorism, de-mining and related programs (NADR) to support efforts in Columbia. There's also a 46% increase in foreign military financing funding (FMF), most of which would support military partners in Colombia and throughout Central America.

- Can you let me know which programs' funding levels decreased in order to support these increases?

Answer. The FY 2017 Request for Department of State and USAID totals \$50.1 billion, an increase of \$2.3 billion over the FY 2015 appropriation. While the FY 2017 request represents an increase over FY 2015, diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance needs are ever rising, and certain tradeoffs had to be made as the administration finalized the request. Of the \$50.1 billion, \$1.7 billion is requested for foreign assistance programs in the Western Hemisphere. While the FY 2017 Request includes a \$155 million (10 percent) increase above funding allocated to the region in FY 2015, this funding is part of the overall increase in funding requested by the President in FY 2017 for the Department of State and USAID above the FY 2015 appropriation.

The President has made clear his commitment to providing strong support for our partners and programs in the Western Hemisphere, including those in Central America, Colombia, Mexico, and elsewhere. The FY 2017 Request of \$1.7 billion for the Western Hemisphere reflects this commitment. The increases in this request will bolster efforts to address the underlying factors of migration from Central America and help support the peace process in Colombia.

Question 5. As you all know well, the world is facing unprecedented humanitarian crises—conflict and disaster have displaced millions of people. In June 2015, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that worldwide, nearly 60 million persons were forcibly displaced—the highest number on record. Many people forget that a large number of these refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are fleeing violence in the Western Hemisphere with almost 350,000 refugees and more than 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) originating from Colombia alone according to the U.N. CR as of this week. Despite these record highs, the total U.S. humanitarian assistance request is \$6.156 billion—that's 20 percent less than FY 2016. Further, the amount in the Migration and Refugee Assistance account in this year's request decreased by \$267 million.

- What accounts for this significant decrease? Particularly when the causes of this mass migration have yet to be solved, and so many refugees and IDPs are in need of assistance?

Answer. The administration remains dedicated to providing strong support for humanitarian programs worldwide. The President's FY 2017 request reflects the administration's ongoing commitment to these programs. The FY 2017 request level includes \$1.957 billion for the International Disaster Assistance Account, \$1.35 billion for Food for Peace Title II, \$2.799 billion for the Migration and Refugee Assistance Account, and \$50 million for the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund. The overall FY 2017 request for humanitarian assistance is \$511 million higher than the FY 2016 request. In concert with FY 2016 resources, the request will enable the U.S. Government to respond to the dire humanitarian situation resulting from displacement from violence around the world, including Colombia and Central America, as well as the humanitarian needs resulting from El Nino.

Thanks to generous support from the U.S. Congress, the U.S. government is the largest humanitarian donor in the world. We plan to continue our robust support in FY 2016 and FY 2017 while urging other donors to contribute to these ongoing emergencies. We will continue to ensure that we are using funds as efficiently as possible in order to meet current and unforeseen needs.

Question 6a. For FY 17, the State Department is requesting \$3.8 million for WHA to increase staff and update the aging facilities of the U.S. Embassy in Havana, and notes in the request that "adding these new positions is vital to U.S. national security and to supporting Cuban civil society." At the same time, the administration's FY 2017 foreign aid budget request for Cuba democracy and human rights funding

is for \$15 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF), a 25% reduction from the \$20 million provided annually in recent years to nongovernmental democracy and human rights programs.

- Please describe in what areas the nine additional staff that are requested would work, and in particular, how they would help support Cuban civil society.

Answer. The Embassy has not created any new positions since the transition from an Interests Section to a full-fledged Embassy, despite an enormous increase in workload. The fact that our Embassy in Havana is severely understaffed makes it difficult to meet the U.S. government's objectives. To put the staffing level of our Embassy in Havana in context, Embassy Santo Domingo has approximately 150 U.S. direct hire employees compared to 54 in Havana.

Of the nine additional staff requested, six would be assigned to Embassy Havana and three would join the Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs in Washington, DC. The Havana positions would work in the Political, Economic, and Management sections. A mixture of reporting and support positions are required to deepen U.S. understanding of Cuba's political, social, and economic environment, oversee maintenance upgrades, conduct human rights monitoring and advocacy, and deepen law enforcement cooperation on issues such as fugitives and counternarcotics. Adding these positions is vital to U.S. national security and to supporting Cuban civil society.

During re-establishment negotiations, we successfully negotiated greater freedom for our diplomats to travel in Cuba to better monitor developments within the country. The ability to travel outside Havana and interact with Cubans outside the capital is vital to our security and to our support of the Cuban people. We need additional staff in Cuba to take advantage of this enhanced ability to travel. Questions for the Record Submitted to Principal Deputy Assistance Secretary Francisco Palmieri Senator David Perdue (#6b and #6c) Senate Foreign Relations Committee April 26, 2016 Question:

Question 6b. What is the rationale for the 25% reduction in Cuba democracy and human rights funding? Has there been any change in the type of assistance provided in the aftermath of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations?

Answer. The promotion of democratic principles and human rights remains the core goal of U.S. assistance to Cuba. We agree that support to civil society in Cuba remains critical, and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations has not changed that. We will continue to implement democracy programs supported by Economic Support Funds. We believe the FY 2017 request provides a sustainable level of democracy support that will enable us to continue advancing our democracy and human rights goals in Cuba.

In prior years, the scope of the tools available to us to interact with civil society in Cuba was limited. As restrictions on travel by Cubans and to Cuba have been eased on both sides, additional tools are available that enable the United States to engage directly with the Cuban people. For example, we are now able to conduct some forms of training in the United States or third countries whereas previously, these programs could only be carried out in Cuba.

Also, U.S. educational, religious, and humanitarian groups now connect directly with the Cuban people. Other programs funded by the Department of State offer enhanced opportunities for professional, academic, and cultural exchanges with Cuba. Cuban activists are able to travel regularly to the United States and elsewhere.

Under these circumstances, we also believe the FY 2017 request takes into consideration that one of our goals in supporting civil society worldwide is to provide the kind of training and capacity building that allows them gradually to become more self-sustaining.

Regarding the status of prior year funding, the Department of State obligated all of the Cuba ESF funding in Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014. We are soliciting proposals for FY 2015 funds.

Question 6c. How would you assess the impact and effectiveness of U.S. democracy and human rights assistance in Cuba?

Answer. When U.S. government-funded programs began, we supported the few nascent civil society groups on the island who operated primarily in urban environments. Since then and due in part to U.S. government programming efforts, we support the professionalization of the growing, diverse civil society groups throughout Cuba, and have assisted in amplifying the voice of independent media through training and information dissemination.

