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REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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CONTENTS

	Page
Corker, Hon. Bob, U.S. Senator From Tennessee	1
Cardin, Hon. Benjamin L., U.S. Senator From Maryland	3
Kerry, John F., U.S. Secretary of State, Washington, DC	5
Prepared statement	9

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Nuclear Proliferation—Preliminary Observations on IAEA's Role in Verifying the Iran Agreement, a Report to Members of Congress Prepared by the GAO	53
Responses to Additional Questions for the Record Submitted to U.S. Secretary of State John F. Kerry by Members of the Committee	
Responses to Questions Submitted to Secretary Kerry by Senator Cardin	81
Responses to Questions Submitted to Secretary Kerry by Senator Rubio	100
Responses to Questions Submitted to Secretary Kerry by Senator Boxer	114
Responses to Questions Submitted to Secretary Kerry by Senator Flake	117
Responses to Questions Submitted to Secretary Kerry by Senator Shaheen	119
Responses to Questions Submitted to Secretary Kerry by Senator Perdue	122
Responses to Questions Submitted to Secretary Kerry by Senator Barrasso	145

REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Johnson, Flake, Gardner, Perdue, Paul, Barrasso, Cardin, Boxer, Menendez, Shaheen, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, and Markey.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

The CHAIRMAN. The meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We welcome everybody here. I know that many of us had a chance to talk to some of those in the audience in the hallway, and while we have had great discussions, we know that you will honor the committee by keeping comments to yourself while we are proceeding.

I want to thank everybody here on the committee for being here today. And I want to thank our Secretary for his service. I do not know of many Secretaries of State that have put out as much effort in trying to solve the many problems that exist around the world. For that, I thank him.

Thank you for coming today. And I thank you for, typically when we have a budget hearing, the testimony that is put forth is only about the budget. I think you know, having been chairman of the committee, you are probably not going to be asked many questions about the budget. Therefore, I think you gave a narrative of your view of the world, which I appreciate.

I think all of us understand that the reason the State Department exists, really, and the reason that we fund it, is to do everything we can through diplomacy to solve the many problems that exist around the world and to do everything we can to keep our men and women in uniform from being utilized more than they are today because of our diplomacy.

That is why you are here, and I think that is one of the reasons you went into the narrative in your written testimony about things happening around the world. So I just wanted to, again, thank you. I appreciate you being here.

My opening comments are going to center around things happening around the world. We saw you in Munich last week. We had quite a candid conversation. I know you gave a talk there at the conference.

My observation is, and I know that Senator Perdue was there and others, I do not think I have seen Europe so unsettled ever in my lifetime. I think their confidence level is at an all-time low. I think they are concerned about what Russia is doing to destabilize the area, using refugees as a weapon of war. Again, I do not think I have seen that at that level before.

So they are looking for U.S. leadership, no question.

In Syria, I know we had a very frank and off-the-record discussion regarding—you had just entered into the agreement relative to cessation in Syria. I know there were concerns at that time, relative to what Russia would actually do. And I think many people thought they would do what they have done, and that is to further solidify gains, kill more people, move into Aleppo, as they have.

I know that you have negotiated another one, and I realize that, again, what you have at your disposal is negotiation. I think that many of us have been asking what happens if, in fact, the ceasefire does not hold. I do not think Russia believes that anything is going to happen. I think that is why they continue to make the gains. And at some point, they will have all the gains they need and be willing for a cessation.

They are also right now selling or announced that they are going to sell to Iran Su-30s, which is in strict violation of the U.N. Security Council agreement that put the JCPOA into place.

It is my understanding that they can, in fact, come to the U.N. Security Council and ask for permission. I would love to understand whether you expect that to happen.

China today is beginning to militarize, if you will, the gains they have made in the South China Sea, building very sophisticated radar facilities. We understand through announcements—we do not have this verified—they are even developing missile systems on these "islands" that are basically underwater at high tide but are now being utilized in that regard.

North Korea, we passed something here in the Senate and House last week. The President, thankfully, has signed it, to push back against them. I understand there were some peace overtures toward them prior to that occurring. I hope you will expand a little bit about what that was about and where you see that going.

And then in Libya, we have 5,000 ISIS members there. I know we took some hits against them in the outskirts of Sirte last week.

But I think many people had thought that maybe what the administration was going to do was going to assess a much greater effort there, so that instead of it being incremental, as it appears it might be, there would be something done on a far more shock-and-awe basis to really set them back while we have the ability to do so.

So I look forward to you talking about and sharing with us your thoughts on all of these issues. Again, I thank you for your narrative on the front end. I thank you for your service.

And I certainly thank Senator Cardin for his distinguished ranking member leadership on this committee and will now turn to him.

STATEMENT OF HON. BEN CARDIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this hearing. It is always a pleasure to work with you.

And, Secretary Kerry, it is really a pleasure to have you before your former committee.

I first start by acknowledging this is the last budget that President Obama and his administration will be submitting to us, so I just really want to reflect for a moment on your extraordinary leadership in advancing America's soft power through the effective use of diplomacy and development assistance.

Secretary Kerry, you understand more than anyone else, as a former chair of this committee, the importance of diplomacy and development assistance to our national security. For that, I just congratulate you on an incredible record of accomplishment as Secretary of State. [Applause.]

Senator CARDIN. You understand that military must be our last resort, and you have carried that out through developing partnerships with other countries and coalitions, so that we can be effective with our soft power.

The most recent is the hope that we have in Syria through the ceasefire to stop the killings and to allow humanitarian access, which is a critically important first step to resolving the conflict within Syria, so that we can focus on ISIL without the fighting going on between the Assad regime and the opposition. And you did it in a way that does not compromise our position in regard to President Assad's future and his accountability for war crimes that he has committed.

I also want to thank your staff. They have been incredibly accessible to us in providing information that I think is vital to our needs. So to Julia Frifield and to the entire team, thank you for what you have been able to do.

I generally support the President's budget. I think it speaks to the right priorities, in regard to the State Department. It deals with the threat emanating from ISIL in the Middle East and North Africa, the $4 billion to counter violent extremism. It supports the rebalance to Asia and recognizes the challenges that we have in Asia, relative to China's provocative actions in the South China Sea, and North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

I was pleased to see that we have enacted, as the chairman pointed out, the North Korea sanctions bill. The President signed it into law. We are always stronger when the Congress and the administration work together to advance American foreign policy.

The budget deals with challenges in our own hemisphere. I particularly mentioned Central America's Northern Triangle. We still have the problems of unaccompanied children coming to our borders.

I was in Honduras and El Salvador, saw firsthand the violence in the communities through the gang-controlled areas. We must do more in order to make that country safe. The President's $1 billion

request, I hope we will support that, dealing with good governance and protection of communities, as well as the security issues in Central America.

The budget deals with Russia's aggression in East and Central Europe. I particularly support the $953 million to improve democracy and good governance and anticorruption and promote European integration. I think that is critically important.

It is the first anniversary of the Minsk II agreement. We know Russia has not complied with the military aspects, but it is incumbent upon Ukraine to comply with the good governance aspects, if there is going to be lasting peace in Ukraine. This budget allows us to advance to those challenges.

The budget provides for the continued support of Israel, for its QME, $3.1 billion of security assistance, recognizing we are in the process of negotiating the next chapter in the memorandum of understanding.

And it provides U.S. leadership on climate change. I was pleased to be part of 10 members who were in Paris for COP21. We saw firsthand America's leadership, your leadership, and the international community coming together. This budget carries out our commitments.

I am going to refer a couple times to a visit under CODEL flight. We were just in the southern part of Africa, and we saw firsthand the impact of continued drought on the survivability of those countries in the southern part of Africa.

Their way of life is in jeopardy today, because we were there during the rainy season, and we saw no rain. This is the second year in a row that they have had this impact.

The New York Times today points out that research teams report fastest sea rise in 28 centuries—28 centuries. The budget does deal with carrying out our commitments on climate change, so that we can continue to provide leadership needed globally to deal with this crisis of our times.

The budget deals with Africa, carrying out Africa Leaders Summit commitments that were made there on Power Africa, Trade Africa, Young African Leaders. I think that is all very important.

And it carries out our values, from providing international leadership on the refugees, humanitarian needs that are global, to maternal and child health, to Feed the Future. It deals with the Zika virus in Latin America. And it deals with AIDS-free generation.

Mr. Secretary, when we were in Namibia, we had a chance to visit an AIDS site and see it firsthand. Senator Coons and I had a chance to interview with about 30 or 40 AIDS patients. One asked that we relay to the leaders of our country their thanks because, literally, they are alive today because of U.S. efforts. There is a whole generation alive today, working in their economies and on the future, as a result of U.S. leadership on PEPFAR.

It makes a huge difference, what we do on development assistance around the world. We now have a stable country in Namibia that wants to work with the United States, and it is a direct result of our involvement.

I want to also thank you for including $60 million for trafficking in humans. Senator Corker has been one of our great leaders on

the trafficking issue, to end modern-day slavery. And we appreciate the funds that are put in.

So I am positive on the budget that has been submitted, but I want to conclude on two points that I am not as pleased about.

First, there is not enough allocation in good governance and democracy in this budget. The small amount of monies that we put into democracy-building, we saw that in the four countries we visited—Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. The small dollars that are available are having incredible results. It is what America stands for, and we need to do a better job in providing resources to promote democracy globally.

Then, secondly, I am very concerned about the OCO funding versus the baseline funding. I think we need to talk about that. The budget provides $50.1 billion in allocation for foreign assistance, but only $35.2 billion is in baseline funding, as this chart points out. That is a declining sum that is in the baseline.

The reality of our world is that this budget provides our national security, and it needs to be grounded and sustainable and ongoing for the safety of our Nation. I am concerned, by not having the baseline high enough, we run a risk in the future.

Now, I know the realities and the politics of the budget here. This is not the administration's doing. But we need to make it clear that on national security, soft power, that we are committed not only to this year, but to the sustained growth of America's presence globally. And I would hope that we would get a larger sum in the baseline.

I look forward to your comments, and I thank you again for your leadership.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could, prior to you starting, I could not agree more. It is the budget process, on both sides of the aisle. It is nothing but a political document. It serves no purpose. And our inability to focus on our fiscal issues will weaken our Nation while we are having this hearing.

The fact that so much of it is funded through OCO, both, by the way, here and at DOD, just speaks to the fact that we are not willing to make the tough decisions that are necessary on a permanent basis to put our country on solid footing. I know, on this particular issue, that is not what the administration proposed, and I do appreciate you bringing that up.

I would ask the audience, I know there was a degree of clapping and cheering. Again, we like the fact that everybody is here. I know you will all be very respectful, as the Secretary makes his comments.

If you will, please begin.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you. Senator Cardin, all my former colleagues and friends on the committee, I am really happy to be here. I think we have a chance to have a very important conversation, and I appreciate both of your opening comments very, very much, both in tone and tenor.

And I want to begin just by thanking all of you. I know it has been very, very difficult. I know the committee has worked incred-

ibly hard to fill our positions at the State Department and our overseas posts. And I also know this committee has a very special appreciation for the vital work of diplomacy.

Both of your comments just now underscore how vital it is for America to have our senior diplomats, particularly our career diplomats, who just do not deserve to be waiting a year or 2 years or a year and a half to be put in position.

And I know this committee believes that, and you worked extremely hard, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your diligence, and Senator Cardin, likewise, and all the members of the committee.

This is the way we advance the objectives of U.S. policy, whether it is for our businesses that are trying to create jobs, or travelers, Americans abroad. So I thank you again for really pushing obviously complicated politics.

And I ask your favorable and prompt effort on the other nominations. There are still some hanging out there, and particularly Roberta Jacobson, who is a professional civil servant, career, has done a diligent job. She does not make the choices about policy, and she should not be the prisoner of those choices. She does what she is instructed to do, and she does it very, very well.

So, Mr. Chairman, you have my prepared statement. I am not going to give you all of that, but I do want to do just some initial comments in summary.

First, you mentioned the number $50 billion, a little bit over. It is equal to about 1 percent of the entire budget of the United States. And that 1 percent, Mr. Chairman, I am just convinced more and more after these last years, even after serving on the committee, is the minimum price of the leadership role that the United States of America plays on a global basis, and particularly at a time when we are engaged diplomatically more deeply in more places simultaneously, on more significant issues simultaneously, than at any time in our history.

And the scope of that engagement, I am also convinced, is absolutely essential to protect the interests of our Nation and to keep our citizens safe. And I think it is even growing more so with the numbers of failed and failing states, where the governance money that Senator Cardin just referred to is so critical. We can talk about that a little bit today.

We are confronted today by perils that are as old as nationalist aggression and as new as cyber warfare, by dictators who run roughshod over global norms, and by violent extremists who combine modern media with medieval thinking to wage war on civilization itself.

The last century was marked by state actors and states going to war with each other—World War I and II, Vietnam, Korea, so forth. This century is defined much more by nonstate actors taking actions against states and against, as I said, the broad norms of society.

And I would emphasize today in coming here, despite the dangers, despite the turmoil, we Americans have many reasons for confidence. In recent years, our economy has added more jobs than the rest of the industrialized world combined. Our Armed Forces are second to none. It is not even close. Our alliances in Europe and Asia are vigilant and strong. And our citizens are unmatched in

the generosity of their commitment to humanitarian causes and civil society. We are the largest donor in the world to the crisis of Syrian refugees, over $5.1 billion.

I see, we see, all of us, and hear a lot of handwringing nowadays. But I, for one, with all my affection and respect for all my colleagues around the world that I work with, I would not switch places with the foreign minister of any country, and nor do I yearn to retreat to some illusionary golden age of the past.

Here and now, we have enormous opportunities and we are trying to seize them. In the past year, we reached a historic multilateral accord with Iran that you all played a critical role in. And it has cut off that country's pathways to a nuclear weapon, thereby making the world safer for us and our allies.

And if you doubt that, read the speech by General Eizenkot, the head of the IDF forces of Israel, who recently, at a security conference in Israel, said that now, because of this agreement, there is no longer an existential threat to Israel from Iran with respect to the nuclear threat. That is from their security in Israel.

In Paris, in December, we joined governments from more than 190 nations in approving a comprehensive agreement to curb greenhouse gases, and you have mentioned the effects that we are seeing in the world today. We are trying to limit the most harmful consequences of climate change, and we are determined to implement that accord by meeting our targets here at home and helping friends abroad to reduce carbon pollution and move their economies forward at the same time.

Just this month, we officially signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership to ensure a level playing field for American businesses and workers, to open up job opportunity and 40 percent of the global GDP, and also to strengthen America's leadership within the entire Pacific. We are asking Congress to approve that pact this year, and we can accrue its benefits as quickly as possible when we do.

In Europe, we are sharply upgrading our Security Reassurance Initiative with a fourfold increase in support and giving Russia a clear choice between continued sanctions or meeting its obligations to a sovereign and democratic Ukraine.

In our hemisphere, we are helping Colombia to end the globe's longest running civil conflict, and we are aiding our partners in Central America to implement reforms that will reduce the pressure for illegal migration. We are also seeking supplemental funds to minimize the danger to public health created by the Zika virus.

In Asia, we are standing with our allies in opposition to threats posed by a belligerent North Korea. We are helping Afghanistan and Pakistan to counter violent extremism; deepening our strategic dialogue with India; supporting democratic gains in Sri Lanka and Burma; and encouraging the peaceful resolution of competing maritime claims in the South China Sea, a goal that is definitely not helped by the militarization of facilities in that region.

So with friends in fast-growing Africa—and we are very grateful for the interest of this committee, Senator Coons, Senator Flake and others who have really been very focused on it—we have embarked on initiatives to combat hunger, increase connectivity, empower women, train future leaders, and fight back against such terrorist groups as al-Shabab and Boko Haram.

Now, of course, this administration recognizes that the threat posed by violent extremism extends far beyond any one region, and it is not going to be addressed solely, or even primarily, by military means. So the approach that we have adopted is comprehensive, and it is long-term.

Diplomatically, we are striving to end conflicts that fuel extremism, such as those in Libya and Yemen. We also work with partners more broadly to share intelligence, tighten border security, improve governance, expand access to education, and promote job training and development.

And I might add the coalition we have put together, 66 countries strong now, is gaining traction in many sectors where it has not previously worked on these kinds of things as jointly as we are now.

As you all know, we have forged that coalition of 66 countries to defeat Daesh. Just a quick word on our strategy. We are combining our power with that of our partners to degrade Daesh's command structure, shrink its territory, curb its financing, hammer its economic assets, discredit its lies, slow its recruitment, and block any attempt to expand its networks. Militarily, we are intensifying pressure through coalition airstrikes, more advisers, stepped-up training, improved targeting, and the systematic disruption of enemy supply lines. And we can go into greater detail, I am sure, in your questions.

To consolidate territorial gains, we are stressing the importance of stabilizing communities freed from Daesh in Syria and Iraq. We are helping the government in Baghdad as it seeks to broaden and professionalize its security forces. And we continue to strengthen our regional partners, Lebanon and Jordan.

And we are supporting a broad-based diplomatic effort, which I know we will talk about today, on the Syria war.

Two weeks ago, we announced a plan to ensure access to humanitarian supplies for all Syrians in need. I am pleased to tell you that 114 trucks have gone in. At least 80,000 people who have not had supplies in years now have supplies for the next month, at least. And we have results in food and medicine reaching places that have been under siege for months. We will continue to work closely with the U.N. to see that future requests are honored and that humanitarian supplies are available throughout the country.

The United States and Russia are co-chairing the International Syria Support Group Ceasefire Task Force. Yesterday, President Obama and President Putin agreed that the cessation of hostilities should begin on Saturday morning and include all groups willing to participate, with the exception of Daesh and al-Nusra, and any other terrorist groups designated by the U.N. Security Council.

We are reminded each day in Syria that every attack, every casualty, every loss, every loved one that is bombed from the air by barrel bombs or otherwise, provides fresh grounds for the conflict. As long as the killing goes on, this devastating cycle will feed on itself.

And that is why we have urged all parties to support the cessation of hostilities now, and it is why we have argued repeatedly there must be a diplomatic solution. As difficult as it is to get there, there must be a diplomatic solution to this war.

The only way forward that preserves a unified Syria is the path envisioned by the Syria Support Group, ratified by the U.N. Security Council and endorsed by the responsible opposition. And that requires a de-escalation of the conflict, a transition to a new system of governance, a new constitution, an election, and hopefully a Syria that could be committed to peace and stability with its neighbors and within itself.

Mr. Chairman, the success of our leadership on terrorism and other security threats is linked to whether or not America is leading the fight to protect what we care about. And the truth is, we are in arena after arena. In all the years I sat on this committee, I never saw us having to deal with quite as many fronts, quite as many challenges as we are today.

So this year, we seek your support to stay at the forefront of international humanitarian response, including the worldwide refugee crisis; to strike a blow for global health through PEPFAR—and you talked about it, Senator Cardin—and the President's malaria initiative; and to carry out important programs on behalf of democracy, freedom of the press, human rights, and the rule of law; and to launch a new strategy focused on the equitable treatment of adolescent girls; and to adequately fund the people and the platforms that enable us to serve America effectively around the world.

So my colleagues, as the chairman said, this is the last budget the Obama administration will submit on behalf of the foreign policy and national security of the United States. And I ask for its fair consideration, welcome your questions, appreciate your counsel, and I seek your backing.

But above all, I want to say how privileged I feel to have had the chance to work with all of you in support of an agenda that reflects not only the most fundamental interests and values of the American people, but also carries with it, I am absolutely convinced, the hopes of the world.

Thank you.

[Secretary Kerry's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN KERRY

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee; I appreciate the chance to testify on behalf of the administration's budget request for the State Department and related agencies for Fiscal Year 2017.

Our request this year is roughly level with last year's—right around fifty billion dollars. That amount, though substantial, is equal to only about one percent of the federal budget. We seek these resources to sustain America's international engagement, which is deeper and more wide-ranging today than ever before in our history.

The unprecedented scope of our leadership is warranted by the mix of opportunities and challenges we face. We are confronted by dangers as old as excessive nationalism and as new as cyber warfare, by dictators who run roughshod over international norms, by failing and fragile states, by infectious disease and by violent extremists who combine modern media with medieval thinking to murder, enslave, and wage war on civilization itself.