Growing activism within Cuba by independent groups, increased information flow to, from and within the island, and increasing disillusionment with failed government policies have emboldened a greater number of Cubans and provided us the opportunity to engage with a wider range of civil society actors, including a new generation of activists and individuals who work to create new opportunities for an open and prosperous Cuba.

U.S. government assistance in Cuba responds to the Cuban people's demand for human rights and democratic governance. Our programs train independent journalists to provide an alternative voice to state-run media, and equip human rights defenders to better document human rights abuses. Following Cuba's lifting of travel restrictions in early 2013, more civil society members have been able to participate in training opportunities outside of Cuba, increase their professional networks, and present the situation regarding human rights through reports and testimony to international fora. U.S. government assistance also provides crucial humanitarian assistance to alleviate the hardships for victims of political repression and their families, so they may continue to speak out for their basic fundamental and human rights.

We support online platforms to promote the free flow of information and disseminate reports of human rights violations, reaching more Cubans than before as viewership of the platforms has dramatically increased as internet access expands on the island, a trend we expect to continue.

We will continue to assess the impact and effectiveness of our programs and respond to changing conditions on the island as well as new strategies and needs identified by civil society groups.

Question 7. The administration has requested more than \$391 million in foreign assistance for Colombia in FY 2017 to support the country's efforts to end its 52-year internal conflict and implement a sustainable and inclusive peace.

- In your view, what assistance does Colombia need to ensure a successful post-conflict transition?
- To what extent are you able to move ahead with programming while peace negotiations are still underway?
- How would U.S. assistance efforts change if the peace negotiations fail or if the Colombian public chooses not to approve the peace accords?

Answer. We strongly support President Santos' efforts to reach a just and lasting peace with the FARC. The negotiations are in the endgame. We are hopeful the parties will reach a final accord soon, leading to the FARC's disarmament by the end of this year.

The President's Peace Colombia strategy focuses U.S. assistance on three broad pillars: (1) security, including counternarcotics, counter-transnational organized crime, demining, and demobilization of former fighters; (2) expanding state presence and public institutions; and (3) justice and other assistance for victims.

The President's strategy is flexible. A guiding principle is to focus our assistance on special U.S. capabilities that can catalyze Colombia's efforts to end the conflict, secure a just and durable peace, consolidate public support for the peace process, and address the conflict's long-term underlying drivers. Building on the success of prior year programs, the FY 2017 \$391 million State and USAID request will fund critical programs to strengthen Colombia's efforts on victims' assistance, reintegrating ex-combatants, and rural development; counternarcotics and transnational organized crime; military civil engineering; and demining.

As the negotiations progress, the Colombian government continues to combat illegal armed groups, drug-trafficking, and transnational organized crime; remove landmines; strengthen public institutions and foster licit economic opportunities in areas where the state's presence has historically been weak; and provide assistance to conflict victims. U.S. assistance for Colombia's efforts continue to be critical and advance U.S. interests in regional security, counternarcotics, law enforcement, economic development, justice, and human rights.

Certain Colombian efforts, such as reintegrating demobilized combatants, could be deferred or deemphasized if the peace accord is delayed. Colombian military and law enforcement operations might intensify in regions where illegal armed groups continued to pose threats. Colombian efforts to strengthen the state's presence, build public institutions, promote economic opportunity, and deliver victims assistance would likely concentrate on more permissive areas.

Adjustments to U.S. assistance, if the Colombian public failed to approve the final accord, would take into account the Colombian government's plans to consolidate its development and security gains, to ensure a lasting peace.

Question 8. A range of governments, NGOs, and international organizations work to promote democracy around the world.

- How does the State Department and the US government as a whole coordinate democracy promotion efforts with these groups?
- How does DRL, if at all, work with organizations such as USAID or the National Endowment of Democracy?
- How does DRL work with the regional bureaus regarding democracy monitoring and oversight? In your view, how can these efforts be more effective?
- How do DRL assistance programs to promote democracy differ from those of USAID?
- What, if any, are the State Department's relative advantages or unique strengths with regard to planning and implementing democracy and governance activities?

Answer. With more than 100 operating units within the Department of State and USAID in Washington and overseas that are involved in the promotion of democracy abroad through foreign assistance, the Department and USAID place a high value on coordination to help ensure assistance efforts are complementary and non-duplicative. The U.S. government regularly engages with other funders and entities involved in promoting democracy and human rights around the world. In 2006, the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources was established to provide leadership and coordinate foreign assistance planning and management across the Department and USAID. The relevant Chief of Mission coordinates all assistance awards obligated overseas and assistance awards obligated in Washington are coordinated by the responsible operating unit with relevant stakeholders.

For example, proposals for new assistance awards managed by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) undergo interagency review panels to ensure that potential programs are well coordinated, complement, and do not duplicate existing programming efforts. DRL invites representatives from the relevant regional bureaus (which represent the views from U.S. embassies), other functional bureaus as appropriate, and USAID (which draws its input from USAID field-missions). With respect to democracy programs managed by other operating units, DRL may be consulted on the drafting of comprehensive strategies, solicitations, and Congressional notifications, and may also participate in technical review panels. DRL regularly coordinates and exchanges information with USAID and the NED on respective program portfolios.

The promotion of human rights and democratic governance is an integral part of the U.S. development agenda. USAID views human rights and democratic governance as fundamental ends of development and as critically important means to the reduction of poverty. USAID employs a bottom-up approach to programming whereby field missions develop five-year Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) that analyze and prioritize key challenges in the DRG sector. The most effective programmatic approaches are developed for the country context and activities are implemented through a combination of mission and central awards.

USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG Center) supports DRG programs in the field by operating 14 central funds or pre-competed implementation mechanisms (both grants and contracts). These capabilities include support for programs in elections and political party assistance, rule of law, anticorruption, human rights, legislative strengthening, civil society, global labor programs, media, and internet freedom.

DRL programs directly support national security and foreign policy goals and objectives, and advance key priorities of the President and Secretary of State. These include promoting Internet freedom, defending international religious freedom, empowering women and girls and preventing and responding to gender-based violence, preventing atrocities and countering violent extremism, supporting transitional justice, fighting corruption and cronyism, promoting media freedom, protecting labor rights, advancing the human rights of members of marginalized populations, and supporting pillars of President Obama's Stand with Civil Society agenda.

DRL has developed best practices and specialized mechanisms to work in closed societies and closing spaces that may have a limited or no U.S. government presence. This ability to conduct sensitive programs in a manner that meets federal requirements while keeping grantees safe is the basis of all DRL programs, 90 percent of which operate in restrictive or challenging environments. As a result, DRL has been able to sustain support in environments when other donors were required to halt.

DRL is able to administer programs in ways that allow the programs to be flexible, adaptable, and responsive to complex and changing situations on the ground,

while mitigating risk to both our implementing partners and local beneficiaries. DRL manages global initiatives that can rapidly respond to deteriorating situations and emerging opportunities, and provide emergency assistance to human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and individuals under attack or threat of attack. Since 2007, DRL emergency assistance programs have assisted more than 3,300 people and organizations in more than 98 countries and territories.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR, TOMAZ MALINOWSKI

Question 1. The Budget includes \$2.7 billion for programs that support rule of law and human rights, good governance, political competition and consensus-building and civil society capacity-building, and supports key Administration initiatives, including the Open Government Partnership and Stand with Civil Society initiative.

- Can you provide details on the specific programs that support the above-mentioned initiatives?

Answer. Within the \$2.7 billion request for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) programs, \$652.1 million is requested for civil society programming globally, which includes funds for bilateral and regional civil society programs as well as the Lifeline: Embattled Civil Society Organization (CSO) Assistance Fund, the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the Civil Society Innovation Initiative (CSII), the Legal Enabling Environment Program (LEEP), Civil Society Sustainability Index (CSOSI), Information Safety and Capacity Project (ISC), and the Emerging Global Leaders Initiative (EGLI).

The Lifeline: Embattled CSO Assistance Fund provides emergency assistance to CSOs under threat or attack, subject to politically-motivated prosecution, or otherwise at risk due to repression from state or non-state actors; provides support and short-term concentrated capacity building to CSOs for advocacy initiatives and preventive measures; and provides publicity for cases of significant crackdowns on civil society. Lifeline is managed by the Department of State's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), which created the initiative with \$1 million in seed funding in 2011. It has since grown to include support from 17 other governments and two foundations. Since its launch, Lifeline has assisted more than 900 CSOs in 97 countries. In one case, government officials raided the office of a CSO, confiscated equipment and financial documents, and brought the employees of the CSO in for questioning, where they threatened criminal action based on false accusations of embezzlement. Because of Lifeline assistance, the group was able to relocate, replace their equipment, and continue their work.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) was launched by President Obama in 2011 with seven other heads of state and civil society leaders. A global partnership between government and civil society across 69 countries designed to facilitate a "race to the top" by incentivizing best practices, OGP works to advance transparency and accountability through national commitments for reform and an independent review mechanism for tracking progress. The OGP Secretariat is supported in part by U.S. government funding and OGP members have collectively made more than 2,000 publicly-monitored commitments—improving how governments serve more than 2 billion people worldwide. As a direct result, citizens are petitioning their governments online, citizens are participating directly in policy making, and governments are partnering with civil society to find new ways to expose corruption and improve good governance.

The Civil Society Innovation Initiative (CSII) was announced in September 2014 to connect civil society through a network of demand-driven innovation hubs that encourage cooperation, innovation, research, learning, and peer-to-peer exchanges. USAID is partnering with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to create a process to ensure that civil society is an active partner in the design process of the hubs. To date, CDII has engaged over 500 CSO leaders to map existing networks and resources. Two global co-creation workshops and six regional co-design workshops brought together over 150 CSO leaders from 118 countries to design the hubs and participate in a "pitch" session in Colombia. USAID envisions that all six hubs will be launched in some capacity by the end of 2016.

The Legal Enabling Environment Program (LEEP) was established in 2008 and is managed by USAID. It supports the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law to promote a more enabling legal and regulatory environment for CSOs and provides technical assistance to respond swiftly to regulatory threats to CSOs. Over the past

four years, LEEP has supported and/or defended civil society in approximately 50 countries, including strengthening the capacity of local civil society to defend itself.

USAID's Information Safety and Capacity (ISC) project was established in 2011 and provides advanced, sustained information security assistance to CSOs, independent media, and human rights activists in countries where free expression, journalistic reporting, online communications, and advocacy is potentially risky to personal and digital safety. The ISC project connects democracy and human rights activists to mentors who work with them to ensure they are using technology securely and using the best tools tailored to their own risk environment. To date, ISC has mentored and assisted more than 200 organizations and organized a dozen workshops that bring groups together for coordination and joint planning.

The Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI) began in 1997 and reports on the strength and overall viability of the civil society sector in over 70 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Europe and Eurasia based on seven key dimensions: legal environment, financial viability, organizational capacity, advocacy, service provision, infrastructure, and public image. With support from USAID, this index and corresponding information is available to the public. It is used by CSOs to engage in policy dialogue with governments and private sector.

Since the announcement of the Emerging Global Leaders Initiative (EGLI) in September 2014, 77 emerging civil society leaders have come to the United States on a leadership development fellowship ranging from six-18 months. As part of the program, fellows convene three times in Washington, DC, for leadership training and are placed at civil society organizations across the United States.

Question 2. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) plays a key role in executing the will of Congress on human rights, democracy promotion, and religious freedom. It produces the annual human rights report and the annual International Religious Freedom Report, and vetting of security units pursuant to the Leahy human rights amendment.

- Does DRL feel that it has enough discretionary resources at its disposal to carry out its mission?

Answer. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) has sufficient resources to carry out its mission and appreciates the support it receives from Congress each year. New opportunities do arise, however, and the bureau's ability to address all priorities sufficiently can be stretched. Recent examples of such opportunities include protecting civil society, democracy, and security through the Community of Democracies; promoting transparency and combatting corruption through the Open Government Partnership; or strengthening multilateral efforts to promote Internet freedom through the Freedom Online Coalition.

Question 3. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) plays a key role in executing the will of Congress on human rights, democracy promotion, and religious freedom. It produces the annual human rights report and the annual International Religious Freedom Report, and vetting of security units pursuant to the Leahy human rights amendment.

- What program areas have you identified that are neglected and require additional funding that are not congressionally mandated?

Answer. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) continues to focus its efforts on programs that advance its core mission, including advancing civil society and promoting human rights. As with many foreign assistance programs, given broader budget constraints and other foreign policy and development priorities, needs are greater than available resources. Beyond DRL's own budget resources, DRL plays an important policy role informing U.S. Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) programs carried out by other agencies and bureaus. In the FY 2017, \$2.7 billion is requested for U.S. DRG assistance through State and USAID. This request is \$411.8 million above the FY 2016 appropriation for such programs and would support the Administration's strategic goal of promoting resilient, open, and democratic societies.

There are areas in which DRL could do more, including protecting civil society, democracy, and security through the Community of Democracies; promoting transparency and combatting corruption through the Open Government Partnership; strengthening multilateral efforts to promote Internet freedom through the Freedom Online Coalition; and strengthening efforts that assist businesses as they endeavor to respect human rights such as the Voluntary Principles on Business and Human Rights. The Bureau will work to extend its reach to these areas as resources allow.