In the face of such challenges, the United States and its citizens remain firmly committed to the pursuit of international peace, prosperity, and the rule of law. The administration's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request embodies every aspect of that commitment. It is a reflection of our country's wide-ranging interests, of what we are against—and most important—what we are for.

There's a reason why most people in most places still turn to the United States when important work needs to be done. It's not because anyone expects or wants us to shoulder the full burden—but because we can be counted on to lead in the right direction and toward the right goals.

Make no mistake, we live at a moment filled with peril and complexity, but we Americans also have ample grounds for confidence. In recent years, our economy has added more jobs than the rest of the industrialized world combined. Our armed forces are by far the world's strongest and best. Our alliances in Europe and Asia are energized. We have reached historic multilateral accords on Iran's nuclear program, climate change, and trans-Pacific trade. We have witnessed important democratic gains in, among other places, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Burma. We helped facilitate what we hope will be a landmark peace agreement in Colombia. We have enhanced our position throughout the hemisphere by resuming diplomatic relations with Cuba. We marshalled a global campaign to save lives by containing the Ebola virus; and we are the leader in championing the empowerment of women and respect for the full range of internationally recognized human rights. We have also taken the lead in mobilizing international solidarity in the fight against such terrorist groups as Daesh, al-Qa'ida, Boko Haram, and al-Shabab—groups that have absolutely nothing to offer anyone except destruction and death.

From the vantage point of America's national security, we begin 2016 with a long agenda focused on key priorities but understanding the potential for emergencies to arise at any moment. We think it essential to make full use of every available foreign policy tool—from carrots to coercion—but with an emphasis on persuading governments overseas not just to do what we want, but to want what we want. We will act alone when we must, but with allies, partners and friends when possible on every continent and in every situation where our interests are at risk. We will respond to immediate needs, but with long term requirements in mind. And we will always be conscious that the State Department's principal responsibility is not to interpret and justify foreign perspectives to the United States, but to defend and advance America's well-being in a fast-changing world.

I will turn now to the specifics of the administration's budget request for the coming fiscal year.

The funding we seek is in two parts; the first consists of a base amount of $35.2 billion. These resources will deepen cooperation with our allies and regional partners and bolster American leadership at the U.N. and other multilateral organizations. They will protect U.S. diplomatic personnel, platforms, and information, while also helping us to mitigate the harmful consequences of climate change, promote human rights, combat trafficking in persons, and continue valuable educational exchanges. Worldwide, they will furnish life-saving humanitarian assistance, foster growth, reduce poverty, increase access to education, combat disease, and promote democratic governance and the rule of law.

The Overseas Contingency Operations portion of our budget is $14.9 billion and will improve our ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from crises abroad; contribute to new and ongoing peacekeeping and U.N. special political missions; help allies and partners such as Afghanistan and Pakistan counter threats; step up our efforts to counter terrorist organizations; and sustain security programs and embassy construction at high risk posts.

The number one goal of U.S. foreign policy is to keep Americans safe. To that end, this year's budget seeks resources to enhance our nation's leadership of the 65-member global coalition to degrade and destroy the terrorist group Daesh. Our strategy is to combine our power—and the power of our partners—to degrade Daesh's command structure, shrink the territory under its control, curb its financing, hammer its economic assets, discredit its lies, slow its recruitment,and block any attempt to expand its networks. As President Obama has made clear, the murderous conduct that Daesh is trying to foment must be opposed with unity, strength, and a determination on our part to persist until we prevail. That determination has several dimensions:

- Militarily, we are intensifying pressure through coalition air strikes backed by local partners on the ground, a stepped-up training and supply effort, the deployment of Special Forces advisers, improved targeting, the systematic disruption of enemy supply lines, and coordinated planning of future actions.
- To consolidate the important territorial gains made thus far, we are stressing the importance of stabilizing communities freed from Daesh in Syria and Iraq.
- We are helping the government in Baghdad as it seeks to broaden and professionalize its security forces and to liberate portions of the country still occupied by Daesh.
- We continue to strengthen our regional partners, including Jordan and Lebanon, and to provide humanitarian assistance to people impacted by the conflict inside Syria, in neighboring countries, and beyond.

- We are supporting a broad-based diplomatic initiative, chaired by U.N. Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, and aimed at achieving a political solution to the Syrian civil war that will de-escalate the conflict, isolate the terrorists, provide for a transition in governance, and make possible the kind of peaceful, inclusive, pluralist, and fully sovereign country that most Syrians want. To that end, on February 11, we announced a plan to ensure access to humanitarian supplies for all Syrians in need, and to arrange a cessation of hostilities that we hope will evolve into a durable and nationwide ceasefire. The full and good faith implementation of these measures—to ensure humanitarian access and end violence against civilians in Syria—is a top foreign policy priority of the United States.
- Finally, we believe it essential that America speak with a single voice in its resolve to defeat Daesh. Congressional approval of a new and more specific authorization to use military force against that terrorist organization would be welcomed by the administration and help to demonstrate our unity and commitment.

In the seventeen months since the Counter-Daesh coalition was formed, its aircraft have launched more than 10,000 air strikes. The combination of air support and ground assaults by local partners has reversed Daesh's momentum; driven the terrorists from such key cities as Kobani, Tikrit, and Ramadi; and weakened their position on the Syria-Turkish border. All told, Daesh has been forced to abandon almost a third of the populated territory it had previously controlled in these countries, and many of their fighters—faced by a deep cut in wages and no new towns to plunder—have either deserted or been executed trying to escape.

The threat posed by violent extremism extends far beyond the Middle East and the particular dangers spawned by Daesh. Those threats cannot effectively be addressed solely—or even primarily—by military means. Our approach, therefore, is comprehensive, long term, and designed to enhance the capacity of countries and communities to defeat terrorist groups and prevent new ones from arising. To that end, our new Center for Global Engagement is helping partner nations to promote better governance, strengthen democratic institutions, expand access to a quality education, and foster development, especially in the most vulnerable parts of the world. On the diplomatic side, we are striving with the U.N. and our allies to solidify a new Government of National Accord in Libya, and to bring an end to the violence and political unrest that has plagued Yemen.

Last year, with our P5+1 partners, we negotiated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, cutting off each of Iran's potential pathways to a nuclear weapons capability, requiring it to take thousands of centrifuges offline, pour concrete into the core of its heavy water reactor, and ship abroad 98 percent of its stockpile of enriched uranium. Because of these steps and the rigorous inspection and verification measures to which Tehran has also agreed, the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran has receded, our allies are safer, and so are we. In months to come, we will continue our close consultations with Congress as we monitor Iran's compliance with the Joint Plan, and as we stand with our allies and friends against Iran's destabilizing policies and actions in the region.

In part because of the challenges posed by Iran and other threats, we continue to engage in a record level of military, intelligence, and security cooperation with Israel. We remain committed to helping our ally confront its complex security environment and to ensure its qualitative military edge. Each day, we work with Israel to enforce sanctions and prevent terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hizballah from obtaining the financing and weapons they seek. Since 2009, we have provided more than $23 billion in foreign military financing to Israel, which constitutes the majority of what we have given to nations worldwide. Diplomatically, our support for Israel also remains rock solid as we continue to oppose efforts to delegitimize the Jewish state or to pass biased resolutions against it in international bodies.The Transatlantic partnership remains a cornerstone of American security and prosperity. We are in constant communication with our NATO and EU Allies and partners about a vast array of issues, including our steadfast backing for a democratic Ukraine, full implementation by every side of the Minsk protocols, and an increase in European Reassurance Initiative funding that will support the persistent presence of a brigade's combat team for 12 months out of the year and allow us to preposition warfighting equipment for a division headquarters and other enablers in Europe. This year's budget includes $953 million to enhance stability, prosperity, energy independence, and good governance in Ukraine and other partner countries facing direct pressure from Russia, in addition to fighting HIV/AIDS and countering violent extremism in the region.

Closer to home, the Fiscal Year 2017 budget will continue our investment in Central America to fight corruption and crime and to attack the root economic causes of illegal migration to the United States, including by unaccompanied minors. Our Strategy for Engagement in Central America, with its whole-of-government approach, emphasis on building effective and accountable institutions and leveraging of private capital, will make it easier for our regional neighbors to live securely and with steadily increasing prosperity in their own countries.

In addition, we are supporting Colombia as it seeks to finalize an agreement that will end the world's longest ongoing civil conflict. During President Santos's visit to Washington earlier this month, President Obama announced his intention to seek support for "Peace Colombia," a successor to Plan Colombia that will spur recovery in communities ravaged by the many years of fighting. This project will highlight assistance to the victims of conflict, and aid in reinforcing security gains, clearing mines, demobilizing rebel fighters, and curbing trade in illegal narcotics. Our citizens may be proud that, in his remarks at the White House, President Santos attributed many of his country's advances "to the fact that 15 years ago, when we were in serious straits, the Colombians received a friendly hand. That friendly hand came from here in Washington, from both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans."

In Cuba, we have resumed diplomatic relations after 54 years. Although we continue to have sharp differences with the government in Havana regarding human rights, political prisoners, and other issues; we remain determined to support the aspirations of the Cuban people to plug into the global economy and live in greater freedom. We call on Cuban authorities to remove obstacles to participation by their citizens online and in commercial enterprises; and we urge Congress to lift the economic embargo, which has for decades been used as an excuse by the Castro regime to dodge blame for its own ill-advised policies.

As evidenced by last week's ASEAN Summit hosted by President Obama at Sunnylands in California, the United States is an indispensable contributor to stability, prosperity, and peace in the Asia Pacific. Dangers in that region include North Korea's provocative nuclear and ballistic missile programs and tensions stemming from contested maritime claims in the South China Sea. United States policy is to encourage security cooperation and dialogue aimed at building confidence and ensuring that disputes are settled in keeping with international obligations and law. Our modernizing alliances with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and the Philippines—in addition to our partnership with New Zealand and close ties with ASEAN—provide a firm foundation for our strategy, as does our multi-dimensional relationship with China. Our diplomatic priorities include support for human rights and the continued evolution of an open and democratic political process in Burma, where a freely-elected parliament has been seated for the first time, and where we have called for an end to discrimination and violence directed at the Rohingya Muslim minority.

Our FY 2017 budget includes $1.25 billion in assistance to the national unity government of Afghanistan to strengthen its institutions, bolster its security capabilities, repel attacks by violent extremists, implement economic reforms, preserve gains made over the last decade (including for women and girls), and move forward with a wide range of social programs. We are requesting $742 million in aid to Pakistan to support its citizens as they seek security, build democracy and sustain economic growth and development—even as the country continues to suffer from terrorist attacks. Last October, I traveled to every state in Central Asia to reaffirm America's friendship with the people in that part of the world and to discuss shared concerns in such areas as security, energy policy, development, and human rights. Also in 2015, we strongly endorsed democratic progress in Sri Lanka, while elevating our important strategic dialogue with India to include a commercial component, reflecting the five-fold increase in bilateral trade over the last decade.

In Africa, our budget request reflects our emphasis on partnership—with civil society, with the private sector and with key allies. Our request of $7.1 billion will support democratic institutions, spur growth, promote gender equity, and protect human rights through such mechanisms as the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, the Feed the Future initiative, Power Africa, and the President's "Stand with Civil Society Initiative." Our assistance also undergirds regional stability through the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, the Security Governance Initiative, and strategically important international peace operations in, among other countries, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia. Diplomatically, the United States continues to work closely with regional leaders to prevent crises—whether caused by outbreaks of disease, the threat of famine, or political controversy, as has recently been the cause of urgent concern in Burundi.

American leadership is on display and making a positive difference in every part of the world including the far north, where the United States last year assumed chairmanship of the Arctic Council, a platform we are using to forge united action on the environment, fisheries conservation, and economic opportunity for local populations. But in addition to bilateral and regional issues, the United States is at the forefront of a host of efforts that address global challenges and uphold universal ideals.

For example, the administration's FY 2017 budget request reaffirms our country's premier role in the world economy. Each day, the men and women in our embassies and consulates work closely with representatives of the American private sector to identify new markets for our goods and services, ensure fair competition for foreign contracts, protect intellectual property, and advocate for U.S. interests under the law. This budget will advance U.S. engagement on global information and communications technology policy, encourage innovation, and protect the interests of our citizens in Internet freedom and digital privacy. Through our contributions to international financial institutions like the World Bank, we help to lift the economies of low-income countries and expand the global middle class.

With the Trade Representative and others in the administration, the State Department works to conclude forward-looking agreements such as the recently signed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) to ensure a level playing field for American businesses and workers and raise labor and environmental standards. The TPP is a landmark twelve nation pact that will lower trade barriers and advance American leadership in the Asia Pacific region, ensuring that the rules of the road for trade in this critical region are written by the United States and our partners, rather than others who do not share our interests and values. In asking Congress to approve the agreement, President Obama has pointed out that the TPP will cut 18,000 taxes on products that are made in America, boost U.S. exports, and support high-paying jobs, and he has expressed his interest in working closely with Congress to get the agreement approved as soon as possible. We are also working with USTR to pursue a similar high-standard approach to trade with Europe in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which is still being negotiated.

In Paris last December, the United States joined governments from more than 190 nations in approving a comprehensive agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions and limit the most harmful consequences of climate change. This historic pact represents the first time the world has declared that all countries have a responsibility to join in what must truly be a global commitment—through arrangements marked by transparency, a mandatory standard of review, and the flexibility a framework for successive and ambitious nationally determined climate targets. Our budget request of $983.9 million for the Global Climate Change Initiative and includes $500 million for the Green Climate Fund, which will help low income countries leverage public and private financing to reduce carbon pollution and bolster resilience to climate change.

Our request for Fiscal Year 2017 allocates $4.7 billion for assessed dues and voluntary contributions to international organizations and peacekeeping efforts and to help other countries participate in such missions. The request includes contingency funding for new or expanded peace operations that may emerge outside the regular budget cycle. Tragically, the demand for peacekeeping assistance remains at an all-time high; and the United States neither can, nor should, take the lead in most cases. It serves both our interests and our values when U.N. agencies and regional organizations are able—with our encouragement and support—to quell violence, shield civilians from harm, promote reconciliation among rival groups, and ensure that women are fairly represented in all aspects of peacemaking and recovery projects.

In FY 2017, we are requesting $8.6 billion for bilateral and multilateral health programs. These funds support the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, & Malaria; Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and other critical maternal and child health programs; the Global Health Security Agenda; and an intensified campaign, launched by the White House, to end the scourge of malaria. We have also sought emergency funding to aid in an international effort to minimize the public health threat posed by the Zika virus.

This year, we are asking for $6.2 billion to address humanitarian imperatives, including support for internally displaced persons, refugees, those affected by conflict or natural hazards and communities working to increase preparedness and resilience to disasters.

To date, with backing from Congress, the United States has provided over $4.5 billion in humanitarian assistance—more than any other country—to assist victims of the catastrophic civil war in Syria. In London, earlier this month, I announced a further pledge of $600 million in humanitarian aid as well as $325 million in de-

velopment funds that includes support for the education of 300,000 refugee youth in Jordan and Lebanon. In September, at the U.N., President Obama will host a summit on the global refugee crisis. This will be the culmination of a vigorous diplomatic effort to rally the world community to increase the global response to humanitarian funding appeals by at least 30 percent, and to add significantly to the number of countries that donate regularly to these appeals or that are willing to accept refugees for admission within their borders.

Our budget request allocates $2.7 billion for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance—a modest amount compared to the steep costs of the civil strife and political extremism that often thrive in the absence of effective and democratic governing institutions. Programs carried out by the State Department and USAID can play a pivotal role in enabling countries to make governance more accountable, electoral systems more professional, and judicial systems more independent. By supporting civil society and the rule of law, these programs contribute to a range of important goals, among them freedom of speech, religion and the press; respect for the rights of persons with disabilities; equitable treatment for members of the LGBTQ community; and an end to human trafficking.

In addition, I am pleased to announce that the administration, led by the Department of State and in cooperation with USAID, the Peace Corps, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, will soon launch a strategy to advance the empowerment of adolescent girls. This strategy will be holistic in nature and address key issues facing adolescent girls today, including equal access to secondary education and cultural practices that deny girls a fair chance to participate in the economic and political life of their societies. Our budget also underscores the State Department's decades-long commitment to scholarship programs and educational exchanges that help Americans to learn about the world and young leaders from around the world to learn about America. Meanwhile, our energetic and innovative activities in the field of public diplomacy are essential to convey the truth about U.S. policies and actions at a time when some—including terrorist organizations—lie continually about what Americans believe and do.

To achieve our country's international objectives, we must give State Department and USAID employees the tools and resources they need to do their jobs well. That's why our request includes a $169 million net increase for Diplomatic and Consular Programs, reflecting heightened requirements in such areas as Freedom of Information Act processing, cyber security, counterterrorism, intelligence, and research. This proposal will support increased diversity through expanded recruitment and fellowship opportunities, and will provide more competitive wages for the locally employed personnel who make up the majority of our overseas workforce. I also ask you to support the restoration of full Overseas Comparability Pay for State Department personnel who are deployed abroad. This reform is essential to our effort to retain highly-skilled individuals in a competitive international jobs market, and to ensure fair treatment for those serving our country in relatively high-risk locations. The Budget also includes a $122 million increase for USAID's Operating Expense account to maintain the Agency's workforce and sustain on-going global operations to meet foreign policy objectives, implement Presidential initiatives, and expand global engagement.

Finally, we are asking $3.7 billion to ensure the security of our diplomatic platforms, protect our IT network and infrastructure, meet special medical needs at select posts, and carry out emergency planning and preparedness. Our $2.4 billion request for diplomatic facility construction and maintenance will be used for repairs at our overseas assets, and to continue implementing the security recommendations of the Benghazi Accountability Review Board.

My colleagues, a little more than a quarter century ago, when the Berlin Wall fell, there were those who suggested that we Americans could now relax because our core ideas had prevailed and our enemy had been defeated. But we have long since learned that although the particular demands on our leadership may vary from one decade to the next; our overall responsibilities neither vanish nor diminish.

The challenge for today's generation is to forge a new security framework that will keep our country strong and our people safe. We are under no illusions about how difficult that task is. We face determined adversaries and many governments whose priorities do not match our own. The old plagues of excessive nationalism and tribalism retain their grip in many regions. Technology is a two-edged sword, simultaneously bringing the world closer and driving it apart. Non-state actors have arisen, often for the best, but others are at war with all we have ever stood for—and with the modern world itself.

In this complex environment, some setbacks are inevitable. Persistent and creative engagement will be required on all fronts. But we are guided by the same values and supported by the same democratic institutions that enabled our prede-

cessors to succeed. We are bolstered by a citizenry that is earning respect for our country every day through its contributions to technological innovation and global prosperity; through its activism on behalf of humanitarian causes and civil society; through its brave service on the battlefield, in air and on sea; and through its commitment to a system of governance that will allow our country this year to elect a president—peacefully and fairly—for the 58th time. We are sustained, as well, by one of the true touchstones of America's greatness—the willingness on the part of Congress and the Executive branch to work together for the common good.

Thank you, and now I would be pleased to respond to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I could not agree more that the hopes of the world very much depend upon us. Again, I thank you for your testimony.

Before we get into other longer discussions, you did not mention Afghanistan. I was there a couple months ago and witnessed that continued duplicity on Pakistan's part, outright, blatant duplicity, where they continue to support the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and give safe haven to Al Qaeda.

Most of us have been to the Waziristans and seen the tremendous amount of taxpayer money that has gone into changing the context of those areas. But they continue to give them safe haven.

So recently, they have asked to be able to purchase F-16s. I would rather they purchase them from a U.S. company than some other company, but they also want U.S. taxpayers to subsidize more than half of that purchase over time.

Do you agree with my position that that should not occur until they stop the duplicity that has continued now for 14 years while we have been in Afghanistan?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman, we are evaluating all aspects of the counterterrorism efforts with respect to Pakistan's impact on Afghanistan, obviously.

I just met with Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Sharif, a few weeks ago, and we discussed our concerns about the need to rein in particular terrorist groups that are either homegrown in Pakistan or are using Pakistan as a sanctuary. We have been very, very clear that they have to target all militant groups.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could, we do know that they know exactly where these people are living, not in the FATA region, right in Pakistan in neighborhoods that they could interdict while we are having this hearing, and they are not.