Question 4. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) plays a key role in executing the will of Congress on human rights, democracy promotion, and religious freedom. It produces the annual human rights report and the annual International Religious Freedom Report, and vetting of security units pursuant to the Leahy human rights amendment.

- Are there any congressionally mandated programs that require additional resources to be effectively carried out?

Answer. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor has sufficient resources to carry out effectively congressionally mandated programs. As DRL works to fully implement authorities to ensure human rights violations and abuses are taken into account when reviewing visa eligibility, DRL anticipates the bureau's resource needs may grow in future years. Any additional future funding requirements would be included in future Congressional Budget Justifications.

Question 5. Having come from the human rights community you know for some time there have been conversations regarding the utility of various human rights dialogues and concerns that these dialogues have yielded little in terms of substantive outcomes and have had the unintended consequence of ghettoizing human rights in U.S. foreign policy.

- Can you share any significant deliverables during the course of the Obama administration that have emerged from these dialogues, specifically the U.S.-China and U.S.-Vietnam human rights dialogues?

Answer. Human rights dialogues with other governments are useful when the other government is willing to openly and genuinely address the issues discussed. Such dialogues also can be valuable opportunities to discuss our human rights concerns in greater detail and depth. We actively resist any effort by a government to use such dialogues as a substitute for substantive progress or to avoid bilateral discussions on human rights in other contexts.

The U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue (HRD) is just one forum among many where we discuss human rights concerns with the Chinese government. While Beijing seeks to confine human rights discussions to the HRD, they have not succeeded. Secretary Kerry and other Department principals raised human rights issue at every high-level engagement, including the Strategic and Economic Dialogue, the Legal Experts Dialogue, and other bilateral meetings. However, the HRD is another important channel for the United States to engage directly with the Chinese government on human rights in an in-depth manner—focusing on both systemic issues and specific political prisoner cases. This is not a venue where we simply agree to disagree.

In some cases the dialogue has led to better conditions for political prisoners whose cases we highlighted or their release. For example, we repeatedly called for the release of journalist Gao Yu at the most recent dialogue in August 2015, and in November, she was released on medical parole. That said, we are greatly concerned about the recent significant downturn in human rights in China and to signal that the HRD is no substitute for progress on human rights, a dedicated human rights dialogue has not been planned this year.

The annual U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue is likewise a critical forum to engage in in-depth discussions. There have been some successes, and we believe continuation of the Dialogue has prevented greater backsliding on many democracy and human rights issues. On the positive side, the number of prisoners of conscience continues to decline due to the decreasing rate of new arrests. The broader trend has been the overall number of prisoners of conscience decreasing from 160 in mid-2013 to fewer than 100 today. In February, Vietnam acceded to the U.N. Convention Against Torture and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Vietnam also passed a new law to provide greater protections to LGBTI persons, including the decriminalization of gay marriage. In addition, Vietnam's commitments to allow the formation of independent labor unions as part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement would be significant if TPP is ratified and implemented and if the commitments are realized.

Still, the overall human rights record in Vietnam remains poor. Since January, Vietnamese courts have convicted nine individuals for peaceful political expression. The National Assembly failed to ease or eliminate vague national security provisions in the criminal code that are used to prosecute peaceful dissent. Instead, it actually strengthened and increased penalties for some of the relevant political offenses. The Assembly will be considering key laws on association, assembly and religion or belief this year, and we are urging the government to ease restrictions on NGOs, religious groups, and demonstrations. The most recent Human Rights Dia-

logue concluded in April 2016 and we will assess its outcomes over the coming months.

Question 6. In a response to a Freedom House question this year regarding the continued violence and discrimination faced by ethnic and religious minorities in Burma, the State Department said that the \$29.9 million requested would go towards supporting the ongoing democratic transition and reforms as well as advance national reconciliation and the political dialogue process. While this is laudable, these aims outlined in this response are very broad and the response did not address the specific plight of ethnic and religious minorities, including the Rohingya, the Kachin and the Chin, who continue to suffer violence and discrimination.

- Can the State Department go into more detail into how the funding will specifically target the situation of the ethnic nationalities and religious minorities?

Answer. The U.S. remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian and human rights situation in Burma, including the situation of ethnic and religious minorities. Since FY 2015, the U.S. has provided over \$77 million in humanitarian assistance for vulnerable Burmese, including Rohingya, Kachin, and Chin, and populations along the Thailand-Burma border. To assist Rohingya transitioning from internally displaced persons camps and address the needs of surrounding vulnerable Rakhine communities, USAID is providing \$5 million to support livelihoods, early recovery, trust-building, and income generation among both groups.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) has programmed \$1.25 million to date in programs that promote religious diversity and tolerance, document abuses and advocate against religious discrimination, conduct interfaith dialogue, and support community actors seeking to bridge religious divides in Burma. DRL is currently designing programs to promote a diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society in Burma that respects the rights of all people, and addresses inequalities faced by the Rohingya and other ethnic and religious minorities. DRL will support projects that address social, political, and economic factors that contribute to cycles of intolerance, violence, and the internal displacement of minorities.

Question 7. How will this budget assist the Mexican government in addressing ongoing violations of religious freedom as well as fight impunity and strengthen the rule of law?

Answer. The FY 2017 budget will strengthen the rule of law and reduce impunity by supporting Mexico's continued transition to an oral adversarial criminal justice system.

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) supports training and capacity building for investigators, prosecutors, judges and other justice sector actors in their roles under the new system, and provides support at both the federal and state level to develop more professional, accountable police forces. INL will continue to support accreditation to international standards in Mexico's prisons to help reduce crime while maintaining safer, more secure, and humane prisons. DRL plans to support projects in Mexico that address social factors contributing to cycles of intolerance and violence toward religious and ethnic minority populations. Our efforts in Mexico address impunity and strengthen the rule of law by empowering civil society organizations and journalists to promote human rights. A strong civil society is the cornerstone of any democracy and is essential to ensuring fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, so we are also committed to working with Mexican civil society to encourage reform.

In addition to activities financed by our foreign assistance budget, the United States is committed to working with the Mexican government and its citizens to strengthen the rule of law, promote transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption efforts, and protect human rights, including religious freedom, in Mexico.

The Department closely tracks reports of local political leaders pressuring Protestants to convert to Catholicism through forced displacement, arbitrary detention, and destruction of property in some rural and indigenous communities. We are also concerned about reports that priests and other religious leaders in some parts of the country continued to be targeted last year with threats of extortion, death, and intimidation, often from organized criminal groups.