So I do not want to go into a long discussion about our relationship with Pakistan. I do hope that, ultimately, you will support the position that I have laid out in my capacity as chairman that zero U.S. taxpayer dollars will go to subsidize Pakistan's purchase until such a time that they do the things that we know they could do to stop helping to destabilize Afghanistan, where men and women in U.S. uniforms have lost their limbs and lives, and huge amounts of taxpayer monies have gone to support a country as it evolves in democracy and anticorruption and other ways.

Secretary KERRY. It is a very complicated mix, Mr. Chairman. I know you know this. The government itself, the military, has been very cooperative, very engaged in the fight against terrorism. They have lost tens of thousands of people themselves, and they have had 160,000 to 180,000 troops out in the western part of the country conducting a sweep, a major operation, in North Waziristan and

elsewhere. They drove the Haqqani network into new locations. And it is an ongoing process.

But there are, obviously—and we should deal with this, I think, in a classified session—entities that complicate our efforts very significantly. We have had those conversations. I am happy to go into it in greater depth.

I understand your reservations about it, but their military has been deeply engaged in the fight against terrorism. They have several groups there that are of concern. And we should talk in a classified session about what we are trying to do about it.

The CHAIRMAN. They are partially helping. They are hedging their bets, and they are continuing a long line of duplicity, which is the greatest threat to U.S. soldiers right now in Afghanistan. I know you know that. I agree that the relationship is complex.

How should we look at a relationship, speaking of complexity, with Russia? They have done more for a country that has very little economic resources to break Europe apart. In the modern era, it has never occurred, like it is right now with what they have done in Ukraine, what they continue to do in delaying the implementation of the Minsk III. I know part of that is on Ukraine's side, too. What they have done to threaten the Baltics. What they have done to exacerbate the refugee issue and really use them now, in many ways, as weapons of war. And Syria, I do not think anyone can say that their role has been constructive as they continue—continue—to kill the folks that are our friends and allies.

Now, in Iran, after this agreement has been negotiated, in strict violation of the U.N. resolution that put it in place, is now getting ready to sell Russian fighter jets to Iran in strict violation of that.

So what is our relationship today with Russia?

Secretary KERRY. Well, our relationship is one that is also complicated, because, obviously, we have different positions with respect to Ukraine, different positions with respect to Syria, at least as to the support of Assad. And the question remains to be tested whether or not they are at all serious about the political process.

On the other hand, Russia cooperated quite significantly in the Iran negotiations. Russia joined with us in helping to remove the chemical weapons, the declared chemical weapons, under the Chemical Weapons treaty from Syria. Russia has cooperated with us in a U.N. resolution bringing to a head this effort diplomatically. Russia cooperated with us in the Vienna meetings that could not have happened without Russia's input. In fact, without Russia's cooperation, I am not sure we would have been able to have achieved the agreement we have now, or at least get the humanitarian assistance in.

In the last days, Russia has sent its special envoy on the Syria issue to Syria to talk to the Assad regime and to make sure that they are in agreement to move forward in the diplomatic process, as well as to honor the humanitarian requirements. And they sent their defense minister to Iran to do the same.

So it is step-by-step. There are no illusions. Eyes are open. And nobody on this committee should have any illusions. Russia made it clear years ago that they support Assad. This is not a surprise to us. It is not a surprise that they are following through on their support for Assad.

And they are also threatened by terrorists. There are maybe 2,000 to 2,500 to 3,000 Chechens who are fighting in Syria, and the Russians have a serious concern about the return of those Chechens to Russian soil or places of interest, and stirring up their Muslim population and/or other objectives they may have.

So the bottom line, Mr. Chairman, is that we are proceeding on a step-by-step process by which the delivery of actions is what speaks. We will meet again in Geneva in the next few days to work on the modalities of the cooperation, so that it is Nusra that is attacked and not the moderate opposition, and so that we are both understanding how we are proceeding against ISIL.

There could be a significant benefit in that we wind up having greater effort against ISIL and can speed up the destruction of Daesh. But the proof will be in the actions that come in the next days.

May I say, I really appreciate your comments about Europe. I could not agree with you more. Europe is deeply threatened by what is happening. They are talking about different border measures that may be taken. I think it is imperative for the United States to be prepared to help Europe as much as necessary in every way possible in order to address what is happening and the pressures being put on them. But in the next days, we will know more.

Now, when I met with President Putin, I said to him very directly that the test here is not a test that is going to be proven in 6 months or 1.5 years, when the election is supposedly scheduled. We are going to know in a month or two whether or not this transition process is really serious—or three, whatever. We will have a sense of that.

Assad himself is going to have to make some real decisions about the formation of a transitional governance process that is real. If there is not, as you have read in the newspapers and are probably hearing, there are, certainly, plan B options being considered.

The CHAIRMAN. I do not think they think plan B is realistic, and I think that makes it very difficult for you in your efforts.

I, again, want to thank you for your efforts on our behalf. I do think the breakthrough on the humanitarian side was a good thing, but I think you have a very tough hand of cards that you are dealing with. Again, we appreciate you being here today and for your service to our country.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, Ranking Member Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Once again, Secretary, thank you for your service to our country. Thank you for sharing with us today.

Let me follow up a little bit on Syria. Obviously, the first challenge was to stop the shootings between the government and the opposition, supported by Russia and the government, and to allow humanitarian access, so that the humanitarian crisis can be eased. At least it will, hopefully, stop some of the flow of the refugees, and it will take some of the internal pressure, in order to be able to get a negotiation as to the future of Syria itself. That is the objective here. I strongly support that.

You have alluded to this, but I hope you could be a little bit clearer as to what comes next. There seems to be a fundamental disagreement between the United States and Russia as to the fu-

ture of President Assad. There has been silence as to the accountability of the Assad regime for its war crimes. And a lot of us are determined that when leaders commit war crimes, they must be held accountable for their actions. I understand there will be a process.

At the end of the day, there needs to be a government in Syria has the confidence of all of its people, otherwise we will be back fighting again, and we are not going to be able to concentrate against ISIL forces, which is the objective here.

Can you just share with us briefly how you see the next step unfolding, where we can get to a result where there is truly a government in Syria that has the confidence of all the population?

Secretary KERRY. So let me try to lay this out as clearly as I can, and, certainly, how we see the options here.

Russia, the United States, and Iran, and our allies, all say that we want a united Syria. The vast preponderance of the players say they want a nonsectarian, even secular, Syria, status quo ante, in which all minorities are protected, in which the people of Syria have the right to choose their leadership and their future.

The Russians agree to that. The Iranians agree to that. All of our allies agree to that fundamental precept. So we are united on sort of this vision of where we want Syria to be. The question is getting there.

We believe deeply, and we have argued this to the Russians and to the Iranians and others, that even if you wanted to, even if someone did strike an unholy alliance and suggested Assad could be part of that future, the war will not stop.

As long as Assad is there, you cannot stop the war, because of the grievous events that have transpired over the course of the last years. People do not see how someone who has gassed his own people, driven so many of them into refugee status and displaced, tortured them, starved them, barrel-bombed them—how he somehow is going to be the glue that brings the place together is beyond anybody's understanding. And there are forces out there that will never stop fighting him.

So if you want peace, by definition, we believe it has to be without Assad.

What the Russians and others have said is the Syrian people have to decide that. But this political process that we have created is what they say is the mechanism by which that decision could begin to be made.

Senator CARDIN. What timing do you see? Are we talking months? Are we talking years?

Secretary KERRY. No, we are talking months, because there is no way that people will be patient enough, obviously. First of all, there is a 6-month period that has been basically laid out for the political transition to try to be put in place. Now, if it is real and really happening, that could move. If it is not, as I said earlier, we will know.

If they are stalling, if there is an absolute stonewall, if there is no progress, if nothing happens, it would be very hard to keep people at the table. I have no illusions about that. There are people who will say this is a farce, and they will walk away.

So I think we are going to see very quickly whether or not countries are serious about this transition and whether or not Assad is serious about it.

Now, President Putin said and has said publicly, and Prime Minister Lavrov has said and said publicly, that they are committed to this process and that their support for Assad is an important component of his need to take part in it.

Senator CARDIN. As far as holding President Assad accountable for the crimes that he has committed, has there been any understanding reached either for impunity or for actions?

Secretary KERRY. No. No, there has been no discussion, no determination of it. I mean, I have said several times publicly, we have talked about the crimes that have been committed. Using gas against your own people is a war crime. Starvation as a tool of war is a war crime. So these are pretty clear things.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Let me turn to the area I said in my opening comments about democracy funding, anticorruption, et cetera, which, to me, is critically important. I do think that you have showcased the importance of anticorruption activities. We have talked about the Ukraine.

If we get Russia to leave Ukraine alone, Ukraine's survival depends upon the internal reforms in its own country, where the people have an honest government. That was one of the major reasons for the protests that occurred in Ukraine.

When we look at countries we are dealing with in Asia, including in TPP, we fight countries that have serious corruption problems within their government, and we have tried to take steps in the TPP to deal with some of those issues. And we go through country after country—the impunity in Central America of people who commit crimes without any accountability.

I would hope, this year, we could work together, this committee and your leadership, to develop a protocol where we make it clear that we will not tolerate a government that does not move to deal with the corruption problems.

We are talking about developing an index similar to what we do in trafficking in persons for corruption. There has been transparency evaluations done of countries.

Can you just share with us steps that you are taking to provide a more permanent structure within the State Department to deal with the problems of corruption and good governance?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, I am glad you bring that up, because I gave a speech in Davos just a few weeks ago in which I talked about the challenge of global corruption. It is one of the most difficult challenges that we face in trying to deal with extremism, trying to deal with counternarcotics, with trafficking in persons. And the levels of corruption, I have to say, are greater in impact than I had perceived previously in my years on the committee and otherwise.

It is having a profound impact. It steals the future from young people.

In a sense, the Tunisian uprising and the Arab Spring was born not out of anything religious motivated. It came about as a result of corruption. A police officer was refusing to allow that Tunisian

fruit vendor to sell his wares and wanted a bribe, and so forth. So when he got slapped around, it was one slap too many, and he self-immolated. That is what ignited the revolution that saw change sweep through the region.

I see that in other countries incipiently. In Nigeria, it was reported that former generals stole some $50 billion, some extraordinary amount of money taken out of the country. In Yemen, we know enormous amounts were taken out of the country. There are many other countries. We know this is happening.

So we are very, very focused on this issue and the standard. In the State Department, this effort is led by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Enforcement Affairs, but it is really an all-department effort. And we promote standards in many, many different ways. We model our proposals to countries on our best practices.

I might add, with respect to Ukraine, the IMF has put a very strong 10-point program in front of the government in Kiev that they need to address in full in order to get further support from the IMF. That has a very significant reform package in it.

In the last weeks, the Vice President and I met with President Poroshenko. We have been very clear about steps that need to be taken. We are working very closely with them.

That is really the best way to do this. I know there is an instinct people want to put hard lines in place legislatively, sort of a draconian "do this or else" kind of message. That often winds up in severing our capacity to have an impact. What I have found that we are able to do in working with countries is actually get them to move on things and make changes. We are working. We are co-chair of the G–20 anticorruption working group, and we have advanced standards internationally on transparency, on integrity, on countering impunity.

So this is an ongoing effort. It is not going to be resolved overnight, obviously. But the more we focus on it, the greater the prospects are that it is going to have an impact, and it will make a difference. And we are making a difference in a lot of places.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Johnson?

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for coming here and testifying. Thanks for your service.

I have to take this opportunity, though. I have to put on my chairman of Homeland Security and Government Affairs hat. As you are aware, my committee has jurisdiction over national security procedures and Federal records. I have joined in letters with Chairman Corker and Chairman Burr and Chairman Grassley. We have sent you a number of letters. You have been responsive, in part. I appreciate that.

I want to go through a series of questions. I do not need real long answers, but I just want to establish that, so I can hopefully get to putting my Foreign Relations hat on as well.

First of all, as Secretary of State, you send and receive classified material, correct?

Secretary KERRY. Yes. I mean, I do not send it personally, directly. It is sent through the Executive Office.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. So you never use your email system to actually create classified materials?

Secretary KERRY. No, I do not.

Senator JOHNSON. You never do that.

Secretary KERRY. I have never actually opened my computer on my desk. [Laughter.]

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. So, members of your staff do. I understand. I have white hair, too.

Senator KERRY. It is not because I do not know how. I want it separated from me, and I do not do it.

Senator JOHNSON. Good. So members of your staff do, correct?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, of course.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Then they use a system called ClassNet, correct?

Secretary KERRY. Yes.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. You are fully aware of our enemies' capabilities, in terms of hacking into——

Secretary KERRY. Indeed.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Would you allow—so you do not use—you do not allow yourself to use a private server. Would you allow any members of your staff to use a nonofficial, nonsecure server for transmitting classified information?

Secretary KERRY. Look——

Senator JOHNSON. Just yes or no.

Secretary KERRY. Senator, I understand——

Senator JOHNSON. Just yes or no.

Secretary KERRY. We have very specific procedures in place in the department. I brought in an Inspector General. I wrote a letter to the Inspector General, asking him to review our entire process. And so in today's world, given all that we have learned and what we understand about the vulnerability of our system, we do not do that.

Senator JOHNSON. So the answer is no.

For every classified piece of information that is transmitted, there is a log kept at the State Department, correct?

Secretary KERRY. Yes. There is a log kept on everything. Everything is kept, period, not just the log but the substance of the message is kept and filed.

Senator JOHNSON. I would think that is a relatively condensed log though, I mean, pretty easily accessible.

Secretary KERRY. I do not know the answer to that.

Senator JOHNSON. There is a finite number of classified materials back and forth.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we have 275 posts, and we are sending classified material every single day. I cannot tell you how many millions of——

Senator JOHNSON. Are the logs differentiated by individual, though?

Secretary KERRY. I do not know precisely.

Senator JOHNSON. We will find that out.

Secretary KERRY. I do not believe so.

Senator JOHNSON. In a September 21st letter of 2015, one of our questions was: Did Secretary Clinton have an official State Department email account assigned to her for accessing classified emails

during her time in the State Department? We did receive, and I appreciate, this response from Julia Frifield. This states: To answer question five, Secretary Clinton did not use a classified email account at the State Department. An account was set up on ClassNet for her calendar, but it was not used.

Another question we asked, which has not been responded to, is, I would like access—our committee would like access to those logs in the State Department of all the classified material that was transferred between the administration, other members of the administration, within the State Department, and Secretary Clinton.

You have not responded to that yet. It has been about 5 months. Is there a reason why we have not had access to those logs?

Secretary KERRY. I do not know the specific reason, because it has not been discussed with me.

Senator JOHNSON. Is there any reason I cannot get access to those logs?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I do not know the answer to that, Senator.

Senator JOHNSON. So I will put that for questions for the record. I will continue to want a response to that.

Secretary KERRY. Right. But let me, so you understand, I appointed a transparency coordinator, an experienced ambassador, Janice Jacobs, to assist us to make sure we respond rapidly to all requests.

We have more than 50 simultaneous investigations going on. And we have an unprecedented number of FOIA requests. I have had to cannibalize bureaus to get people to go spend their time responding to these requests.

Senator JOHNSON. Which is my next question. Do you know how much money you have spent and what kind of manpower you put on, because you have been really evaluating these emails since March 2015? Do you know how much money the State Department has spent just reviewing—because, again, I think we have to assume that every piece of information that passed over Secretary Clinton's nonofficial, nonsecure private server is in the hands of our enemy. We have to assume that. It is prudent to do so.

So you have been reviewing that for almost a year. Do you know how much you have spent and the manpower associated with cleaning up that mess?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I would have to look. As I said to you, we have over 50 investigations, nine different committees, involving hundreds of specific requests for literally——

Senator JOHNSON. Well, I will——

Secretary KERRY [CONTINUING]. WAIT, WAIT—HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PAGES OF DOCUMENTS.

Senator JOHNSON. Again, I am not concerned about the other investigations. I am asking a question on the one with Hillary Clinton's emails.

Secretary KERRY. I am concerned about it because this is——

Senator JOHNSON. Good. I am glad you are.

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. Tying up professional diplomats.

Senator JOHNSON. Are you aware, has the FBI recovered any of the 55,000 emails that were supposedly wiped from the server?

Secretary KERRY. I have no knowledge of what the—you have to ask the FBI. We do not touch or know anything about——

Senator JOHNSON. Have you, in the emails——

Secretary KERRY. You allocated $2.4 million in years 2015 and 2016 in order to help us respond to you, and we have been able to step up the level of our delivery as result of that. We are still greatly overburdened.

Senator JOHNSON. So based on what you have reviewed, the classified material, because we are up to—what?—1,700 different emails that have some variation of some level of classified material in them.

Secretary KERRY. I do not know.

Senator JOHNSON. Is the State Department aware of anything that you have had to mitigate the damage from? Have you taken any actions in the State Department? Do you know if the intelligence community has taken any actions to mitigate the harm by the potential fact or the potential that our enemies might have access to that classified material on Secretary Clinton's server?

Secretary KERRY. I would not be able to discuss that in an open session, but I can tell you that the department, we have. I do not know what the other agencies have done or not done.

By the way, that is one of the reasons why it has taken a while. If we have anything in an email, when one of our professional reads the email, that involves another agency, then every agency has to have a chance to read that to see if their interests are, in fact, at risk. So that takes a long time, and that is one of the reasons why——

Senator JOHNSON. Right. Secretary Clinton's actions have cost the Federal Government an awful lot of money and caused you an awful lot of headache.

Secretary KERRY. Senator, it remains to be seen whether or not it is the 50 investigations by nine different committees that have created more heartburn.

Senator JOHNSON. So what I would like are answers to these questions. You said you cannot do it in an open committee. Would you commit to coming in a secure setting before my committee to answer some of these questions?

Secretary KERRY. Would I what?

Senator JOHNSON. Would you come before my committee in a secured setting, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, to answer some of these questions based on national security procedures and Federal records?

Secretary KERRY. I am not the appropriate person to discuss those issues in that context.

Senator JOHNSON. Would you send a representative, then?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I will evaluate with others in the administration through the appropriate interagency process who the appropriate person is to do that. Of course, someone appropriately responsible will always respond to any committee of the Congress.

Senator JOHNSON. Again, it has been 5 months that we have been asking for the logs of the classified materials sent. So I would ask for those logs, as well.

Secretary KERRY. Again, I am not sure whether that is even authorized or capable of being done, but we will take a look at it.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary KERRY. It is the first I have heard of it. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Boxer?

Senator BOXER. I just want to say, before I welcome you, the Senator is injecting presidential politics into this. I resent it, and I would like to say for the record that we know that Secretaries Rice and Powell used their own private email. And I know of no Senator that has not sent emails about the work of this subject matter and other subject matters on their personal emails. So let us be clear.

Now, I am really disappointed in this. I think we should be working together on the subject of today's hearing.

Senators Corker and Cardin, I thank you so much for this hearing, and I thank you both for your leadership. It is extraordinary, the way you work together. As a ranking member myself working with Senator Inhofe, it is so important that we do that to restore faith, frankly, in this government.

Secretary Kerry, I just want to say how much I appreciate your accomplishments, especially in these very difficult times and, as you point out, so many hotspots all over the world. I want to be specific about what I am talking about when I compliment you.

First of all, your work on the Iran nuclear agreement, I know it is controversial, but I also know how hard it was. While you are doing that, also your continued support for Israel in this budget, it is so important. And thirdly, your opening relations with Cuba. And fourth, the global climate change negotiations. And fifth, your efforts to bring Russia to an agreement regarding Syria.

It was way back 3 or 4 years ago that Senator Dick Durbin called a bunch of us together to meet with the Russian Ambassador to say, can we work together so that there could be a peaceful transition in Syria? And there was the Russian Ambassador.

That was the most brutal meeting I have ever been to. It was horrible. And all we said was, let us work together for the future of the world, for the future of the Syrian people. And he was impossible.

So, frankly—I am not being diplomatic, you have to be, but I do not—I blame Russia and Iran for what is happening there, for the quarter of a million deaths since we had that meeting of innocent women and children. It is horrible.

So I am going to ask you, if I have time, I have two subject matters I want to cover with you. One is Cuba, and one is Syria. So I will start off with Cuba.

I am a strong supporter of the President's decision to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba, another very difficult issue on this committee. I was proud to join you at the reopening of the U.S. Embassy in Havana last August.