Each year, the Assistant Secretaries of DRL and the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) lead a Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue between the United States and Mexican governments, during which the two sides discuss cooperation on human rights issues. We hold discussions with civil society members ahead of this dialogue and throughout the year to ensure that we understand their concerns. The dialogue is an opportunity to work together and share best practices on a wide range of topics related to the rule of law, violence against women and persons with

disabilities, journalist security, and basic freedoms of expression, association, and religion.

Question 8. Recent reports have stated that a panel of international experts commissioned by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has said that the Mexican government “has hampered the inquiries on the investigation of the disappearance of 43 Mexican students.”

- Do you believe this reporting to be accurate?

Answer. As President Obama has said, this gruesome crime has no place in a civilized society. We commend the Commission and the experts for their work, which was requested by the Mexican government, and for the assistance it has provided Mexico and the victims’ families in working to resolve this tragic case. The final detailed report includes over 600 pages of analysis and recommendations and has been extensively covered in the press, as have public statements by the experts. We encourage the Government of Mexico to carefully consider the report’s recommendations, evaluate suggested actions to address the issue of forced disappearances, provide support to the victims’ families, and continue their efforts to bring the perpetrators of these terrible crimes to justice. The Government of Mexico took an important step by recognizing the role that the international community could play, and by requesting that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) appoint an independent group to support its investigation.

The experts are well-known and widely respected experts on the rule of law, human rights, and public policy. Their report and public statements reinforce the critical importance of bringing to justice the perpetrators of these crimes to ensure accountability and bring closure for the victims’ families, who have suffered deeply. During the course of the expert group’s mandate, U.S. officials urged the Mexican government to fully facilitate the experts’ review of the investigation. We now look forward to learning what the follow-up mechanism will entail, with respect to the experts’ recommendations and work, as announced by the IACHR following its recent spring period of sessions.

Beyond the case of the 43 students, the report reinforces the need to continue efforts in Mexico to strengthen accountability and the rule of law. The United States is supporting these efforts through strengthening communities and institutions, supporting Mexican efforts to establish and sustain the rule of law, advance transparency and anti-corruption efforts, and working with Mexico to promote and protect human rights.

Question 9. There are over 3 billion estimated internet users in the world as of 2014. The Internet as we know it has transformed our societies and economies, and it has thrived because it is open, free, and encourages innovation and information sharing.

- How effective has DRL been in promoting a free and open internet with its current resources?

Answer. In 2014, DRL commissioned an external evaluation by the Rand Corporation of its Internet freedom programming portfolio. The evaluation concluded that, “The DRL Internet Freedom portfolio represents a resilient mix of both high-risk/high-gain and tried-and-true approaches. . . balanced in investment allocation, geopolitical focus, distribution of performance, and project breadth.” Since 2008, DRL has invested over \$145 million in those programs to promote Internet freedom globally through support for anti-censorship and secure communication technologies, digital safety, policy advocacy, and research. DRL’s portfolio is the most comprehensive support for Internet freedom of any funder, private or public.

Over the last five years, DRL has supported the creation and improvement of numerous anti-censorship and secure communications tools. These tools are used by millions of individuals each year to freely and safely access the global Internet. DRL’s digital safety programs have provided over 180,000 human rights defenders with digital safety training, technical support, or emergency assistance. In addition, DRL has supported policy advocacy efforts to promote Internet freedom in nearly 40 key countries around the world. For example, in a country in Eurasia, DRL supported local civil society efforts to advocate against government plans to create an Internet “blacklist” and assisted with the development of a new multi-stakeholder Internet regulatory body.

Question 10. What obstacles or foreign governments has DRL identified that inhibit a free and open internet? How can these obstacles be overcome?

Answer. More than half the world’s population lives in a country where the Internet is censored or restricted. Repressive regimes are deploying new, sophisticated tactics to further limit Internet freedom. Many governments have begun actively

manipulating online content, deploying malware to target human rights defenders, and launching digital attacks to silence users. Last year, servers that experts claim were associated with China's so-called "Great Firewall" launched a cross-border cyber-attack against human rights websites being hosted in the United States. The attack manipulated traffic intended for one of China's biggest web service companies, turning it into malicious code and re-directing it at American websites used by Chinese activists. The attack was dubbed the "Great Cannon."

Many governments have also begun adopting restrictive policies to further limit freedom of expression online, including implementing national blacklists of banned websites, onerous online registration policies, and overbroad cybercrime legislation. Governments are also increasingly seeking to shift the burden of censorship to private companies and individuals by pressing them to store, provide access to, and remove online content.

To promote a free and open Internet, DRL has:

1. Invested over \$145 million in Internet freedom programs to ensure human rights defenders and ordinary citizens around the world are able to safely access the global Internet. Our programs provide individuals with the tools, information, and support they need to circumvent censorship, defend against online attacks, and communicate safely in closed environments. For example, when the government of Burundi blocked access to social media during election protests last summer, many human rights defenders and journalists turned to anti-censorship tools to continue reporting on the protests, documenting human rights abuses and safely communicating with the outside world.
2. Led multilateral efforts to promote Internet freedom. The United States is a founding member of the Freedom Online Coalition, a group of likeminded nations committed to promoting and protecting human rights online. Since its founding in 2011, we have doubled membership in the Coalition to 30 countries.
3. Worked to build international consensus. The United States is part of the core group that drafted and successfully negotiated a series of pioneering resolutions on Internet Freedom at the U.N. Human Rights Council. These resolutions, each of which has passed by consensus, reaffirm that the same human rights that people have offline must also be protected online.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAVID PERDUE TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR, TOMAZ MALINOWSKI

Question 1a. I was disappointed to see the announcement earlier this month that the second round of Haiti's presidential elections was postponed due to allegations of fraud and subsequent threats of violent protests, leaving Haiti without a duly elected president or a complete federal government in place. Despite having agreed on a plan to move forward with an election by this week, the second round of elections has been postponed, possibly until as late as October. The U.S. has a tremendous stake in the future of Haiti's democracy. We have spent over \$30 million on elections in Haiti in the past year, and the international community collectively has invested about \$80 million.

- Can you let me know what we've used the \$30 million for in support of the elections? Can you tell me about the FY 2017 budget request for election support in Haiti?

Answer. We fully share your disappointment and agree it is essential to get elections back on track. The United States has a huge stake in Haiti's democracy. Through 2015, USAID had budgeted more than \$30 million for election-related activities. These activities aim to strengthen Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), and political party and civil society groups' capacity to organize and monitor regular and inclusive elections that meet international standards for transparency and fairness.