It was so emotional to see and speak with the same Marines, Mr. Secretary, who took down the flag 50 years ago who raised the flag again, and to see how excited they were to be there and to do that.

To me, it is through engagement that we have the best chance to support the Cuban people. How do I know this? And I respect my friends on both sides of the aisle who disagree with me vehemently and disagree with you vehemently and disagree with the

President vehemently. But really, we tried isolation for 50 years, and how did that go?

So I think we have to move forward and get past it. People have a right to believe what they want to, and I have no animosity toward them. There are reasons they put forward that are deeply held. But I think those folks are living in the past.

Walking through the Embassy last August, I did feel like I had traveled through time. The building, which has not been upgraded in over 30 years, was clearly in disrepair and understaffed. I see that the administration requested $3.8 million for upgrades to our Embassy in Cuba in its fiscal year 2017 budget.

So whether or not one agrees with the new policy, could you tell us, because I know so many Americans are traveling to Cuba—and there are not enough hotel rooms. That is why Airbnb is doing so well there. That is where people are staying.

Could you comment on why we really need these funds to rebuild the Embassy?

Secondly, what are your priorities with respect to Cuba for the remainder of the administration? What does the President hope to achieve with his upcoming historic visit in March?

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Boxer.

The current staffing in Havana is inadequate to support our objectives of being able to do the diplomacy, the normal diplomacy. We were able to negotiate with the Cubans successfully a 50 percent increase in staffing, so we are very eager to reverse this shortfall, which will be helpful in terms of helping business, helping travelers, helping Americans. We have not increased any direct hire staff since 2014.

Our Embassy there has hosted over 40 congressional and executive branch official delegations just in the year since the President announced the opening of diplomatic relations. So we also negotiated greater freedom for our diplomats to travel within Cuba and better monitor developments. And the ability to travel outside Havana and interact with Cubans outside the capital is obviously important to our relationship and security, and support of the Cuban people.

We also were able to negotiate a number of containers going down there in order to help refurbish some of the Embassy, which, you are right, has not had any care in a long period of time.

So we have concerns still. I am not going to pretend to anybody—I think the President said at the beginning that not everything is going to change overnight. There are still human rights issues. In fact, I may be down there in the next week or two to have a human rights dialogue specifically.

Senator BOXER. Good. And what does the President hope to achieve?

Secretary KERRY. The President hopes to press forward on the agenda of speaking to the people of Cuba about the future. Obviously, he is anxious to press on the rights of people to be able to demonstrate, to have democracy, to be free, to be able to speak and hang a sign in their window without being put in jail for several years.

Senator BOXER. So just to sum it up, because I have one more question for you, he is going to speak directly to the Cuban people, and that is really good.

My last question is, as the person who has perhaps engaged the most with the Russians, and I talked about the frustration Senators felt when we met years ago with the Russians, do you believe they are truly willing to commit to a cessation of hostilities in the Syrian area and a peace process that allows for the eventual removal of Assad? What is your assessment?

Secretary KERRY. My assessment is that we have an opportunity to put to test the proposition that they are committed to a political solution. If, indeed, the only outcome that anybody believes can occur is a political solution, we have no choice but to try to get the modalities in place to be able to get to the table and argue about it.

So as Senator Corker has said, my tools are the tools of diplomacy, the tools of trying to reach an agreement, trying to use whatever leverage we have to get an outcome. The outcome we have gotten is to have everybody who is a stakeholder at the same table, all of them agreeing in this process to have Russia joining us with China and France and Britain, as the five permanent members of the Security Council, going to the Security Council with Germany and others, in order to get a U.N. Security Council resolution outlining a framework for a political settlement, and Russia voting for it.

So if we are going to test whether the words mean anything, we have to put in place a process like we have here.

Now, Senator Corker mentioned Aleppo and what they have been doing in the ensuing weeks. Yes, they have been bombing. Imagine what would happen if we did not even have an agreement to end in 2 weeks or 1 week? They would still be bombing.

You have to begin a ceasefire sometime. But you cannot begin it on day 1 without working out modalities of it. You have to sit there and say, okay, what are the rules? Who is going to live by what? And in this case, that was particularly difficult because of the different players that you have involved in this.

Senator BOXER. Well, if I could just reclaim my time because I have gone over, I just hope it is not a rope-a-dope deal. I just hope.

Secretary KERRY. Well, it may be. I am not going to sit here——

Senator BOXER. Not that you have another option. I am not suggesting——

Secretary KERRY. If humanitarian assistance flows, if the guns do silence, with the exception of the effort against Daesh and Nusra, on Saturday—if they do—and lives are saved, then that is to the benefit—and it does not mean that is automatically going to have a positive outcome in the political process, folks.

In fact, let me say this, because Senator Corker raised an important issue. He said Russia has sort of been accomplishing its ends in the meantime. Well, folks, even if Russia took Aleppo, even if Russia is sitting there, holding territory has always been difficult. If the war does not end, if the Turks and Qataris and Saudis and others continue to support the opposition, and we are supporting the opposition, and the opposition continues to fight, this can get a lot uglier. Russia has to be sitting there evaluating that, too.

So the question is, at some point in time, someday, someone is going to have to sit down at a table and arrive at an understanding about what Syria is going to be.

But it may be too late to keep it as a whole Syria, if we wait much longer. So that is what is at issue here.

I am not going to vouch for this. I am not going to say this process is sure to work, because I do not know. But I know that this is the best way to try to end the war, and it is the only alternative available to us, if, indeed, we are going to have a political settlement.

Senator BOXER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Flake?

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate the testimony so far.

I share the concerns that Senator Cardin raised with regard to OCO, the shift. This is something all of us have been concerned with, the chairman and others, over the years, the shift from baseline funding to OCO funding. It is just not an honest way to budget. And I am not blaming the administration anymore than I am blaming Congress here, but we have to get away from it.

Let me talk a little bit about the trip that Senator Cardin mentioned that he and I and Senator Coons from this committee and two other Members of Congress took to southern Africa, mostly to look at wildlife trafficking and poaching, and to provide some oversight for some of the programs that our government has with various governments there.

It is a challenge. We have seen a decline in the elephant population in Africa over the past 10 years of about 40 to 50 percent. Rhinos are being poached in just one part, Kruger in South Africa, to the tune of about 1,200 just last year.

When we were in Namibia, we went into a vault where they held illegal seizures of rhino horn and ivory. I held two horns from one white rhino that on the black market was worth about $600,000, one set of rhino horns. It goes for about $60,000 a k, more expensive than any precious metal or anything else, cocaine or drugs.

Those countries are very worried that criminal networks will come in that will fund conflicts and instability like they have in Central Africa and elsewhere. So I would just say that the programs that we have going in those countries, to help these countries actually respond to this threat, are important and we ought to keep going with that.

Also, Senator Cardin mentioned the issue of trafficking in people, TIP, the report that we have. Senator Cardin raised that just about everywhere we went. That is an important lever that we have to induce these governments to help more in this area. But it is concerning in some areas.

In Namibia, when it was raised, the government responded, hey, we have tried to respond. After we left, there were newspaper articles expressing some confusion about where they were and where they are. It is not just the Namibian Government. Some of the other governments have expressed some confusion about how they respond.

When you look at what we are trying induce these governments to do, one of the things is the government of the country should make a serious and sustained effort to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

Those items are maybe a little too subjective. And if we want to use this as an effective lever to push these countries to more where we want them to be, I would suggest that maybe we need to work on some of these measures to make them more concrete and precise.

Do you have any thoughts on that? I know this is an area that is of concern to you, and you have been working with these governments.

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you, Senator. I know this is not on everybody's mind, obviously, but I will tell you, it should be. I wish it were something that we were able to do more about, and we should be able to.

The same criminal networks that engage in wildlife trafficking also, by the way, engage in trafficking in human persons and narcotics trafficking. It is a multi-billion-dollar criminal enterprise. And it is destroying the future for lots of countries that could rely on ecotourism or other things. But it is also eliminating species from the planet.

I think there is one rhino, I saw the other day, I think there is one white rhino in one country left. That is all.

When I was in Kenya recently, I visited the David Sheldrick preserve there, where there were a bunch of orphaned baby elephants, because the parents had been killed. And the poaching has been reduced significantly because they now have wardens out there armed, and there is a price you pay if you are caught.

That is the only way—it has to be stopped by enforcement. You cannot have impunity in the system.

When it is part of a criminal enterprise in what has become a klepto-country of one kind or another, it is extremely hard to do anything about this.

So we need to galvanize countries together. Unfortunately, this also is one of those things that takes resources. You have to be able to provide the shelter, the refuge. You have to be able to provide the enforcement mechanism, train people, make sure that there is no impunity with respect to this. Until this moment, there has not been a significant enough effort.

I know you and Senator Coons are contemplating legislation on this. We welcome talking to you about it. The one concern that we have goes back to what I was talking about earlier. We are cooperating now with a lot of countries, and they are cooperating with us. We are worried about the prospect that, if there is sort of a frontal assault on them, we may lose the cooperation rather than be able to make the progress we are making. It is something that we should talk about. So what is the best way to get the return on investment here?

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. I have one last question.

I just want to commend the administration for what they have done on Cuba, as was mentioned before. I have said to the President and others that there are still, obviously, big concerns with the Cuban Government in the area of human rights, for example.

But it should not be lost on anyone, the improvement in the condition of the Cuban people, since many changes have been made.

For example, few years ago, when the President lifted restrictions on Cuban-American travel and lifted caps on remittances, that in combination with some changes made in Cuba have meant that nearly 25 percent of the Cuban work force is now outside of government, whether they are running private hotels or Airbnb with a bed-and-breakfast, a private auto repair shop, or a beauty salon.

These people, who have that ability now, are separate as much you can be in Cuba from government and are enjoying richer, fuller, more free lives than they would have otherwise. We still have a long way to go, but we are moving in the right direction. And I commend the administration for the steps that have been taken, and I wish the President well on his visit there. I think it is an important step.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator. I appreciate it. We appreciate your support.

The CHAIRMAN. Before moving to Senator Menendez, this is slavery and trafficking awareness week. We have a hearing tomorrow on this very topic. I very much appreciate you bringing it up.

And I want to thank the State Department for working with us. This committee passed unanimously, under Senator Menendez's leadership, the End Modern Slavery Act. We had a down payment on that, that we are working closely with the State Department to get to the right places. But this has to be a global effort, when there are 27 million people today enslaved. I know you know that. This committee knows that, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your drive and leadership on that issue.

Let me join the chair and the ranking member in saluting you, Secretary Kerry, for your service. While I may have disagreements at times on policy, I never doubt your commitment to America's virtues and promoting those virtues abroad.

And let me make a comment or two, which I did not intend in my preparation today. I guess it is the political hunting season, but if you keep shooting and you do not land anything, maybe there is nothing to shoot at. I think the global needs that we have, that we would be far better off if the State Department focused on that.

And on Cuba, I would just say to my dear friend from California, I wish he was here, that human rights and democracy are never about the past. They are eternal, from my perspective. And yet, all I can say is that there is a difference between the President traveling to Cuba and when he traveled to Burma, for example.

When he traveled to Burma, we had Aung San Suu Kyi released from house arrest. We had elections, however flawed. We had the 11 commitments to release political prisoners. We got the Red Cross access to prisons and so forth. There were concrete and tangible progress on political reform and human rights.

If anything, we are going backwards here. Some of the people who were released under the original deal have already been re-

arrested and are serving long terms in prison. So much for good faith.

We had 1,400 arrests this year alone in the first 2 months. That is progress? Fourteen hundred arrests. Not because I say it, but because the Cuban Commission on Human Rights, which is inside of Cuba, says it.

When we do business with the Castro regime, which is what we are doing—we are not doing business with the Cuban people. We are dealing with Castro's son and son-in-law, who head the two major entities, the only way you can do business inside of Cuba, both heads of the Cuban military. We are going to have a transitional and generational change from one set of Castros to another.

So I am going to continue to speak out on that issue, because I think that human rights and democracy in Cuba is incredibly important, as I have viewed it elsewhere in the world. And I concerned that what we have done is neutered our programs there.

But let me get to the heart of what I really wanted to talk about, and that is Iran.

I want to ask you, Mr. Secretary, invoking sanctions against Iranian activities unrelated to its nuclear portfolio—let us say items of proliferation, of ballistic missile technology, or support for terrorism—they do not violate the terms of the JCPOA, correct?

Secretary KERRY. They do not what?

Senator MENENDEZ. That pursuing sanctions and other actions on proliferation of missile technology and support for terrorism, they do not violate the terms of the JCPOA?

Secretary KERRY. That is accurate.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Now, I look at what has transpired since our agreement. We have seen two ballistic tests in violation of the U.N. Security Council. We have seen missiles tested in the vicinity of U.S. naval vessels. We have seen American sailors detained. We have seen the barter of four innocent Americans held hostage for the freedom of 21 Iranian criminals, including those convicted of conspiracy and material support to a state sponsor of terrorism, shipping sensitive dual-use technology, money, and other materials in violation of standing U.S. sanctions. We have seen clemency for another 14. We have awarded the Iranian Government $1.7 billion, admittedly, for some type of contractor service that we did not provide.

But that was never, ever talked about, not when I was chairman, not when I was the ranking member, not as a member of this committee. I never heard about that at all. And it was done so quickly, and the payment was made so rapidly, that even the victims of terrorism who have judgments in the United States did not have the wherewithal to try to attach it.

So I look at that, and then I see the challenges that we have with Iran outside of its nuclear portfolio, support to a Houthi insurgency that helped topple the internationally recognized Government of Yemen, support to Shia militias in Iraq that exercise profound control over the democratically elected Iraqi Government, support to the Syrian regime of Assad with the devastating war that we all know about, financing billions of dollars to Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas.

And so I look at that and I just do not see where the counterweight is. And I look at that and say, I have a sense we are creating a permissive environment.

Why do I say that? When we look at Iran's ballistic missile launches, which violated U.N. Security Council resolutions, we waited an inordinate amount of time, knowing that the United Nations ultimately was not going to ask act, and did not. And when we finally did provide some sanctionable action, well after all the elements of implementation day took place, we have 11 entities that were sanctioned.

But instead of sanctioning the banks that were financing those entities, so that we have a more far-reaching consequence, we are playing whack-a-mole.

So we have the ability to be far more aggressive against the Iranians on those things that we care about. And I know there is this desire to try to create space for the moderates inside of Iran, even though they were just blocked by the Guardian Council in a way in which there are virtually no moderates who are being allowed to run in the legislative elections.

So I look at that, and I say, why is it that we are not being far more aggressive with the tools that we have?

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce into the record a GAO report that I had commissioned with Senator Kirk.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to above can be found in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section of this transcript.]

Senator MENENDEZ. It talks about the entity in which we are putting all the marbles, the International Atomic Energy Administration. Now, I think they do good work, but let me just say that some of the preliminary findings cause concern for me about what the IAEA is capable of.

So let me read some of them. GAO's preliminary observations point directly to future problems with monitoring, verifying, and meeting requirements of the JCPOA. It talks about its limitation, a limited budget from irregular funding sources, human resource shortfalls, important equipment operating at capacity already not being able to go beyond that. Limited analytical capabilities that will be tested by the new mandates of the JCPOA. A lack of authorities. Obviously, the IAEA activities will depend a significant degree on the cooperation of the Iranian state. Thirdly, while they have focused virtually all of their resources to pursue the JCPOA, they are going to have very little resources. They turn away from other proliferators and potential proliferators. And, finally, among other items, the IAEA's own estimates identified the need for approximately $10 million per year, for 15 years, over and above its present budget.

So it is an agency that is understaffed for its purposes, losing technical assistance—people are leaving; has now a singular focus, which I applaud the focus, but I want them to also pursue other proliferators; and a budget that does not have the wherewithal to sustain it just for the focus of the JCPOA.

So should Iran, who violated international norm and international law, ultimately be the entity to pay, since they are now flush with money that we have given them or returned to them? Should they be the ones to pay for the very essence of the verification and monitoring that they caused the need for in the first place?

Secretary KERRY. Senator, you raise a lot, obviously.

Let me just try to quickly say, on Cuba, first of all, I really appreciate your personal comments, and I am grateful for that. I also respect enormously your commitment. You are dedicated when it comes to the issue of human rights and freedom, and you have always been very clear about it, with respect to Cuba. We have a difference maybe in the tactics about how to get there, but we do not have a difference in the goal.

It is our sense that we have already seen some improvement in empowerment of the Cuban people in the private sector now employing one in four Cubans. It has grown significantly and is growing. And as the flights come in, and more and more people are there, there is a transformation taking place.

Anybody who has been down there and had been there previously has observed this change that is taking place. People in the United States can now send unlimited remittances in support of private business investment.

Senator MENENDEZ. And 1,400 arrests.

Secretary KERRY. I agree. It is not perfect.

Senator MENENDEZ. I did not really ask you for comments on Cuba, which I appreciate. I just want to let you know, for the record, how I felt.

I would like responses to the question of Iran, though.

Secretary KERRY. Sure.

With respect to Iran, we believe we are being more than vigilant, actually. On January 17, we designated three entities and eight individuals who had provided materials for Iran's ballistic missile program. So we sanctioned people, and we cut them off from the U.S. financial system.

We have continually been tracking the implementation with great impact. We had a couple questions about one thing or another. We raised them with the Iranians, and we resolved them in a way that kept faith with exactly what should happen. They were not malicious. They were just normal kinds of things that had arisen in the course of the process. We are happy to brief Congress. I am sure you will be fully briefed on every aspect of that.

Yes, the IAEA does need more money. We know that. There are additional inspectors, however, under our agreement, who will be in there, 130 of them.

And as you know, our Intelligence Community and our Energy Department remain absolutely clear that they have the ability to be able to verify and track this agreement.

So the GAO is helpful. I think anybody's scrutiny that adds some choices for what can be done to make sure we are doing this correctly can do so.

But the bottom line is, we know that they took out—from 19,000 centrifuges down to 5,060. We know that they took the calandria out of the plutonium reactor and destroyed it, filling it with ce-

ment. It can never be used again. We know there is no enrichment taking place in Fordow, and so forth.

Senator MENENDEZ. My time is over, well over, so I appreciate the chairman's courtesy.

My focus was not about the implementation of the JCPOA. It is about Iran's malign activities within the region that——

Secretary KERRY. Let me come to that. We are also extremely focused on that. I had a meeting with the GCC a few weeks ago. We are meeting again somewhere in the next few weeks. I think we have plussed-up our assistance in the billions of dollars in terms of sales to them for their ability to be able to push back against Iranian activities.

We have engaged with Iranians on their activities, specifically in Yemen.

And we have high hopes that, over the course of the Syria process, we can begin to deal with the flow of weapons that have been coming out of Iran through Damascus into Lebanon and threatening Israel. We are very clear about that, and the threat of Hezbollah, and the IRGC's engagement in various ways. Again, some of that should be taken up in a classified session.

But we believe that the amount of money that has flowed to Iran thus far, not because we have interfered with it or something, but because it just has not materialized as significantly as a lot of people alleged, is not winding up in some great imbalance in support for activities that we object to.

So there are things going on, obviously. That is why we left in place the sanctions on human rights, the sanctions on arms, the sanctions on missiles, the sanctions on state sponsors of terror. They are all still there, extant, and subject to enforcement. We have made that clear, which is why we did designate people because of the missile test that took place.

So we are very focused on it, Senator, together with our allies and, I might add, with Israel. We are constantly sharing information, and I can assure you every country in the region will be as diligent as we are in tracking what they are doing.

The CHAIRMAN. So I get an F on being a traffic cop. I am going to try to be better, for the remainder of the time here. I do appreciate the fulsome answers and questions. If we could, we will try to stay closer to our time frame.

With that, Senator Perdue?

Senator PERDUE. I will try to honor the time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your energy and effort. We may have disagreed on some of the details of some of the efforts, but I respect your effort to represent us diplomatically and solve some of these really tough problems around the world. It is a very dangerous world.

With regard to the budget, which is primarily what I thought we were supposed to be talking about today, next week, Senator Kaine and I, I will chair and he is ranking member of the subcommittee where we will have some of your staff talk about a few more details of the State Department's budget request.

But I want to note for the record today, the State Department, while it is up 25 percent since 2008, some $12 billion, I recognize it is still 1 percent of our total spending.