To support the electoral process going forward, USAID has provided an additional \$4.9 million in elections funding to the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to provide transport and logistics support. USAID has also budgeted additional funding for the Consortium for Electoral and Political Processes Strengthening (NDI and IFES). This assistance equips the partners to respond effectively to the continually changing electoral and political process environment.

As a result of the delayed elections, increased funding will likely be required. Until the CEP releases an electoral calendar, however, we cannot accurately project

the total elections cost, since that will be significantly impacted by the CEP's decisions on the timing and possible grouping of Presidential, Parliamentary, and sub-municipal elections. Preliminary estimates prepared by UN Development Program and the CEP have included an additional \$13 million for the next round of elections.

Going forward, the U.S. government's and Haiti's technical partners stand by to assist efforts by civil society, the Haitian government, and the CEP to meet demands for increased credibility and transparency of the ongoing electoral process and to ensure a level playing field. However, each step will require sustained commitment and political will from the Government of Haiti and the CEP.

Question 1b. What is the State Department doing to help get Haiti's election cycle back on track?

Answer. The Department of State is urging the Haitian government to complete the 2015 electoral process promptly and seat a democratically elected government, emphasizing that anti-democratic "political solutions" are not an acceptable outcome. We are supporting Haitian efforts aimed at finding consensual and constructive solutions that will see the February 5 political accord implemented and a conclusion to the electoral process as soon as possible. We are urging the verification commission to complete expeditiously its evaluation and the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) to implement the commission's legal and constitutional recommendations. As interim President Privert has promised, we expect the CEP to announce its electoral calendar by June 6.

Question 1c. If elections get postponed again, does the State department have a plan in place for a U.S. response?

Answer. Along with international partners, we are reviewing an array of possible responses by the United States if the electoral calendar is not issued on June 6, or if the deadlines announced in that calendar are not met.

We have consulted closely with other donors to ensure a consistent and coordinated response to possible continued electoral delays. To date, the international donor community has generally spoken with one voice, urging political actors to stick with the previously agreed timetable. In some cases, international financial institutions' programs may be affected if there is a prolonged absence of a democratically elected government in Haiti.

Question 1d. If so, what is State prepared to do in order to influence the interim government to complete elections?

Answer. We have indicated to the highest levels of the Haitian government that it is important to set early deadlines not only for the holding of elections, but also for the seating of those elected. The administration is reviewing a range of unilateral and multilateral actions we could take in the event that elections are not completed quickly. Such responses include UN Security Council action, Organization of American States (OAS) action, withdrawal of funding for elections, and pressure on individual decision-makers. Questions for the Record Submitted to Assistant Secretary of State Tomasz Malinowski by Senator David Perdue (#2a and 2b) Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs April 26, 2016

Question 2a. I recently wrote a letter to Secretary Kerry about this issue—some U.S. officials on the ground in Haiti believe a small group of candidates who were unsuccessful in the first election round are responsible for inciting allegations of fraud in the elections and sparking civil unrest in order to trigger a "do over" election, even stooping to the level of paying citizens to take them to the streets.

- How are State Department's resources being used to identify and call out election disruptors?

Answer. Some actors have mobilized supporters and championed allegations of fraud that to date are unsubstantiated; our Embassy observers and other international electoral monitors determined there was no massive fraud in the first round of presidential elections. The United States, through multiple statements and a visit to Port au Prince by Secretary Kerry, has made clear that electoral intimidation and violence are unacceptable. We expect those who organize, finance, or participate in electoral intimidation and violence to be held to account in accordance with Haitian law.

In addition, through private meetings and public statements, the U.S. government has made clear that all parties must take their claims of fraud through the legal process, and not to the streets. Our efforts are focused primarily on encouraging the interim Haitian government to conclude the 2015 electoral process with the two candidates who won the most votes in the October 25 elections. Once elections are scheduled, we will expect Haitian security officials, with support from the UN secu-

rity mission (MINUSTAH) as needed, to respond strongly to the threat or use of violence to disrupt the vote. We will also seek to identify the perpetrators of violence aimed at disrupting the elections, along with those who incited such acts, and take appropriate action, such as restricting visas, to target those responsible for inciting or committing violence.

Question 2b. Aside from public rhetoric and private talks, is State willing to use other diplomatic tools of persuasion, including travel restrictions and/or visa bans, for these disruptors and their families, who view U.S. travel ability as a status symbol?

Answer. Yes, the Department of State is willing to use the diplomatic tools at our disposal to respond to disruptors of the electoral process. We are considering appropriate U.S. responses to continued delays, including visa revocation on human rights or other legal grounds, for those who deliberately disrupt the electoral process to pursue their own interests. We are prepared to back public statements and diplomatic pressure with concrete consequences, as needed.

Question 3a. Can you speak a bit on democracy and human rights efforts in Egypt, and how the FY 2017 budget request will work to address those issues?

Answer. We are concerned by the deterioration of the human rights situation in Egypt in recent months. The President, Secretary Kerry, and other U.S. officials have repeatedly raised human rights concerns, including those related to religious freedom issues in our bilateral conversations with senior Egyptian officials and with civil society leaders. We continue to have frank discussions with Egyptian officials about the use of mass trials, the use of military courts to try civilians, arbitrary arrests, and prolonged pre-trial detention. We have also expressed concern about increased restrictions on the exercise of freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, as well as harassment of NGOs.

The FY 2017 budget request complements these diplomatic efforts and it includes funds to work with targeted government institutions and non-governmental partners to enhance respect for human rights and rule of law, including by supporting Egyptian efforts to modernize the curriculum and instructional methods in initial entry training programs for public prosecutors. Assistance will also help strengthen good governance by providing expert advice on policy, regulatory, and management reform initiatives for national and sub-national government bodies, such as Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance and local councils, to support required fiscal and budgetary reforms and improve transparency, accountability, and service delivery. To complement these activities, assistance will support organizations that raise awareness of and advocate for improved public services and increased civic participation on key rights. Funding will continue to support technical assistance and training to government entities and the Egyptian people to counter trafficking in persons, combat violence against women, and promote a society that is more inclusive of marginalized populations.

Question 3b. What message do you think the consistent flow of foreign assistance, despite leadership, has sent to Egypt? Do you see a problem with how America provides continued security assistance to Egypt, or how that is viewed by Egyptians concerned about the government's human rights abuses?

Answer. Since the January 2011 revolution, we have made clear our commitment both to safeguard our regional security interests and to support meaningful Egyptian political reform including respect for human rights. We are concerned by the deterioration of the human rights situation in Egypt over the past year, and we continue to raise our concerns both publicly and privately over increasing restrictions on freedom of expression, association and civil society, including at the highest levels of the Egyptian government.