I also recognize that the world is a lot more dangerous today. In fact, I think we see the world as having two real major crises. One is this global security crisis that continues to grow every day. But I think when we look at the State Department budget, as well as the defense budget, we would be well-positioned to consider it in its full perspective. I know you mentioned this in Munich last week, where you represented the United States very well, I thought.

But it seems to me that we have interlocking two crises. One is the global security crisis on several levels.

One is the rise of traditional states. China and Russia are ever more aggressive. We have these asymmetric threats and terrorists from Indonesia now to Algeria, and here at home. We also see nuclear proliferation threats, and honestly cooperation between North Korea and Iran, even that continues to date. On top of that, we have the cyber warfare dimension that our military is trying to adapt to, and I know you organization is trying to adapt to. And what we do not talk a lot about is the growing arms race in space.

So, I mean, this is a very complicated world right now.

Interlocked with that, though, is our own debt crisis, our own intransigence here threatens our ability to fund the needs that we have. I am coming to a specific question about Europe.

Before I get to that, I would just like to ask you a quick question about Iran.

Originally, we were told the number that they would be given over a period of time was somewhere between $100 billion and $150 billion. Then the administration came back and said, well, we think it is closer to $50 billion in terms of what they can get. There are some balance sheet issues that they have access to, but cash is about $50 billion. We have heard Iranian officials talk recently about it being an excess of $100 billion.

Do we have an update on what that number is, quickly?

Secretary KERRY. It is below the $50 billion.

Senator PERDUE. Do we have any intelligence on how they are using it to date?

Secretary KERRY. We can talk about that in a classified setting.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

The next question is, General Breedlove in Munich just last week described the refugee situation, the migrant situation in Europe, as the refugees being weaponized. I know you were there, and I know you commented on that. I would love to get your comments, though, relative to defense spending in Europe as well under 2 percent. I think for a generation, Europe has looked to the United States to be the big brother. And now we see Putin seeing that underspending in the military.

Our spending right now is about 3 percent of our GDP. It is about 100 basis points less than our 30-year average or, in today's terms, about $200 billion. I am not suggesting that we need to spend $200 billion more.

But I would like to know what the State Department and your strategy is, the administration strategy is, to deal with Putin, in

light of these growing dangers from this immigration issue in Europe, particularly in the very susceptible states of Eastern Europe that used to be satellites of the Soviet Union all the way up through the Baltics. But starting in Greece and go up the refugee pipeline, these are very vulnerable states right now.

What is our strategy to offset Putin and deal with the growing threat to these very fragile governments?

Secretary KERRY. Our strategy is to support them to a much greater degree. We have the NATO assurance program that is in place. We have put very significant effort into larger numbers of rotating training and troops and equipment in the region.

In addition, as I mentioned in my opening statement, I think our expenditure last year was about $700 million or something. We are taking it up to $3.4 billion or $3.5 billion in assistance to the frontline states, in order to make it very, very clear that we are there, and to support Ukraine, in addition to that. It is a very significant amount. It is about $1.6 billion, I think it is.

So we are making it very clear that we are there to help.

Now, the weaponization issue is a serious one. I think we have seen the dial get turned up and turned out, I might add, not only by Russia. So, again, in a classified session, I would be happy to talk about that a little bit.

But I think it is imperative for us, as I said earlier, to be prepared to do more with respect to helping Europe be able to withstand this onslaught. You really cannot overstate the impact politically of the potential of another million refugees.

Senator PERDUE. Do you think Europe can take another million?

Secretary KERRY. No. I think it is not doable. I think that would have profoundly negative, dramatic——

Senator PERDUE. I know you also heard people in Munich just last week talk about the growing refugee crisis from the sub-Saharan area as well, and the crisis in Egypt right now.

Secretary KERRY. Well, 50 percent of the people going in are not from Syria. They are coming from Bangladesh. They are coming from Pakistan, Afghanistan. They are coming from Africa. So it is a major challenge to the very nature of the European Union.

Senator PERDUE. Some of us visited Serbia, and about 60 percent coming in through that pipeline are male, young male under 35, and only about 17 percent women, and the balance, 20 percent or so, were children. A good number of those were from Afghanistan, coming through the Greece and Macedonia pipeline.

Secretary KERRY. Right.

Senator PERDUE. Let me ask one other question. I am about out of time, but I would like to go back to North Korea.

Director of National Intelligence Clapper just this year commented that, and I will quote this, "Pyongyang's export of ballistic missiles and associated materials to several countries, including Iran and Syria, and its assistance to Syrian construction of a nuclear reactor, illustrate North Korea's willingness to proliferate dangerous technology."

We know that, in 2006, 2009, 2013, Iranian officials reportedly participated and were there during those nuclear tests.

Do you have anything you can tell us about what the State Department is doing and the administration is doing to monitor that

cooperation, and any potential violations of the JCPOA in terms of nuclear cooperation between those two countries?

Secretary KERRY. Yes. At this point in time, we do not assess that there is a violation. But we have in place restrictions under the U.N. Security Council resolutions to be able to act, if there are.

Director Clapper is on target, and he is accurate. We agree with that assessment, and we are working very closely to address that.

I think we are on the verge of having an agreement, hopefully, with China. In fact, I am meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister this afternoon. We are very hopeful. We know we have made progress in the negotiations in New York in coming up with a substantial and improved U.N. Security Council resolution with respect to what we will do as a result of these activities.

So we are taking both national steps and multilateral steps. We have entered conversations with South Korea on the THAAD missile deployment, THAAD defensive system deployment. And we obviously have other options available to us.

But this does not interfere with the JCPOA. It is separate from it. But we are nevertheless going to take these actions.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Udall?

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Kerry, let me echo what others have said about your excellent service around the world, and all you are doing to try to bring peace to many of these difficult regions.

I am glad you mentioned Roberta Jacobson in your opening. I think other Senators have mentioned her here. I have worked with her extensively. I think she is a very capable career State Department person. As you said, she does not make the policy about Cuba, so if you are objecting to the policy, it does not make any sense to hold up her nomination. I went down last week to the Senate floor to offer her name in consent, and it was objected to.

I can just tell you, she is nominated for Mexico, to be Ambassador to Mexico. This has a real impact on my State. The State of New Mexico borders with Mexico. We have dramatic trade that is going on, in the last 15 years. It started at about $7.5 million. Now it is up to about $1.2 billion. We have all sorts of cooperative kinds of things we work with Mexico on at the State level.

So I am just wondering, from your perspective, what is the impact of not having an ambassador to Mexico and recognizing that, Secretary Kerry, this has been vacant for 6 months. This is one of our very, very strong trading partners. Could you speak to that?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, thank you. And thank you for your support of that effort.

Look, everybody here knows you all interact with our ambassadors when you go over to these other countries. They spend a lifetime in service to our country, gaining skills over 20 and 30 years, and there is a reason we send them to the countries we send them to. It is because they are particularly suited to helping us advance America's interests, to build a relationship, to help to explain our values and choices.

But in this world right now, particularly, notwithstanding instant communication, and email, and the way in which we can communicate directly Foreign Minister to Foreign Minister, having an ambassador on the ground who builds relationships, who knows the people in the government, who understands their difficulties, who has a sense of the politics of that particular country, helps us to be able to get our policy implemented.

Here we are. We just had a North American security dialogue in Canada the other day, with the Foreign Minister of Mexico, the Foreign Minister of Canada, and myself. We have a huge North American interest. We have energy challenges. We have border challenges. We have narcotics trafficking. We have violence. We have the challenge of Mexico's help to help us prevent the flow of those children coming out of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, coming up through Mexico into the United States last year, and so forth. I mean, you can run a long list. Counterterrorism.

The need we have on a daily basis to have our Nation properly represented by an ambassador is absolutely critical.

We are just hurting ourselves, and we make ourselves look silly, frankly.

And we insult the country that does not get the person. They are sitting there saying, what is this? Punishment for something we did or did not do? And they do not sort of understand this process.

So I spent years and years up here, as you all know. We usually got to the point where we could have a vote. Not one Senator or two Senators or rolling holds between three Senators preventing the country from doing what the country needs to do.

I would hope that we just have a vote, and let democracy decide whether or not the Senate will say that Roberta Jacobson should go to Mexico and help us with all these issues.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I would applaud Senator Corker. He has tried to move these nominees forward. What has ended up happening is they get bogged down on the floor.

I would like to shift to another area that you just mentioned, because it is an area that we also work with Mexico on, and that is the vexing and problematic situation in Central America.

This is having an impact on my State of New Mexico, because we have many unaccompanied minors who are staying at Holloman Air Force Base. The real central question here is, with these three countries in Central America—you have drug-fueled violence, you have corrupt governments, you have very weak governments—how are we going to move ourselves into a better situation so that migration does not happen? That is what I am very concerned about.

We, in this budget deal, as you are very aware, helped significantly in terms of State Department funding for Central America and for these three countries.

So I would like you to discuss any progress that has been made to date with respect to implementing the U.S. strategy for engagement in Central America. Has there been any change in migration patterns that could be attributed to this effort, which we are undertaking? Would the funding requested for 2017 be used differently from previously appropriated funds for the region? And how long

do you think we are going to have to work on this to really make an impact?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are going to have to work for a fair number of years, Senator. As you recall, we just were able to celebrate 15 years of Plan Colombia.

I remember in this room when we passed Plan Colombia, $1 billion, and a lot of people were wondering, for one country, over a 10-year period, what that was going to do. I think it saved the country, together with the country's commitment itself and its leaders to try to stand up to the narcotraffickers who back then were destroying the nation.

Today, Colombia is one of the strongest countries in all of Latin America, and doing an amazing job, in many, many respects.

So these investments are critical. That is what the administration has decided to do and is doing with respect to a number of countries, not just El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, but also Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama. We are working with all of them to try to address the causes of these folks sending their kids into danger and trying to come into the United States.

It has to do violence, violence against young people. It has to do with narcotics trafficking. It has to do with lack of opportunity, education, health, and other ingredients.

So we have found that what really does make a difference is to help these countries to be able to help themselves, and that helps us. So we are engaged in a major effort to try to professionalize the law enforcement, to reduce the illicit trafficking, to reduce the smuggling, the transnational organized crime, the gangs.

I think we have $750 million we have asked for. It is a down payment on the full $1 billion-plus we want to put into this. And $359 million of that is for bilateral assistance, and $390 million is regional assistance for the things that I just talked about.

I am convinced, if we follow through on that, this is going to reduce the numbers of people trying to come to the United States, cross the border. And it will significantly, in the long term, strengthen those countries and our relationships with them.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Paul?

Senator PAUL. Thank you for your testimony.

I continue to believe that one of the greatest threats our country faces is the accumulation of debt. We borrow about $1 million a minute. We have given away over $300 billion in foreign aid over the last 10 years. During those 10 years, we have accumulated over $10 trillion in debt.

Now, some would say, well, it is only 1 percent of the budget. It is not a big deal. Actually, if you cut 1 percent of the budget each year over about a 5 year-period, you actually balance your budget within 5 years, so the savings does add up.

The other thing I think in thinking about this is that most of us give privately to charities or to our church. And most of us would think it would be absurd to go to the bank and borrow money to give to your church. You give out of your surplus or out of your earnings, but you do not give out of borrowed money.

I think it is equally absurd for a country to borrow money from China to send to Pakistan. It sort of defies any common sense.

The other argument, though, is whether or not it actually works, whether the money, if you say, "Gosh, it is so valuable. We borrowed this money and we are going further into debt, but it works." But there is quite a bit of evidence that maybe it does not work.

We plowed $1 trillion into Iraq, and Iraq has treated their liberation that we granted them with falling into the arms of Iran. You could make the argument they are closer allies with Iran than they are with us. They do not seem to do what we ask them to do with regard to making their army more national and less sectarian. They brought some of the Sunni uprising upon themselves, against our wishes.

In Egypt over the last 10 years, we have given them $60 billion. Some estimate as much as half of that was stolen by the Mubarak family. Even liberal institutions such as the New York Times have reported as much as 50 percent to 70 percent of foreign aid is stolen.

Chairman Corker has mentioned the duplicitous nature of Pakistan, who I think at best can be described as a frenemy, sometimes friend, sometimes enemy, but really "duplicitous" is probably the best way to put it. We have given them $15 billion over the last 10 years.

I do not think I will convince you, but I think the American people are convinced, that we do not have the money to be sending money all around the world when our infrastructure here is falling down, our country is struggling. We just simply do not have the money, and it makes no sense to borrow it.

I do not think I will convince you on any of those points, so I would rather ask you a specific question about Syria.

Do you think it would make any difference if, instead of demanding as a precondition Assad leaving, the demand were something more like an internationally monitored election within a certain period of time? Is that something that has already been offered up as a possibility? And what is your best guess as to whether Russia or Syria might treat that as more of a possibility of a starting point, if it were an election at some sort of predetermined date?

Secretary KERRY. Senator, thanks for your comment on the general issue of aid. I would like to come back to it, just for a moment, but let me answer your specific question.

Russia and Iran have accepted the idea of an internationally monitored, highest standard election in which even the diaspora can vote. So they are already there. That is, in fact, part of the laydown in the United Nations Security Council and in the agreement.

The problem is that the opposition will not accept the idea of Assad running in an election, because they just do not have confidence it will——

Senator PAUL. Can I just make one quick interjection?

The opposition is going to have to accept something. With Russia's backing, Assad is not going anywhere. He has the upper hand now.

So we are the ones supplying the opposition. We need to tell them they are going to have to accept something.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we will see. A negotiated settlement of a war requires compromise by everybody. The opposition has already compromised in significant ways to come to the table.

But if you cannot end the war with Assad running, is it really worth destroying an entire country and region over one man who simply thinks his being there is more important than anything else? The question is whether or not, over the course of this process, people will come to their senses and understand—I mean, four words, could end this war. "I will not run." You could immediately move to resolve all of the other issues in a very significant way.

So I think the opposition and everybody believes Assad cannot unite the country. You cannot end the war. I said this earlier——

Senator PAUL. I know, but do you not think the opposition's position has greatly weakened over the last year, and they really do not have the strength? They are one of 1,500 groups. The opposition we support will not exist without our support, basically. They are being overrun as we speak in the areas north of Aleppo.

Secretary KERRY. The opposition has fought fiercely, and they continue to fight. And they continue to push back against the odds of aircraft bombing them, and so forth.

I think that President Putin has to understand what everybody in the region understands, which is that this war cannot end if Russia wants to sit there and fight the jihadis. That can be, obviously, their choice. I do not think that is what they want to do.

Senator PAUL. But I think, if you were to think about it, the whole disaster of this war and the mass migration and the killing and all that has gone on, if you could accept the end of the war with an election in a year and Assad might or might not run in the year, that to me is a victory to end the war.

I mean, sure, he is a terrible guy, but the Middle East is full of them, you know? Half the countries over there have despots, you know? So the thing is that I do not have any love lost for him, but there are also 2 million Christians that would choose Assad over the opposition probably, you know?

So the thing is that I think if you could negotiate something—negotiating is giving. If our position and the rest of the world's position is that Assad has to go, you have seen where it is going. It is not going anywhere.

Secretary KERRY. The United States cannot impose on people who have lived there under these bonds and starvation and torture. You cannot impose on them the notion that they have to live with the guy who did all these things to them. That is the fight.

We do not have the ability, nor should we, to impose it on them. This has to be a Syrian-resolved process.

Senator PAUL. But they only exist with our support.

Secretary KERRY. I do not think so. I think that they would exist otherwise. They exist to greater degree, but we did not create them out of whole cloth. This revolution in Syria began when Assad attacked young kids who went out into the square to demonstrate for jobs and for a future. When their parents went out, he attacked them. That was the beginning of this, and everybody knows it.

So we are where we are, and we have to try to find it.

Let me come back just to the point you made. You know, we would not disagree on everything you said, because there are

places where money has been stolen. There are places where it has not been well-spent. Our job is, obviously, always to find out why that has happened and to prevent it from ever happening again.

But all in all, if you look at the vast majority of countries that we are engaged with, and the nature of the world today, Senator, I just have to tell you that if we were not doing the development work we are doing, if we were not helping kids to get educated, if we were not providing some support for the development of health care capacity, apart from the humanitarian notion of that, there is enormous developmental return on that investment.

For the United States, I am convinced more than ever—I have seen this now for the 3-years-plus I have been Secretary—it makes a difference, a huge difference to the standards of behavior, to the values that those people adopt, to the willingness of countries to join together to fight Ebola, to deal with AIDS, to fight——

Senator PAUL. I guess you could also make the argument that our support for someone like Mubarak leads to a reaction of anti-Americanism. When they see teargas shells made in Pennsylvania that we buy that he suppresses his crowds with, you can see that the reaction is not always a pleasant one for America.

Secretary KERRY. That is correct, and there have always been imbalances and difficulties in some of the choices that we have made. I do not disagree with you about Iraq. There are a lot of problems in Iraq.

But right now, we have a challenge, which is to try to save Iraq and help Iraq save itself from Daesh. And it is in everybody's interest. Every country in the region wants to destroy Daesh. So we need to do that.

I think there are a lot of ways. We are still the richest country in the world. We still have the strongest economy in the world, and we will for some years to come, hopefully forever, but, certainly, as we see a rising China, there is a time when automatically, by virtue of size and people, its economy will be larger. Whether it is stronger is a different question.

But I would say to you that we have a huge imperative here to remain deeply engaged, because if we do not, there are too many young people out there, too many countries with a population under the age of 30 to 35 where you have 60 percent and 70 percent of the country under that age, and if they do not get educated and if they do not get job opportunities in this world in which everybody is connected and knows what everybody has and does not have, then I fear the evil that will fill their heads and the way in which they could get co-opted into enterprises and efforts that are very, very dangerous for all of us.

So we all have a responsibility here to see that and try to do something about it, because that is a national security threat to the United States of America, as well as to all of our friends and allies.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy, is there a timer on your side?

Senator MURPHY. I do not know.

The CHAIRMAN. If the former chairman would help the current chairman, when it gets toward the end of the time, have less expansive answers.

Secretary KERRY. I would be delighted, because I have another meeting.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy, thank you.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will try to do my part as well.

Just quickly, one follow-up on this analogy that Senator Paul was making, regarding how a family may not borrow money in order to make a charitable contribution to their church. I think for a lot of us that is not what we view these investments in foreign aid. We view them as integral to our national security policy as the investments we are making in the submarines and jet engines and helicopters that we produce in Connecticut. So this is not something that we are doing out of goodwill. This is part and parcel of a broader national security strategy.

Second, the overview that you began with, the U.S. and the State Department engaged in more places in the world than ever before, squares with the reality that a lot of people believe exists, which is a world that is more chaotic than ever before. The truth of the matter is, as you have pointed out, the number of people across the world who are dying from acts of violence, who are dying as a result of war, is actually declining and has been declining for a long time.

It speaks to our ability to find ways out of conflicts other than war, something we have not been so good at in the past that we are much better at today. So I just say that as a means of congratulating you on a number of seminal diplomatic achievements that are important in and of themselves, the text in the agreements, whether it be the Iran nuclear agreement, the climate change agreement, or the ceasefire. But they also remind people all around the world of the gains that the been achieved, the lives that have been saved, because we figured out over time that, as important as it is to have a strong military, it is much more important to take chances, to take risks on diplomacy. More of them pan out than do not pan out, which brings me to a question.

You have, in this budget, a near doubling of funding for CVE, for countering violent extremism. That is a smart investment. I know you would want to spend more, if you could, because we are cutting off the roots of extremism before it gets to the branches. A smart strategy.

But here is my worry. My worry is that the impact of these funding increases are going to be blotted out by the advantage that accrues to extremist groups by virtue of this widening proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the region and, certainly, playing out, to an extent, in Syria. But I want to ask you about our policy in Yemen today.

There is a BBC story today that says, "Yemen conflict: Al Qaeda joins coalition battle for Taiz." The underlying analysis is that, increasingly, there is some pretty deep integration between elements of Al Qaeda and elements of the coalition, a coalition that does include the United States, not on the ground, but in terms of support that we have given for the Saudi air campaign.

And as I read the conflict in Yemen, I have a hard time figuring out what the U.S. national security interests are, given the fact that the result of the coalition campaign has been to kill a lot of civilians, has been to sow the seeds of humanitarian crisis, and to create space for these groups, these very extremist groups that we

claim to be our priority in the region, to grow, whether it be ISIS or Al Qaeda in Yemen.