As is the case around the world, we use a wide range of tools including our assistance and diplomatic engagement to advance our interests with Egypt while also strengthening a strategic partnership with a country critical for regional stability. We understand the concerns regarding the human rights situation in Egypt, and continuously assess and refine our assistance to ensure we best support a politically, economically, and socially stable Egypt. In 2015, after a two-year review of our military and economic assistance, President Obama restructured our military aid to focus on our shared strategic objectives of improving Egypt's counterterrorism capability and border security while also providing direct economic assistance. Our economic assistance supports market reforms, inclusive growth, and job creation, providing much needed employment for a rapidly growing number of young people entering the workforce.

For example, programs aim to strengthen basic skills at the elementary level, provide scholarships, and strengthen higher education institutions. We and the Egypt-

tians share the same objective of deepening our strategic partnership. We remain concerned about restrictions on space for civil society and continue to engage with our Egyptian counterparts on this issue.

Question 3c. What do you think is the best policy option we have at our disposal to influence President Sisi's—and his government's—to halt their continued crack-down on human rights?

Answer. With Egypt, as we do around the world, we use a wide range of tools to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms. Secretary Kerry and other senior officials have repeatedly emphasized to the Egyptian government that we continue to strongly support Egypt's security and economic development, but that long-term peace and stability are impossible without trust, accountability, and avenues for peaceful dissent. They have also emphasized that NGOs and other civil society organizations play a legitimate and necessary role in any country and are critical to advancing freedoms, supporting universal human rights, giving voice to citizens' views, and acting as appropriate checks on the government.

Question 3d. Do you think a change to our assistance to Egypt is enough leverage to be a catalyst for change?

Answer. The United States remains committed to supporting the building of a stable, prosperous and democratic Egypt as an ally in an increasingly troubled region. With Egypt, as we do around the world, we use a wide range of tools including our assistance and both public and private diplomatic engagement to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question 4. The FY 2017 budget request seeks \$35.6 million in operational funding for the DRL bureau, an increase of \$0.7 million over last year's request. I understand that funds 171 positions, roughly \leq of which are here in DC. DRL also requests funds to conduct foreign assistance programs. However, this year's request is \$75 million for DRL activities—a 4.6% decrease since FY15.

- Can you help me understand why the funding request for the bureau and roughly 128 staffers in DC has increased, but the assistance funding request is down nearly 5%?

Answer. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) is the foreign policy lead within the U.S. government on promoting democracy and protecting human rights globally. DRL produces the annual Human Rights Report and the annual International Religious Freedom Report, and is responsible for vetting of security units pursuant to the State Leahy Law. DRL works directly with designated human rights officers and others at our 294 embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions around the world and centrally manages programs that focus activities in countries where governments commit egregious human rights violations, are undemocratic or in transition, and where democracy and human rights advocates are under pressure.

The FY 2017 request for DRL's operational funding includes an increase of \$674,000, which includes additional funds for overseas Leahy vetting as well as to cover current personnel, including cost adjustments for domestic inflation and locality pay adjustments.

Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) programs are a significant priority for this Administration and are critical components of our ability to promote resilient, open, and democratic societies. The FY 2017 request for DRG globally is \$2.7 billion, which is \$786.2 million (41 percent) above the FY 2015 request levels. Within the overall request for DRG assistance, the foreign assistance request for DRL is \$75 million. The FY 2017 request for foreign assistance balances the Administration's highest foreign policy priorities, including DRG programs, with other requirements—for example, the need to respond to emerging crises.

Question 5. A range of governments, NGOs, and international organizations work to promote democracy around the world.

- How does the State Department and the US government as a whole coordinate democracy promotion efforts with these groups?
- How does DRL, if at all, work with organizations such as USAID or the National Endowment of Democracy?
- How does DRL work with the regional bureaus regarding democracy monitoring and oversight? In your view, how can these efforts be more effective?
- How do DRL assistance programs to promote democracy differ from those of USAID?

- What, if any, are the State Department's relative advantages or unique strengths with regard to planning and implementing democracy and governance activities?

Answer. With more than 100 operating units within the Department of State and USAID in Washington and overseas that are involved in the promotion of democracy abroad through foreign assistance, the Department and USAID place a high value on coordination to help ensure assistance efforts are complementary and non-duplicative. The U.S. government regularly engages with other funders and entities involved in promoting democracy and human rights around the world. In 2006, the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources was established to provide leadership and coordinate foreign assistance planning and management across the Department and USAID. The relevant Chief of Mission coordinates all assistance awards obligated overseas and assistance awards obligated in Washington are coordinated by the responsible operating unit with relevant stakeholders.

For example, proposals for new assistance awards managed by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) undergo interagency review panels to ensure that potential programs are well coordinated, complement, and do not duplicate existing programming efforts. DRL invites representatives from the relevant regional bureaus (which represent the views from U.S. embassies), other functional bureaus as appropriate, and USAID (which draws its input from USAID field-missions). With respect to democracy programs managed by other operating units, DRL may be consulted on the drafting of comprehensive strategies, solicitations, and Congressional notifications, and may also participate in technical review panels. DRL regularly coordinates and exchanges information with USAID and the NED on respective program portfolios.

The promotion of human rights and democratic governance is an integral part of the U.S. development agenda. USAID views human rights and democratic governance as fundamental ends of development and as critically important means to the reduction of poverty. USAID employs a bottom-up approach to programming whereby field missions develop five-year Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) that analyze and prioritize key challenges in the DRG sector. The most effective programmatic approaches are developed for the country context and activities are implemented through a combination of mission and central awards.

USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG Center) supports DRG programs in the field by operating 14 central funds or pre-competed implementation mechanisms (both grants and contracts). These capabilities include support for programs in elections and political party assistance, rule of law, anticorruption, human rights, legislative strengthening, civil society, global labor programs, media, and internet freedom.

DRL programs directly support national security and foreign policy goals and objectives, and advance key priorities of the President and Secretary of State. These include promoting Internet freedom, defending international religious freedom, empowering women and girls and preventing and responding to gender-based violence, preventing atrocities and countering violent extremism, supporting transitional justice, fighting corruption and cronyism, promoting media freedom, protecting labor rights, advancing the human rights of members of marginalized populations, and supporting pillars of President Obama's Stand with Civil Society agenda.

DRL has developed best practices and specialized mechanisms to work in closed societies and closing spaces that may have a limited or no U.S. government presence. This ability to conduct sensitive programs in a manner that meets federal requirements while keeping grantees safe is the basis of all DRL programs, 90 percent of which operate in restrictive or challenging environments. As a result, DRL has been able to sustain support in environments when other donors were required to halt.

DRL is able to administer programs in ways that allow the programs to be flexible, adaptable, and responsive to complex and changing situations on the ground, while mitigating risk to both our implementing partners and local beneficiaries. DRL manages global initiatives that can rapidly respond to deteriorating situations and emerging opportunities, and provide emergency assistance to human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and individuals under attack or threat of attack. Since 2007, DRL emergency assistance programs have assisted more than 3,300 people and organizations in more than 98 countries and territories.

Question 6. The Administration's FY 2017 budget request for State and USAID includes more than \$1.7 billion in foreign assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean, a 10% increase over FY15 levels. This includes a 92% increase in development assistance (DA) funding, primarily to support development efforts under the U.S. strategy for Engagement in Central America. It also includes a 102% increase

in nonproliferation, anti-terrorism, de-mining and related programs (NADR) to support efforts in Columbia. There's also a 46% increase in foreign military financing funding (FMF), most of which would support military partners in Colombia and throughout Central America.

- Can you let me know which programs' funding levels decreased in order to support these increases?

Answer. The total FY 2017 Request for Department of State and USAID totals \$50.1 billion, an increase of \$2.3 billion over the FY 2015 appropriation. While the FY 2017 request represents an increase over FY 2015, diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance needs are ever rising, and certain tradeoffs had to be made as the Administration finalized the request. Of the \$50.1 billion, \$1.7 billion is requested for foreign assistance programs in the Western Hemisphere. While the FY 2017 Request includes a \$155 million (10 percent) increase above funding allocated to the region in FY 2015, this funding is part of the overall increase in funding requested by the President in FY 2017 for the Department of State and USAID above the FY 2015 appropriation.

The President has made clear his commitment to providing strong support for our partners and programs in the Western Hemisphere, including those in Central America, Colombia, Mexico, and elsewhere. The FY 2017 Request of \$1.7 billion for the Western Hemisphere reflects this commitment. The increases in this request will bolster efforts to address the underlying factors of migration from Central America and help support the peace process in Colombia.

Question 7a. For FY 2017, the State Department is requesting \$3.8 million for WHA to increase staff and update the aging facilities of the U.S. Embassy in Havana, and notes in the request that "adding these new positions is vital to U.S. national security and to supporting Cuban civil society." At the same time, the Administration's FY 2017 foreign aid budget request for Cuba democracy and human rights funding is for \$15 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF), a 25% reduction from the \$20 million provided annually in recent years to nongovernmental democracy and human rights programs.

- Please describe in what areas the nine additional staff that are requested would work, and in particular, how they would help support Cuban civil society.

Answer. The Embassy has not created any new positions since the transition from an Interests Section to a full-fledged Embassy, despite an enormous increase in workload. The fact that our Embassy in Havana is severely understaffed makes it difficult to meet the U.S. government's objectives. To put the staffing level of our Embassy in Havana in context, Embassy Santo Domingo has approximately 150 U.S. direct hire employees compared to 54 in Havana.

Of the nine additional staff requested, six would be assigned to Embassy Havana and three would join the Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs in Washington, DC. The Havana positions would work in the Political, Economic, and Management sections. A mixture of reporting and support positions are required to deepen U.S. understanding of Cuba's political, social, and economic environment, oversee maintenance upgrades, conduct human rights monitoring and advocacy, and deepen law enforcement cooperation on issues such as fugitives and counternarcotics. Adding these positions is vital to U.S. national security and to supporting Cuban civil society.

During re-establishment negotiations, we successfully negotiated greater freedom for our diplomats to travel in Cuba to better monitor developments within the country. The ability to travel outside Havana and interact with Cubans outside the capital is vital to our security and to our support of the Cuban people. We need additional staff in Cuba to take advantage of this enhanced ability to travel.

Question 7b. What is the rationale for the 25% reduction in Cuba democracy and human rights funding? Has there been any change in the type of assistance provided in the aftermath of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations?

Answer. The promotion of democratic principles and human rights remains the core goal of U.S. assistance to Cuba. We agree that support to civil society in Cuba remains critical, and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations has not changed that. We will continue to implement democracy programs supported by Economic Support Funds. We believe the FY 2017 request provides a sustainable level of democracy support that will enable us to continue advancing our democracy and human rights goals in Cuba.

In prior years, the scope of the tools available to us to interact with civil society in Cuba was limited. As restrictions on travel by Cubans and to Cuba have been eased on both sides, additional tools are available that enable the United States to

engage directly with the Cuban people. For example, we are now able to conduct some forms of training in the United States or third countries whereas previously, these programs could only be carried out in Cuba.

Also, U.S. educational, religious, and humanitarian groups now connect directly with the Cuban people. Other programs funded by the Department of State offer enhanced opportunities for professional, academic, and cultural exchanges with Cuba. Cuban activists are able to travel regularly to the United States and elsewhere.

Under these circumstances, we also believe the FY 2017 request takes into consideration that one of our goals in supporting civil society—worldwide—is to provide the kind of training and capacity building that allows them gradually to become more self-sustaining.

Regarding the status of prior year funding, the Department of State obligated all of the Cuba Economic Support Funds (ESF) funding in Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014. We are soliciting proposals for FY 2015 funds.

Question 7c. How would you assess the impact and effectiveness of U.S. democracy and human rights assistance in Cuba?

Answer. When U.S. government-funded programs began, we supported the few nascent civil society groups on the island who operated primarily in urban environments. Since then and due in part to U.S. government programming efforts, we support the professionalization of the growing, diverse civil society groups throughout Cuba, and have assisted in amplifying the voice of independent media through training and information dissemination.

Growing activism within Cuba by independent groups, increased information flow to, from and within the island, and increasing disillusionment with failed government policies have emboldened a greater number of Cubans and provided us the opportunity to engage with a wider range of civil society actors, including a new generation of activists and individuals who work to create new opportunities for an open and prosperous Cuba.

U.S. government assistance in Cuba responds to the Cuban people's demand for human rights and democratic governance. Our programs train independent journalists to provide an alternative voice to state-run media, and equip human rights defenders to better document human rights abuses. Following Cuba's lifting of travel restrictions in early 2013, more civil society members have been able to participate in training opportunities outside of Cuba, increase their professional networks, and present the situation regarding human rights through reports and testimony to international fora. U.S. government assistance also provides crucial humanitarian assistance to alleviate the hardships for victims of political repression and their families, so they may continue to speak out for their basic fundamental and human rights.

We support online platforms to promote the free flow of information and disseminate reports of human rights violations, reaching more Cubans than before as viewership of the platforms has dramatically increased as internet access expands on the island, a trend we expect to continue.

We will continue to assess the impact and effectiveness of our programs and respond to changing conditions on the island as well as new strategies and needs identified by civil society groups.