So I just wanted to ask about the future of the U.S. involvement on the Saudi side of this conflict in Yemen, and just talk to us about why we should continue to fund munition requests from the Saudi Government that end up in that fight?

Secretary KERRY. Senator, a good question. The answer is very straightforward. The Saudis are part of our coalition, part of our GCC link to pushing back against nefarious activities in the region. And the Saudis were threatened very, very directly by the combination of the Houthi and some Iranian input. As a result, they felt they had to defend themselves, and we supported their right to do that.

Now, we are urging them very strongly to get to the table and to negotiate a resolution to this. We believe that there is a certain ripeness to that, and it would be better for everybody if we were able to achieve that.

Now, there are some complications with it, obviously. You have former President Saleh, who has made life difficult in this whole process. We are working with the Omanis, the Saudis, and with the Emiratis, and other friends in the region, to try to see if we can now get back to the table. The U.N. is engaged, as you know. There are supposed to be talks that will take place shortly. Our hope is that this can end.

A lot of civilians have, unfortunately, been impacted, as a consequence of what has been going on.

I think the heart of the matter is that we are urging diplomacy at this moment to try to see if we can bring this to a close. I think it would be in everybody's interest if that were to happen. It would also provide a capacity to be able to focus more on Daesh and get the forces that are there that have been distracted from the Daesh effort realigned and refocused.

Senator MURPHY. I think at the root of your answer is that the alliance between the United States and Saudi Arabia requires us to come to their aid when they feel threatened. I guess my pitch is that I hope that that would not be the default proposition, if this proxy war widens in the region. I think it, frankly, provides incentive and impotence for the proxy war to widen, if the Saudis know that wherever they go, the U.S. is very close behind. And the more this proxy war cedes, the more room there is for these groups to grow.

Secretary KERRY. There is a distinction between a proxy war, as you describe it, and the threat that the Saudis faced as a consequence of what was happening right in their neighborhood, right on their border, and across their border.

So we chose to support that. We would not be supporting a longer sort of proxy kind of effort. That is one of the reasons why I say to you we think it is important now to get to the table and negotiate.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso?

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

Mr. Secretary, it is nice to see you again.

The American people are facing significant issues here at home, a tight budgetary environment. And you are requesting $1.3 billion for the Global Climate Change Initiative.

As legislators, we are constantly searching to find the resources to help many people around the country, communities who are dealing with unemployment, with aging water systems, with poor roads, substandard hospitals, failing schools. So how do we talk to people at home and say that the real priority of the administration is sending 1.3 billion taxpayer dollars overseas to international bureaucrats in the name of climate change, rather than dealing with these issues at home?

Secretary KERRY. Very simple answer. The American people are extremely practical, enormous common sense about things that affect them. You pick up the newspaper today, and you read about the flooding that people are suffering directly as a result of climate change. That flooding costs those taxpayers money.

We spent billions of dollars last year. It was $8 billion, I think, in reaction to storms in the United States, which are of greater intensity as a result, according to the scientists, of the impacts of climate change. We are actually——

Senator BARRASSO. So Barbara Boxer, a member of this committee, would agree with that. But I am saying, why are we not spending the money here? She says climate change is an issue related to wildfire and drought, storms. So it is $1.3 billion——

Secretary KERRY. We are spending some of it here.

Senator BARRASSO. The question is, why are we not spending it here rather than sending it overseas to bureaucrats?

Secretary KERRY. Because there are 20 major nations in the world that account for the vast majority—the majority, put it that way, because less-developed countries are now growing in their emissions as a result of their own developing practices.

But the result is, if we do not help some of these countries that have no money, that are burning coal without any kind of restraint on how they burn it, we, regrettably, are also going to suffer. So it is in our self-interest to help these countries to make better choices about what they their energy future is going to be.

It also, by the way, opens up jobs for Americans, because we are the most advanced, with respect to most of those energy technologies. So we could be actually creating more jobs for Americans, as a result of getting countries to invest more thoughtfully in their energy future.

But they cannot afford to do it on their own. So what we are doing is actually helping people to make a transition to a clean-energy future, which is good for everybody.

There will be $50 trillion, Senator, spent on the whole gamut of energy choices in the next 20 to 30 years. Those are jobs for people all over the world. This is going to be the single biggest market the world has ever seen.

So I think this is an extremely smart investment in our security, as well as in our economy. And I think when Americans are presented that choice, Americans are—in fact, they already are—overwhelmingly in support of our doing something about climate change.

Senator BARRASSO. I want to switch to Syria.

During your confirmation hearing in January 2013, you were asked about the situation in Syria. You stated, every day that goes by, it gets worse.

I specifically asked you about Putin's support of Assad in Syria. At the time of your confirmation hearing, there were more than 60,000 individuals estimated to have been killed in the crisis in Syria. The estimate this past weekend is that it is now up to 470,000 Syrians killed in the crisis in Syria. So that is since the day of your confirmation hearings to now. The numbers were in The Economist and international surveys on this. That is about 300 more killed every day over the last 3 years.

So Russia continues to support the Assad regime. It is now bombing civilians and opposition groups in Syria. Putin is attempting to change the battlefield dynamic to bolster the Assad regime, to weaken the opposition, in terms of anything related to peace. His support of the Assad regime includes bombing civilians, bombing opposition groups.

The current edition of The Economist article is entitled, "Vladimir Putin's war in Syria: Why would he stop now?" It says, both of Aleppo's main hospitals were systematically destroyed by Russian airstrikes last year. Nobody should be surprised that, despite signing the agreement, Russia would continue its airstrikes against those it regards as terrorists, which they then point out is an elastic term for President Putin.

Today's New York Times editorial, "Relying Again on an Unreliable Mr. Putin." It says with Putin, a ceasefire to him is a tactic, even a smokescreen, not a goal. The Economist says the only puzzle is what John Kerry, America's Secretary of State, thought he could achieve through his agreement with Mr. Lavrov.

So, I would say, after decimating opponents of the Assad regime with its bombing, Russia has now made a joint statement with the U.S. that it will agree to a cessation of hostilities February 27.

To me, the only thing Russia has been consistent with is failing to keep its word.

Specifically, what consequences do you support imposing upon Russia if it violates the ceasefire agreement and it is just a smokescreen or some kind of charade?

Secretary KERRY. Well, in answer to the question, what does John Kerry think he could achieve?

Senator BARRASSO. And the consequences for Russia, if they do violate.

Secretary KERRY. Right.

My job, the job of everybody in the State Department, is to try to—war is the absence or failure of diplomacy. And our job is to try to see if there is a way to bring this to an end. I am not sitting here naively vouching for the fact that this is going to work. But the alternative is that I sit in my office and I go visit a bunch of countries while the war rages on, and nobody makes an effort to stop it. That is the alternative.

You would be criticizing me if I was doing that. You would be saying, why are you not doing something to end the war? Why is there not diplomacy to try to find a solution?

Now, it is a well-known fact that I have also advocated for strong efforts to support the opposition, strong efforts to make sure we

have the leverage that we need to be able to achieve something. And there is a significant discussion taking place now about plan B in the event that we do not succeed at the table.

So, look, put yourself in President Putin's shoes. Yes, he can drop bombs, and he can move the battlefield, and he has changed it for Assad. No question about it. He has had a better impact for Assad. But is that going to end the war? The answer is no.

I think President Putin is smart enough to understand that if he just sits there over a period of time, those people who have supported the opposition will get different weapons, more weapons, and they will continue this fight. And you can wind up with a Syria that is utterly destroyed without a capacity to put it back together again, which we have today.

That has happened before. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote about Carthage, "They make a desert and call it peace."

So you can make a desert in the desert and call it what you want. But I am telling you, this war will not end with Assad there. It just will not end as long as Assad is there.

So President Putin can bring in more. He can start additional bombing. But I assure you that, because of the sectarian nature of this, if he thinks he is going to be better off fighting on behalf of a dictator who has driven most of his people out of the country or into refugee status, killed a bunch of them, if he thinks he is going to be better off supporting Hezbollah and the IRGC and Iran and Assad against an increasingly sectarian divide that is defined by Shia and Sunni, that is a very, very dangerous——

Senator BARRASSO. I am over my time, Mr. Secretary, but it does seem that there are no consequences for Putin's violation of a ceasefire. I have not heard one from you with regard to this administration.

Secretary KERRY. Well, there are a number of things being talked about right now. I do not think it is the moment to be throwing—I think it is out there, and people know what they are. But I think this is a moment to try to see whether or not we can make this work, not to find ways to preordain its failure and start talking about all the downsides of what we are going to do afterward.

Senator BARRASSO. U.N. Ambassador Samantha Powers this past year talked about all of the failures of Russia to—all the violations of Russia with ceasefires in Ukraine. It just seems we are seeing this picture again.

Secretary KERRY. Well, let us see if we do, and then let us see what plan B is or is not, if that is what it takes.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Before going to Senator Kaine, I have had terse words with the Secretary in public before, and it is not my job, certainly, today to defend him. I think ever since August, September 2013, when we did not take the actions that this committee authorized against Syria, Russia and others have known we are not going to do those things to cause there to be a price.

I think that the Secretary is negotiating in a situation where there is no plan B. Russia knows there will be no plan B.

So in spite of his energetic efforts, unless the other side knows that there will be consequences—we know there are not going to

be under this President. Secretary Kerry probably knows there are not going to be. And Russia knows that there are not going to be any consequences. And that is what makes it difficult, I think.

Secretary KERRY. That would be, actually, Senator—I appreciate, honestly, I appreciate your comments. But it would be a mistake for anybody to calculate that President Obama is not going to decide that, if this does not work, there are not another set of options. I just do not buy that.

I think anybody who presumes that is misjudging this President and his record of making tough decisions and doing what is necessary. The President's first choice is to try to see if this can be resolved diplomatically. It is my first choice. It is the first choice of the security team. But there are plenty of people who are thinking about, okay, if it does not work, then what, including the President of the United States who has the responsibility to make that choice.

But anybody who thinks that there is impunity for just violating this and going forward is making a grave mistake, in my judgment.

The CHAIRMAN. We have been thinking about it for 2.5 years.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I am way late for a meeting I was supposed to be at. I am going to save my questions for the Budget Committee hearing that we are going to have in subcommittee next week.

Let me just offer a statement to you, Mr. Secretary.

As a member of this committee, but really just as a citizen, we owe you a huge debt of thanks.

As a Senator, you have played a major part in unfreezing three frozen relationships the United States has had bilaterally.

As a Senator, working with Senator McCain, you unfroze a very painful relationship between the United States and Vietnam. There was controversy associated with that, and it could have failed. There was no guarantee it would work, but you played a major leadership role in doing that.

Now, as Secretary of State, you played a major leadership role in taking two other relationships the United States has had that have been frozen, with Iran and Cuba, and putting them into a new chapter. Again, there is no guarantee that diplomacy works, but I think our experience shows that there is a guarantee that the lack of engagement fails.

It will be a long time before we will know the outcome of Cuba and Iran and the work that you have done diplomatically, just like it took a number of years for us to realize a path forward with Vietnam, where they are now begging us to be their security partner, begging us to be their trade partner. That was not obvious when you did what you did back in the early 1990s, yet that has been a path of progress, where even though we saw challenges with Vietnam, no one wants to go backward and go back to frozen relationship.

I am not a historian, but if I think about what I know of American diplomacy, there have been achievements. Roosevelt brokering the end of the Russo-Japanese War, that was an achievement. Truman and Marshall and the Marshall Plan, that was an achieve-

ment. The Nixon opening to China, that was an achievement. The Northern Ireland Accords, that was an achievement.

But I think the work that you have done on these three very tough, historically problematic and challenging relationships, working with Senator McCain and others, with the strong encouragement of President Obama, who cares about diplomacy, thanks goodness, I think it will rank in the very top ranks of American diplomatic achievements.

Again, no guarantees of success, but the absence of diplomatic effort is almost a guarantee of failure. I just want to thank you for that.

I will save my budget questions for next week.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you. I do not have as broad of a perspective to provide thanks to you as Senator Kaine did, but I, certainly, appreciate your tireless efforts to promote American values around the world.

I actually want to bring it back to a minute matter, as opposed to broad strategy. I think you have been very supportive of the special immigrant visa program, which has been designed to help those people who helped us on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I think you may be aware that Senator McCain and Senator Reed from the Armed Services Committee and I sent you and Secretary Johnson a letter 2 weeks ago, asking you to reconsider the department's initial interpretation of the language from last year's defense authorization bill, because I believe the department's initial reading of that language was inconsistent with what our intent was when we passed that bill, that we have disqualified many Afghans applicants who really worked to serve this country and should not be disqualified because they face serious threats if they are disqualified.

So I do not know if you have any update on where the department is on this, but I would urge you to take a hard look and reconsider the initial interpretation.

Secretary KERRY. Well, we could not agree with you more, Senator. And thank you for your ongoing concern about this.

We share that concern. We do not want people who had already received chief of mission approval before September of last year to suddenly be caught up in this change inadvertently. That would be grossly unfair and dangerous, obviously.

So two things. One, we are reviewing it in the legal department, and we are trying to see whether or not in fact the law can be interpreted in a way that we can just make it happen appropriately. If that did not work or does not work, then we are going to work with you very clearly to quickly legislate a change that remedies this inadvertent problem.

But I agree with you. We just do not want people treated that way. And it would be a gross miscarriage of justice, if that happened.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I appreciate that.

To stay on the subject of immigration, I think one of the most horrible outcomes of the civil war in Syria has been the refugee cri-

sis that has been created by that, and the implications not just for Syria, for the Middle East, for so many of our allies, for Europe.

And they have highlighted a growing refugee crisis around the world that is getting worse, not getting better. I was surprised to see that the budget reduces the migration and refugee assistance, and the international disaster assistance accounts, in the budget. Given the crisis that we are facing, it is hard for me to understand the rationale for that, so can you speak to that?

Secretary KERRY. I think we feel as if we have, first of all, the money in the pipeline. But, secondly, I think we do not have a way of predicting exactly what the demand is going to be. We just committed another $925 million to deal directly with the refugee crisis. I think $600 million and some directly for aid, and then the difference would be for education and relocation, and so forth.

But our sense is that, if we do not have enough, we are obviously going to have to come back and discuss that with you. But I think in the OCO, we have an ability to have some flexibility.

Senator SHAHEEN. Since you mentioned it——

Secretary KERRY. That is one of the reasons it is a double-edged sword. We do not like OCO, because it got in the way of the budget baseline, and I agree with that. On the other hand, it gives us some flexibility to be able to respond to these kinds of crises. And there have been more of them, which is why OCO has sort of evolved the way it has.

Senator SHAHEEN. And I appreciate that. But put me in the column with Senators Cardin and Corker that says that is not the way we ought to be solving our budget problems.

Let me go to the EU because I mentioned the threat that has been posed by the Syrian refugees to the EU. It is obviously facing probably more threats than at any time since World War II, given Russian aggression in Ukraine, and other countries on the eastern border of the EU, given the threat from further terrorist attacks, the potential exit of the U.K. from the European Union.

So can you talk a little bit about how we are trying to respond to some of those challenges, and how this budget strengthens our ability to do that, and what more we can do to support Europe?

Secretary KERRY. Well, the first thing we have done most recently was agree to work with them on the NATO deployment, in order to try to prevent the flow of refugees coming across. We are talking with them now about what further extensions of the European border may or may not be needed in an effort to deal with this. I think the President is even having some discussions about that today.

As I said earlier, we have plussed-up our budget to all of the frontline states. And in many ways, they are frontline with respect to this movement of refugees.

In addition to that, we just pledged the $925 million I talked about in London for the refugees.

But one of the things that has motivated our policy, Senator, has been this notion that we are the world's largest donor. We are at $5.1 billion now, and this thing can keep on going, and we can keep writing a check. But we do not want to. What we would rather do is try to push forward on this other front to see if we cannot get

an end to the flow of refugees by the cessation of hostilities and legitimate diplomatic process.

While I have said again and again here I am not going to vouch for the fact that this will work, we have to put it to the test. We have no alternative but to test this. With all the cynicism and all the doubts that each of us will carry to the table, we have to test it. Then we will know. If people are not serious, then that gives you a whole different set of choices.

But that will have the most profound effect of all on Europe, and it is the one way, really, to deal with the issue in a more lasting and effective way.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. My time is up, and you have been here long enough. But I just want to add, as a postscript, that I support the efforts to counter violent extremism that the State Department has undertaken. I think that is absolutely critical, as we think about how we are going to fight back against terrorism and ISIS and other terrorist groups.

I would hope that we are coordinating with the Department of Homeland Security, which has undertaken a new initiative around countering violent extremism. So I just would hope that, as the State Department is working on this issue, that we are working with Homeland Security to make sure that it is a coordinated effort across government.

Secretary KERRY. Yes. We are working very closely with them, hand in hand.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. I just want to make a comment. I was listening to some of my colleagues comment about U.S. involvement internationally.

When I first came to the Congress, we could not pass a foreign assistance bill. It was just not a popular thing to do. Today, I do not think we have any trouble at all, Mr. Secretary, getting the political support for a $50 billion foreign ops appropriation bill based upon U.S. involvement globally. That is a credit to involving leadership in our country to explain the importance of our power.

We are the only country in the world that has the military might. And I agree with you. President Obama will use that military might when it is needed, but it should be a matter of last resort.

We have universal values. These are not American values; these are universal values that we are willing to get engaged internationally in order to promote. And we have the ability to accomplish some really good things for the world, because we do get involved in those issues.

So I just really wanted to underscore your record, and the Obama administration, and what you have been able to do to advance the national security of America.

We are proud to be your partners here. I think we have had a good relationship, and we have been able to get some things done together. When we work together, we get more done.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. Let me just thank you. I thank you both. I mean, the committee has been just a terrific partner, and we really appreciate it. When we came up on the AUMF, you were there. You have taken the lead. I appreciate the chair and the ranking member's relationship. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Listen, we appreciate your indulgence. You have been here 2.5 hours.

On a bipartisan basis, people have extended their appreciation for your tremendous effort on behalf of our country. I know the details of the budget we will get more into with staff. But we appreciate your appearance today. We appreciate your work on behalf of our country, and I look forward to seeing you in the next setting.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. The meeting is adjourned. If you would answer questions, we are going to leave the record open until the close of business Thursday. We would appreciate it.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION—PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON IAEA'S ROLE IN VERIFYING THE IRAN AGREEMENT[1]

United States Government Accountability Office

GAO

Report to Congressional Requesters

February 2016

NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION

Preliminary Observations on IAEA's Role in Verifying the Iran Agreement

GAO-16-417

[1] Prepared for Congress by the GAO and submitted for the hearing record by Senator Robert Menendez.

GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-16-417, a report to congressional requesters

February 2016

NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION

Preliminary Observations on IAEA's Role in Verifying the Iran Agreement

Why GAO Did This Study

In July 2015, multilateral talks with Iran culminated in an agreement called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), through which Iran committed to limits on its nuclear program in exchange for relief from sanctions put in place by the United States and other nations. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an independent international organization that administers safeguards designed to detect and deter the diversion of nuclear material for non-peaceful purposes, was requested to monitor and verify Iran's adherence to these limits. The U.S. Department of State coordinates the United States' financial and policy relationship with IAEA.

GAO was asked to review the authorities and resources IAEA has to carry out its activities regarding the JCPOA. On the basis of preliminary results of ongoing work that GAO is conducting, this report provides observations on (1) the JCPOA commitments that IAEA has been asked to verify and its authorities to do so, (2) the resources IAEA has identified as necessary to verify the JCPOA, and (3) potential challenges and mitigating actions IAEA and others have identified with regard to verifying the JCPOA. GAO analyzed the JCPOA and key IAEA documents and interviewed current and former IAEA officials, U.S. government officials, national laboratory representatives, and experts from research institutions.

GAO is not making recommendations at this time and expects to issue a final report on this work later this year.

View GAO-16-417. For more information, contact David C. Trimble at (202) 512-3841 or trimbled@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

As outlined in the JCPOA, IAEA was asked to verify Iran's implementation of a range of nuclear-related commitments, and IAEA uses its authorities and conducts additional verification activities to do so, according to IAEA. Iran's commitments include limits on uranium enrichment levels and enriched uranium inventories. GAO's preliminary observations indicate that IAEA plans to verify Iran's implementation of these commitments through a range of activities conducted by its Safeguards Department, such as inspecting Iran's nuclear facilities and analyzing environmental samples. To verify Iran's implementation of its commitments under the JCPOA, IAEA officials told GAO that the agency uses its authorities and conducts additional verification activities agreed to by Iran under the JCPOA, such as monitoring Iran's uranium mines and mills. In addition, under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to provisionally apply the Additional Protocol, an agreement that will expand IAEA's access, including to locations where undeclared materials and activities—those that an IAEA member state is required to, but has not declared under its agreements with IAEA—may be suspected. The JCPOA also includes a mechanism in which participants to the agreement commit to resolve an access request from the agency within 24 days after the request is made.

GAO's preliminary observations indicate that IAEA has identified the resources necessary to verify the nuclear-related commitments in the JCPOA. IAEA has estimated that it needs approximately $10 million per year for 15 years in additional funding above its current safeguards budget for JCPOA verification. In addition, IAEA plans to transfer 18 experienced inspectors to its Iran Task Force from other safeguards divisions and to hire and train additional inspectors. According to IAEA officials, existing safeguards technical resources are sufficient to implement the JCPOA. According to IAEA documents, all of IAEA's JCPOA work through 2016 will be funded through extra-budgetary contributions. IAEA officials said that the agency intends to propose that of the $10 million, approximately $5.7 million for all Additional Protocol activities and inspector costs attributable to the JCPOA be funded through IAEA's regular budget after 2016.

GAO's preliminary observations indicate that IAEA may face potential challenges in monitoring and verifying Iran's implementation of certain nuclear-related commitments in the JCPOA. According to current and former IAEA and U.S. officials and experts, these potential challenges include (1) integrating JCPOA-related funding into its regular budget and managing human resources in the safeguards program, (2) access challenges depending on Iran's cooperation and the untested JCPOA mechanism to resolve access requests, and (3) the inherent challenge of detecting undeclared nuclear materials and activities—such as potential weapons development activities that may not involve nuclear material. According to knowledgeable current and former U.S. government officials, detection of undeclared material and activities in Iran and worldwide is IAEA's greatest challenge. According to IAEA documents, Iran has previously failed to declare activity to IAEA. However, according to a former IAEA official as well as current IAEA and U.S. government officials GAO interviewed, IAEA has improved its capabilities in detecting undeclared activity, such as by adapting its inspector training program.

Contents

Letter		1
	Background	4
	IAEA Uses Its Authorities to Carry out Its Verification Activities under the JCPOA	6
	IAEA Has Identified the Financial, Human, and Technical Resources Necessary to Verify the Nuclear-Related Commitments in the JCPOA	10
	Verifying the JCPOA's Nuclear-Related Commitments May Present Potential Challenges to IAEA's Safeguards Efforts	12
	Agency Comments	17
Appendix I	Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	19
Appendix II	GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments	22
Table		
	Table 1: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Estimates for Its Annual Funding Requirements for Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Activities	11

Abbreviations

CSA	Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement
DOE	Department of Energy
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
INFCIRC	Information circular
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
NNSA	National Nuclear Security Administration
NPT	Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons
PMD	Possible Military Dimensions
TC	Technical Cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UN	United Nations

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GAO U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
441 G St. N.W.
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February 12, 2016

The Honorable Mark Kirk
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security and International Trade and Finance
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate

Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear program have threatened regional and global security and presented significant challenges to the United States. The United States and other nations imposed sanctions on Iran that have adversely affected the Iranian economy.[1] In July 2015, multilateral talks with Iran culminated in an agreement—the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—in which the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia, and China, with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, agreed to reciprocal commitments with Iran.[2] These commitments include providing sanctions relief if Iran addressed those countries' concerns about its nuclear program. The JCPOA details, among other things, Iran's commitments related to its nuclear facilities, equipment, materials, and

[1]For a description of the effects of sanctions on Iran, see GAO, *Iran: U.S. and International Sanctions Have Adversely Affected the Iranian Economy*, GAO-13-326 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 25, 2013).

[2]In November 2013, these multilateral talks resulted in the interim Joint Plan of Action, an initial understanding with Iran to explicitly block near-term Iranian pathways to a nuclear weapon and allow further talks to reach a long-term comprehensive solution. The participants to the agreement in addition to Iran are collectively referred to as the E3+3 (i.e., France, Germany, and the United Kingdom plus China, Russia, and the United States).

activities. The United Nations Security Council endorsed the JCPOA and requested that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitor and verify these commitments.[3] IAEA—an independent international organization based in Vienna, Austria, and affiliated with the United Nations—has the dual mission of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and verifying that nuclear technologies and materials intended for peaceful purposes are not diverted to weapons development efforts.

The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which came into force in 1970, requires non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the treaty—countries, such as Iran, that had not manufactured and detonated a nuclear device before January 1, 1967—to agree not to acquire nuclear weapons and to subject all nuclear material used in peaceful activities to IAEA safeguards.[4] IAEA has found Iran to be in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations within the last 15 years.

You asked us to review the authorities and resources IAEA has to carry out its activities to monitor and verify certain nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. In response to that request, we have work ongoing on IAEA's authorities, resources, and potential challenges faced in supporting implementation of the JCPOA. In January 2016, we briefed your staff on the preliminary results of our work, and this report transmits information from that briefing. Specifically, this report provides our preliminary observations on (1) the JCPOA commitments that IAEA has been asked to verify and its authorities to do so; (2) the resources IAEA has identified as necessary to verify the JCPOA; and (3) potential challenges and mitigating actions, if any, IAEA and others have identified with regard to verifying the JCPOA. We will issue a separate report with the final results of our work later this year.

[3]S.C. Res. 2231, U.N. Doc. S/RES/2231 (July 20, 2015).

[4]Under Article II of the NPT, each non-nuclear weapon state party agrees, among other things, not to receive any transfer whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Under Article III of the NPT, each non-nuclear weapon state party agrees, among other things, to accept IAEA safeguards on all source or special fissionable material in all peaceful nuclear activities within the territory of such state, under its jurisdiction, or carried out under its control anywhere.

To identify the nuclear-related commitments in the JCPOA that IAEA has been asked to verify and IAEA's authorities for verifying these commitments, we analyzed the JCPOA, and IAEA documentation concerning the safeguards legal framework, including the Statute of the IAEA (the Statute),[5] information circular (INFCIRC)/153, which provides the basis for a comprehensive safeguards agreement (CSA) that most countries have concluded with IAEA and that covers all of the countries' civilian nuclear activities, and INFCIRC/540, which provides the basis for an Additional Protocol that most countries with a CSA have concluded with IAEA to provide additional information about countries' nuclear and nuclear-related activities. To examine the resources IAEA has identified as necessary to verify the JCPOA, we reviewed IAEA planning and budget documents, such as "The Agency's Programme and Budget 2016–2017," and statements by the IAEA Director General. In addition, to further understand IAEA authorities and resource needs, and to examine potential challenges and mitigating actions IAEA and others have identified with regard to verifying the JCPOA, we interviewed officials of IAEA, the Department of State, and the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA);[6] as well as representatives of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and Brookhaven National Laboratory. We also interviewed 8 former IAEA and 10 former U.S. government and national laboratory officials, and representatives of 10 expert organizations—research institutions and nongovernmental organizations with knowledge in the

[5]The Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, done Oct. 26, 1956, 8 U.S.T. 1093, 276 U.N.T.S. 3 (entered into force July 29, 1957).

[6]NNSA is a separate, semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy, with responsibility for the United States' nuclear weapons and nonproliferation programs, among other things. NNSA conducts its activities at headquarters and at research and development laboratories, production plants, and other facilities. NNSA also provides technical assistance to IAEA's safeguards and nuclear security programs.

areas of nuclear verification, monitoring, and safeguards.[7] Appendix I provides a more detailed discussion of our objectives, scope, and methodology.

Our preliminary observations are based on our ongoing work, which is being conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

IAEA safeguards are a set of technical measures and activities by which IAEA seeks to verify that nuclear material subject to safeguards is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other proscribed purposes. To carry out its safeguards activities, inspectors and analysts in IAEA's Safeguards Department collaborate to verify that the quantities of nuclear material that non-nuclear weapon states have formally declared to the agency are correct and complete. All NPT non-nuclear weapon states are required to have a CSA that covers all of their civilian nuclear activities and serves as the basis for the agency's safeguards activities. Iran's CSA entered into force in May 1974.[8] Most countries with a CSA have also brought into force an Additional Protocol to their CSAs. IAEA developed the Additional Protocol to provide additional information about countries' nuclear and nuclear-related activities as part of its response to the 1991 discovery of a clandestine nuclear weapons program in Iraq. The Additional Protocol, when ratified or otherwise brought into force by a country, requires that

[7]We selected these experts by first identifying organizations that had previously served as sources of IAEA subject matter experts for GAO. To ensure a wide range of viewpoints, we supplemented our initial selection with individuals and organizations identified through a literature search and by recommendations from our initial set of expert organizations. We requested interviews from all the identified experts and suggested contacts and interviewed all who agreed to participate (two experts provided written responses in lieu of in-person interviews). When referring to former U.S. and IAEA officials and expert organizations throughout the report, we use "some" to refer to three members of a group, "several" to refer to four or five members of a group, and "many" to refer to more than five members of a group.

[8]IAEA, "The Text of the Agreement between Iran and the Agency for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons." INFCIRC/214 (Dec. 13, 1974.)

country to provide IAEA with a broader range of information on the country's nuclear and nuclear-related activities. It also gives the agency's inspectors access to an expanded range of declared activities and locations, including buildings at nuclear sites, as well as locations where undeclared activities may be suspected. Undeclared nuclear material and activities are those a state has not declared and placed under safeguards but is required to do so pursuant to its CSA.[9]

In addition to its safeguards program, IAEA's other programs include nuclear safety and security, nuclear energy, nuclear sciences, and technical cooperation. For example, IAEA's technical cooperation program helps member states achieve their sustainable development priorities by furnishing them with relevant nuclear technologies and expertise. IAEA funds its programs primarily through (1) its regular budget, for which all member countries are assessed,[10] and (2) voluntary extra-budgetary cash contributions from certain member countries and other donors to meet critical needs.[11] In 2015, IAEA reported that its regular budget was $375.8 million, of which the nuclear verification program (i.e., safeguards) budget comprised $144.2 million. IAEA has a Board of Governors that provides overall policy direction and oversight for the agency. A Secretariat, headed by the Director General, is responsible for implementing the policies and programs of the IAEA General Conference and the Board of Governors.[12] The U.S. Department of State coordinates the United States' financial and policy relationship with IAEA.

[9]Additionally, for a state that has an Additional Protocol in force, undeclared nuclear material also covers nuclear material which that state has not declared but is required to do so under the Additional Protocol.

[10]Assessed contributions are payments made as part of the obligations that countries undertake as members of the United Nations. The current payment structure for assessed contributions to IAEA is based on the United Nations scale of assessment, adjusted for membership, with a maximum rate (25 percent) and a minimum rate (.001 percent). The scale for IAEA also includes a slight premium to cover the costs of the nuclear safeguards program.

[11]In addition, financing of Technical Cooperation (TC) projects is generally supported through the annual voluntary contributions of member states to IAEA's Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF).

[12]The General Conference is composed of representatives of 167 countries (member states) that contribute to IAEA's budget.

Under the JCPOA, IAEA verification of Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments was a condition to the lifting of specified U.S., European Union, and United Nations nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. These sanctions were lifted on the JCPOA's "Implementation Day" (January 16, 2016), when IAEA verified and reported that Iran had fully implemented its commitments defined in Annex V, paragraph 15, of the JCPOA.[13] In addition, the JCPOA provides for a "Transition Day," when the United States and European Union will take further steps to eliminate nuclear-related sanctions on Iran, either on October 18, 2023, or before if IAEA reaches what it calls a "broader conclusion." A broader conclusion refers to the agency's determination that for a given year, a country has demonstrated that all declared nuclear material within its borders remained in peaceful activities and that there are no indications of diversion of declared nuclear material or of undeclared nuclear activities.

IAEA Uses Its Authorities to Carry out Its Verification Activities under the JCPOA

IAEA has been requested to verify Iran's implementation of a range of nuclear-related commitments, and our preliminary observations indicate that IAEA is using existing authorities to do so. Iran's commitments include limits on, among other things, Iran's enrichment facilities, including numbers of centrifuges (for example, no more than 5,060 of specified centrifuges for 10 years), uranium enrichment levels of no more than 3.67 percent for 15 years, and stocks of enriched uranium of no more than 300 kilograms for 15 years.[14] In addition, Iran agreed to (1) limits on its heavy water inventories;[15] (2) limits on centrifuge

[13]These commitments are specified in Sections 15.1-15.11 of Annex V of the JCPOA. The JCPOA also contains provisions describing the circumstances under which a participant may cease performance of its commitments. These commitments include the provision of sanctions relief. Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council Resolution endorsing the JCPOA details the circumstances under which United Nations Security Council sanctions might be re-imposed.

[14]The JCPOA specifies that Iran will maintain a total enriched uranium stockpile of no more than 300 kilograms of up to 3.67 percent enriched uranium hexafluoride (UF_6) (or the equivalent in different chemical forms) for 15 years. However, the agreement also details cases when certain enriched uranium will not count against the limit. For example, Russian-designed, fabricated and licensed fuel assemblies for use in Russian-supplied reactors in Iran do not count against the 300 kilograms UF_6 stockpile limit.

[15]Heavy water, which contains deuterium (heavy hydrogen), is used in heavy water reactors as a moderator. Heavy water reactors can be efficient at producing plutonium under certain conditions.

manufacturing; and (3) conditions on uranium ore concentrate.[16] Iran also agreed not to engage in spent fuel reprocessing, uranium or plutonium metallurgy, or activities that could contribute to the design and development of a nuclear explosive device. The duration of certain commitments is from 8 (for certain centrifuge restrictions) to 25 years (for monitoring of Iran's uranium ore concentrate). Iran also agreed to fully implement the "Roadmap for Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues" agreed to with IAEA. The Roadmap sets out a process for IAEA to address issues relating to the "possible military dimensions" (PMD) of Iran's nuclear program.[17] IAEA issued a report on the results of its PMD investigation in December 2015,[18] and the Board of Governors subsequently issued a resolution closing its consideration of PMD. State officials noted that the Board, in its resolution, stated that it will be watching closely to verify that Iran fully implements its commitments under the JCPOA and will remain focused going forward on the full implementation of the JCPOA in order to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.

According to officials in IAEA's Office of the Legal Affairs, the agency will draw on existing authorities to verify Iran's implementation of these commitments. For example, using its safeguards authorities, including the CSA, IAEA will verify implementation of most of Iran's nuclear-related commitments largely through a range of traditional safeguards approaches and techniques that it has used in the past, such as inspecting nuclear facilities and conducting nuclear material accountancy to verify quantities of nuclear material declared to the agency and any changes in the quantities over time. For example, to verify non-diversion of nuclear material, IAEA inspectors count items (e.g., containers of

[16]The JCPOA states that Iran will permit IAEA to monitor, through agreed measures that will include containment and surveillance measures, for 25 years, that all uranium ore concentrate produced in Iran or obtained from any other source, is transferred to a uranium conversion facility in Iran. Uranium ore is the product of uranium mining, and uranium ore concentrate is the product of uranium milling. The two steps in the uranium nuclear fuel cycle prior to conversion are mining and milling. IAEA discusses its activities related to uranium ore concentrate as monitoring mines and mills.

[17]In 2002, IAEA became increasingly concerned about the possible existence in Iran of undisclosed nuclear-related activities involving military-related organizations. Information indicated that Iran had carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device.

[18]IAEA, "Final Assessment on Past and Present Outstanding Issues regarding Iran's Nuclear Programme," GOV/2015/68 (Dec. 2, 2015).

uranium or plutonium), measure attributes of these items (e.g., isotopic composition), and compare their findings with records and declared amounts. Other IAEA safeguards activities include environmental sampling,[19] remote monitoring, analysis of commercial satellite imagery, and analysis of open source documents.

Under the JCPOA, IAEA also conducts certain activities agreed to by Iran, such as monitoring of Iran's uranium mines and mills, according to IAEA officials. Such activities include containment and surveillance measures. Containment and surveillance measures include using video cameras to detect movement of nuclear material and tampering with agency equipment as well as seals that indicate whether the state has tampered with installed IAEA safeguards systems. Further, under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to provisionally apply, and seek ratification of the Additional Protocol, which gives the agency's inspectors access to an expanded range of declared activities and locations, including buildings at nuclear sites, and locations where undeclared activities may be suspected.[20] Under the JCPOA, Iran also agreed to fully implement "Modified Code 3.1" of the subsidiary arrangement to its CSA.[21] According to IAEA, the text of the Modified Code 3.1 in Iran's subsidiary arrangement is based on model language under which a country is generally required to provide preliminary design information for new

[19]IAEA inspectors collect environmental samples from nuclear facilities and other locations, and IAEA's Network of Analytical Laboratories analyzes these samples to detect traces, if any, of undeclared nuclear material.

[20]Iran signed an Additional Protocol in December 2003 but has not brought it into force, and ceased implementing it in February 2006. According to IAEA officials, since Implementation Day (January 16, 2016), Iran has been provisionally applying its Additional Protocol. IAEA regards this as if the Additional Protocol were "in force."

[21]According to reports from the IAEA Director General to the Board of Governors, IAEA agreed to implement Modified Code 3.1 beginning in 2003 and ceased to implement it in 2007. In March 2007, Iran notified IAEA that it had suspended the implementation of Modified Code 3.1, and that it would revert to the previous version of the code, which only required submission of design information for a new facility 180 days before introducing nuclear material into it. The Director General disagreed and asserted that Iran remained bound by the revised Code 3.1. See IAEA, "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran," GOV/2007/22 (May 23, 2007), and IAEA, "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1835 (2008) in the Islamic Republic of Iran," GOV/2009/74 (Nov. 16, 2009).

nuclear facilities "as soon as the decision to construct, or to authorize construction, of such a facility has been taken, whichever is earlier."[22]

In addition, Iran made commitments under the JCPOA to cooperate with IAEA and facilitate its safeguards activities. For example, Iran agreed to make arrangements to allow for the long-term presence of IAEA inspectors by issuing long-term visas, among other things. Iran also agreed to permit the use of modern technologies such as online enrichment monitors to increase the efficiency of monitoring activities. The JCPOA includes a mechanism in which its participants commit to resolve an access request from the agency within 24 days after the request is made. The JCPOA also describes a dispute resolution mechanism through which a participant in the agreement can bring a complaint if it feels that commitments are not being met and that allows the participant to cease performance of its commitments in certain cases if dispute resolution fails to resolve the participant's concerns.

Iran has also agreed to import enumerated nuclear-related and nuclear-related dual-use materials and equipment exclusively through a new "procurement channel" established under the JCPOA.[23] The JCPOA details the establishment of a Joint Commission comprised of representatives of participants in the agreement, whose "procurement working group" will provide information to IAEA on these proposed imports.[24] Under the JCPOA, IAEA may access the locations of intended use of such nuclear-related imports.[25] IAEA officials told us that they

[22]According to IAEA, the text of Iran's Modified Code 3.1 is based on language contained in the Model Subsidiary Arrangements General Part (Fifth Revision) dated July 3, 1992.

[23]The items to be imported through the procurement channel include certain nuclear material, equipment, and technology as well as certain nuclear-related dual-use equipment, materials, software and related technology listed in two IAEA documents: INFCIRC/254/Rev.12/Part 1 and INFCIRC/254/Rev.9/Part 2.

[24]The JCPOA details the establishment of a Joint Commission comprising representatives of participants in the agreement (i.e., Iran and the E3+3) and provides that the Joint Commission may establish Working Groups in particular areas, as appropriate. The JCPOA states that the Joint Commission is to establish a Procurement Working Group to review and make recommendations on proposals by states seeking to engage in nuclear commerce with Iran.

[25] The JCPOA states that, "Iran will provide to the IAEA access to the locations of intended use of all items, materials, equipment, goods and technology set out in INFCIRC/254/Rev.12/Part 1 (or the most recent version of these documents as updated by the Security Council) ..."

expect the information provided through the procurement channel to support the agency's efforts to detect undeclared activity.

IAEA Has Identified the Financial, Human, and Technical Resources Necessary to Verify the Nuclear-Related Commitments in the JCPOA

Our preliminary observations indicate that IAEA has estimated the financial, human, and technical resources necessary to verify Iran's implementation of nuclear-related commitments in the JCPOA. IAEA has estimated that it needs approximately $10 million per year for 15 years in additional funding above its current safeguards budget to fund additional inspections, among other things.[26] Of this amount, IAEA estimates that it will need about $3.3 million for costs associated with implementing the Additional Protocol, about $2.4 million for other inspector and direct staff costs, and about $4.4 million in other costs, such as travel, equipment, and support services beyond those associated with Additional Protocol implementation (see table 1).

[26]IAEA, "Verification and Monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (Aug. 14, 2015)," a report by the Director General to the Board of Governors. This report provides this estimate based on activities foreseen as being applicable for 15 years. IAEA officials told us that after 10 years, they will consider incoming information to refine the estimate going forward. The preliminary estimate for the safeguards budget for 2016 and 2017 is approximately $146.9 million per year, according to "The Agency's Programme and Budget 2016 –2017."

Table 1: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Estimates for Its Annual Funding Requirements for Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Activities

Dollars in millions

Funding requirements by category	Human resources	Other costs	Total
Additional Protocol: inspector and direct staff costs	1.6	N/A	**1.6**
Additional Protocol: travel, equipment, support staff from other safeguards divisions, and other	1.0	0.7	**1.6**
Subtotal: Additional Protocol	**2.6**	**0.7**	**3.3**
Other nuclear-related commitments: inspector and direct staff costs	2.4	N/A	**2.4**
Other nuclear-related commitments: travel, equipment, support staff from other safeguards divisions, and other	2.5	1.8	**4.4**
Subtotal: Other nuclear-related commitments	**4.9**	**1.8**	**6.7**
Total JCPOA	**7.5**	**2.5**	**10**

Source: GAO analysis of IAEA data. | GAO-16-417

Notes: Costs were calculated at the average exchange rate used by the Department of Treasury of $1 to €.919. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

IAEA officials said that, pursuant to the Statute, the agency intends to propose to the Board of Governors that the approximately $5.7 million for all Additional Protocol activities and inspector costs attributable to the JCPOA be funded through IAEA's regular budget after 2016. These officials said that the remaining $4.4 million in estimated funding needs for the following 15 years will remain unfunded in the regular budget and will therefore be supported through extra-budgetary funding. Under the Statute of the IAEA, IAEA is to apportion the costs of implementing safeguards, which would include inspector salaries and the cost of implementing the Additional Protocol, through assessments on member countries.[27] As previously noted, such assessments form IAEA's regular budget. The Statute also states that any voluntary contributions may be used as the Board of Governors, with the approval of the General Conference, may determine.[28] The JCPOA was not finalized in time for the agency to include these costs for 2016 in its assessments. Consequently, according to a 2015 IAEA report, all of IAEA's JCPOA

[27] Article XIV(B)1.(b) and Article XIV.D of the Statute of the IAEA, respectively.

[28] Article XIV.F of the Statute of the IAEA.

work through 2016 will be funded through extra-budgetary contributions.[29] According to IAEA officials, how quickly the $5.7 million in JCPOA costs are incorporated into the regular budget depends on member state support. These officials told us that IAEA hopes to resolve the questions about funding the JCPOA through the regular budget by the June 2016 Board of Governors meeting.

IAEA's annual $10 million funding estimate includes approximately $7.5 million in funding to cover estimated human resource costs associated with additional inspectors and support services under the JCPOA. IAEA officials told us that the agency plans to transfer 18 experienced inspectors and nearly twice that number of other staff to its Iran Task Force from other divisions within its Safeguards Department that cover countries and regions beyond Iran.[30] According to IAEA officials, the other Safeguards divisions would backfill the vacancies created by the transfer of inspectors to the Iran Task Force by hiring and training new inspectors. In addition, according to IAEA officials, existing safeguards technical resources are sufficient to implement IAEA's activities under the JCPOA.

Verifying the JCPOA's Nuclear-Related Commitments May Present Potential Challenges to IAEA's Safeguards Efforts

Our preliminary observations indicate that IAEA may face some potential challenges in monitoring and verifying Iran's implementation of certain nuclear-related commitments in the JCPOA, according to current U.S. and IAEA officials as well as some former U.S. officials, several former IAEA officials, and many expert organizations we interviewed. These potential challenges include (1) the inherent challenge of detecting undeclared nuclear materials and activities, (2) potential access challenges to sites in Iran, and (3) safeguards resource management challenges.

[29]IAEA, Report by the Director General to the Board of Governors, "Verification and Monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015)."

[30]According to the Director General's opening statement to the January 2016 Board of Governors meeting, the Director General plans to establish an Office in the Department of Safeguards to take charge of the agency's safeguards, and verification and monitoring activities in Iran. This will replace the existing Iran Task Force.

IAEA Faces an Inherent Challenge in Detecting Undeclared Nuclear Materials and Activities

Our preliminary observations indicate that detection of undeclared nuclear materials and activities is an inherent challenge for IAEA particularly with regard to activities that do not involve nuclear material, such as some weapons development activities and centrifuge manufacturing, according to current U.S. officials, a former U.S. official, several former IAEA officials, and several expert organizations we interviewed. According to U.S. government officials, as well as a former U.S. official, detection of undeclared material and activities in Iran and worldwide is IAEA's greatest challenge. Iran has previously failed to declare activity to IAEA. For example, according to IAEA documents, prior to 2003, Iran failed to provide IAEA information on a number of nuclear-fuel-cycle-related activities and nuclear material.[31] In addition, according to IAEA documents and officials, Iran failed to notify the agency before 2009 that it had constructed the Fordow enrichment facility, as required under Modified Code 3.1 of the subsidiary arrangement to Iran's CSA.

To detect undeclared materials and activities,[32] IAEA looks for indicators of such activities, including equipment, nuclear and non-nuclear material, infrastructure support, and traces in the environment, according to an IAEA document. However, some activities may not be visible through satellite imagery or do not involve nuclear material, and may not leave traces in the environment, such as some weapons development activities. According to a former U.S. government official, some former IAEA officials, and several expert organization interviews, this creates a challenge for IAEA in detecting undeclared activity.

Furthermore, according to one expert organization we interviewed, the Board of Governors' vote to close its consideration of the PMD issue without a complete accounting of Iran's past nuclear program could reduce the indicators at IAEA's disposal to detect potential undeclared activity. However, DOE officials noted that under the JCPOA, IAEA will have the authorities of the Additional Protocol and enhanced transparency measures of the JCPOA with which to investigate any indication of undeclared activities. In addition, IAEA officials told us that

[31]The nuclear fuel cycle refers to the series of processes used to make fuel for nuclear reactors that may also be used to produce material for nuclear weapons.

[32]For all states with a CSA and an Additional Protocol in force, the IAEA looks for indications of (1) the diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful activities, and (2) undeclared nuclear material or activities.

any uncertainties regarding the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program that may arise during the course of the agency's verification and monitoring under the JCPOA would have to be resolved for the agency to reach a broader conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful activities. IAEA officials told us that the agency does not draw a broader conclusion lightly, for any state, and that it has traditionally taken 3 to 5 years for most member states.

According to a former IAEA official as well as current IAEA and U.S. government officials we interviewed, IAEA has improved its capabilities in detecting undeclared activity. For example, according to U.S. government officials and national laboratory representatives, IAEA has adapted its inspector training program to focus on potential indicators of undeclared activity, beyond the agency's traditional safeguards focus on nuclear materials accountancy. IAEA also has analytical tools at its disposal, some of which IAEA officials demonstrated to us, to detect undeclared activity worldwide. Furthermore, IAEA receives member-state support in detecting undeclared activity. For example, member states provided some of the information that formed the basis of IAEA's PMD investigation. State officials agreed that the detection of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and all states, is a serious challenge for IAEA, but added that the JCPOA puts IAEA in a better position to detect such activities in Iran.

The procurement channel established under the JCPOA may also serve as an additional source of indicators for IAEA on potential undeclared activities in Iran, according to current and two former U.S. government officials as well as representatives from two organizations we interviewed. IAEA officials told us that there is additional work to be done in informing exporting countries of their obligations and standardizing the data that the countries would report to IAEA so that they are usable to the agency. Officials noted that ensuring that countries report the data as required is particularly a challenge for countries that do not have a robust export control system.

IAEA Access Depends on Iran's Cooperation and the JCPOA Mechanism to Resolve Access Requests Is Untested

Our preliminary observations indicate that IAEA could face potential challenges in gaining access to Iranian sites, according to two former U.S. government officials, a former IAEA official, and one expert organization. IAEA's safeguards activities in Iran, as in every state, depend on the cooperation of the member state, and those officials noted that Iran has a history of denying access to IAEA inspectors. For example, IAEA requested access in February 2012 to the Iranian military

complex at Parchin—where high-explosive experiments were believed to have been conducted—and Iran did not allow access until the fall of 2015 as part of IAEA's PMD investigation.

One expert organization we interviewed said that Iran's limited cooperation during the PMD investigation may have set a precedent for limiting IAEA access going forward. However, IAEA officials told us that the closure of the PMD investigation would not preclude future IAEA access requests to the sites that were part of the investigation, should IAEA determine that such access is warranted. These officials added that IAEA's PMD investigation was conducted without the Additional Protocol and that any future investigations into potential undeclared activity would be conducted under the expanded legal authority of the Additional Protocol. According to IAEA officials we interviewed, Iran's agreement to provisionally apply the Additional Protocol will facilitate the agency's access to sites in Iran. Specifically, they told us that under the Additional Protocol, the agency can access any part of a site that it is inspecting within 2 hours' notice and any other site within 24 hours. DOE officials noted that the JCPOA's provisions for the reinstatement of sanctions will encourage Iranian cooperation with and access for IAEA. Additionally, State officials noted that refusal by Iran to comply with the access provisions of the Additional Protocol or JCPOA could lead to the reinstatement of sanctions.

If Iran were to deny access, IAEA officials said that they could report the state's noncompliance to the Board of Governors, though there is no deadline in the CSA or Additional Protocol that compels a state to cooperate, and according to a former IAEA official, the Board of Governors cannot impose a deadline for the state's cooperation. However, as we noted earlier, the JCPOA includes a mechanism that limits the time for resolution of differences between the participants to 24 days for matters related to JCPOA implementation. According to some former U.S. government officials, the mechanism is an advantage for IAEA in that it imposes a time frame for Iran's cooperation with access requests.[33] However, a former IAEA official and one expert organization

[33]According to a former government official, the other parties to the agreement may reinstate sanctions if Iran does not cooperate with IAEA access requests in accordance with this mechanism, and continued noncooperation may result in the termination of the agreement and an expansion of sanctions in the future.

noted that the mechanism is untested, and that it is too soon to tell whether it will improve access.

IAEA Faces Potential Budgetary and Human Resource Management Challenges Stemming from JCPOA-Related Workload

Our preliminary observations indicate that IAEA faces potential resource management challenges stemming from the monitoring and verification workload in Iran, including integrating the additional JCPOA-related funding needs that IAEA has identified into the agency's regular budget and managing human resources within the safeguards program that could affect IAEA's safeguards efforts internationally.

Integrating JCPOA-Related Funding Needs into IAEA's Regular Budget

State and NNSA officials told us that they are confident that IAEA would obtain any funding it would need in the form of extra-budgetary contributions from the United States and other member states to support its JCPOA activities. However, IAEA officials expressed concerns about the reliability of sustained extra-budgetary contributions for IAEA JCPOA activities due to possible donor fatigue in the long run, as IAEA will be conducting certain JCPOA verification activities for 10 or more years. IAEA and State officials, as well as a former IAEA official and one expert organization, also stated that funding the JCPOA from the IAEA regular budget would give the safeguards program a more stable and predictable funding base for its monitoring and verification activities. We have previously concluded that IAEA cannot necessarily assume that donors will continue to make extra-budgetary contributions at the same levels as in the past.[34]

However, our preliminary observations indicate that IAEA may face challenges in incorporating some of its JCPOA activities under its regular budget, which requires support from the General Conference. IAEA officials, as well as a former IAEA official, two former U.S. government officials, and one expert organization we interviewed stated that the proposal to move funding for monitoring and verification efforts under the JCPOA into the IAEA safeguards' regular budget could face resistance from some member states without corresponding budget increases for other IAEA programs, such as the Technical Cooperation program, which supports nuclear power development and other civilian nuclear applications. State officials noted that delay or failure to incorporate costs

[34]GAO, *Nuclear Nonproliferation: IAEA Has Made Progress in Implementing Critical Programs but Continues to Face Challenges*, GAO-13-139 (Washington, D.C.: May 16, 2013).

into the regular budget would increase the reliance of IAEA on extra-budgetary contributions, but would not prevent IAEA from carrying out JCPOA-related activities as long as those contributions are forthcoming. These officials added that they recognize that long-term reliance on extra-budgetary contributions risks donor fatigue, and that they will plan for providing support with a view toward filling any future funding gaps that arise.

Managing Human Resources in the Safeguards Program

Our preliminary observations indicate that IAEA faces a potential human resource management challenge in its safeguards program as it implements actions to monitor and verify the JCPOA, which could affect its broader international safeguards mission. Specifically, our preliminary observations indicate that IAEA's strategy of transferring inspectors to its Iran Task Force from other safeguards divisions may pose a challenge to IAEA and its safeguards work in other countries because of the extensive time taken to hire and train new inspectors for those divisions.

According to current IAEA and U.S. government officials, as well as two former IAEA officials and two expert organizations, hiring and training qualified inspectors can take years. A former IAEA official and current officials noted that inspector skills are highly specialized—typically requiring a combination of nuclear engineering knowledge with analytical abilities—making recruitment difficult. These officials also noted that IAEA's hiring process is lengthy, requiring multiple interviews and examinations. Furthermore, current IAEA officials and two former IAEA officials, as well as one expert organization noted that training new inspectors to be proficient in executing their safeguards responsibilities can be a time-consuming process. As a result, IAEA faces a potential challenge as it prioritizes the JCPOA in meeting the need for additional experienced inspectors to work on Iran-related safeguards, while ensuring that other safeguards efforts in other countries are not understaffed. IAEA officials have said that its work in Iran is its priority. However, a former IAEA official, as well as some former U.S. government officials and several expert organizations told us that IAEA could mitigate human resources challenges in the short term through remote monitoring and the use of cost-free experts in its headquarters.

Agency Comments

We are not making any recommendations in this report. We provided the Departments of State and Energy and IAEA a draft of this report to for their review and comment. State, DOE, and IAEA provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

As agreed with your offices, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will send copies of this report to appropriate congressional committees, the Secretaries of State and Energy, and other interested parties. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO website at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3841 or trimbled@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff members who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix II.

David C. Trimble

David C. Trimble
Director, Natural Resources and Environment

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

This report provides our preliminary observations on (1) the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been asked to verify and its authorities to do so, (2) the resources IAEA has identified as necessary to verify the JCPOA, and (3) potential challenges and mitigating actions, if any, IAEA and others have identified with regard to verifying the JCPOA. We will issue a separate report with the final results of our work later this year.

To identify the nuclear-related commitments in the JCPOA that IAEA has been asked to verify and IAEA's authorities for verifying these commitments, we analyzed the JCPOA, in close coordination with IAEA and the Department of State. We also analyzed IAEA documentation concerning the safeguards legal framework, including the Statute of the IAEA,[1] which authorizes the Agency to apply safeguards, at the request of parties, to any bilateral or multilateral arrangement; "The Structure and Content of Agreements Between the Agency and States Required in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (information circular (INFCIRC)/153), which provides the basis for the comprehensive safeguards agreement that most countries have concluded with IAEA and that covers all of the countries' civilian nuclear activities; Iran's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (INFCIRC/214); the Model Additional Protocol (INFCIRC/540), which provides the basis for an Additional Protocol that most countries with a CSA have concluded with IAEA to provide additional information about countries' nuclear and nuclear-related activities; and the November 2011 IAEA Safeguards Report,[2] which details items concerning "possible military dimensions" of Iran's nuclear program; IAEA's report on its investigation of the possible military dimensions; and the related Board of Governor's resolution. We also analyzed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, which requests IAEA to undertake the necessary verification and monitoring of Iran's commitments.

[1]The Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, done Oct. 26, 1956, 8 U.S.T. 1093, 276 U.N.T.S. 3 (entered into force July 29, 1957).

[2]IAEA, "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran," GOV/2011/65 (Nov. 8, 2011).

To examine the resources IAEA has identified as necessary to verify the JCPOA, we reviewed IAEA planning and budget documents, such as "The Agency's Programme and Budget 2016 –2017," the Director General's report titled "Verification and Monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015)," and pertinent Director General's statements to the Board of Governors.

In addition, to further understand IAEA authorities and resource needs, and to examine potential challenges and mitigating actions IAEA and others have identified with regard to verifying the JCPOA, we interviewed officials of IAEA, the Department of State, and the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA);[3] as well as representatives of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, and Brookhaven National Laboratory. We also held classified interviews with officials in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and representatives of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The information from these interviews is not reflected in this report.

We also interviewed 8 former IAEA, and 10 former U.S. government and national laboratory officials, and representatives of 10 expert organizations—research institutions and nongovernmental organizations with knowledge in the areas of nuclear verification, monitoring, and safeguards. We selected these experts by first identifying organizations that had previously served as sources of IAEA subject matter experts for GAO. To ensure a wide range of viewpoints, we supplemented our initial selection with individuals and organizations identified through a literature search and by recommendations from our initial set of expert organizations. We requested interviews from all the identified experts and suggested contacts and interviewed all who agreed to participate (two experts provided written responses in lieu of in-person interviews). We analyzed their responses and grouped them into overall themes related to different elements of the objective. When referring to these categories of interviewees throughout the report, we use "some" to refer to three

[3]NNSA is a separate, semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy, with responsibility for the United States' nuclear weapons and nonproliferation programs, among other things. NNSA conducts its activities at headquarters and at research and development laboratories, production plants, and other facilities. NNSA also provides technical assistance to IAEA's safeguards and nuclear security programs.

members of a group, "several" to refer to four or five members of a group, and "many" to refer to more than five members of a group.

Our preliminary observations are based on our ongoing work, which is being conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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Staff Acknowledgments	In addition to the contact named above, William Hoehn (Assistant Director), Alisa Beyninson, Antoinette Capaccio, R. Scott Fletcher, Bridget Grimes, Joseph Kirschbaum, Grace Lui, Thomas Melito, Alison O'Neill, Sophia Payind, Timothy M. Persons, Steven Putansu, Vasiliki Theodoropoulos, and Pierre Toureille made key contributions to this report.

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Responses to Additional Questions for the Record Submitted to U.S. Secretary of State John F. Kerry by Members of the Committee

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO
SECRETARY KERRY BY SENATOR CARDIN

Question 1. With the lifting of sanctions, European and Asian businesses are flocking to Iran in order to take advantage of investment opportunities. However, Iran is still a major state sponsor of terrorism and perpetrates a variety of human rights abuses.

- What mechanisms do we have in place to ensure that other nations and corporations continue to adhere to the variety of international and U.S. sanctions that remain in place? Has our leverage over international companies been weakened by the lifting of nuclear-related sanctions and the implementation of the JCPOA?

Answer. We have been very clear in highlighting to the international community that the JCPOA was negotiated to address Iran's nuclear program only. All of our other sanctions programs not related to Iran's nuclear program, whether for its destabilizing activities within the region, human rights abuses, or ballistic missile programs, remain in place and continue to be enforced. The most recent example of our continued enforcement is the January 16 designation of three entities and eight individuals involved in a procurement network for Iran's ballistic missiles program. This designation was in response to Iran's October missile launch and cut these persons off entirely from the U.S. financial system. Additionally, any non-U.S. person who engages with these designees will also be subject to U.S. sanctions.

Under the JCPOA, if there is a significant violation by Iran, the United States has the ability to quickly re-impose the multilateral sanctions that were lifted. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231 establishes an unprecedented mechanism under which we have the ability to re-impose U.N. sanctions on Iran—the sanctions that were the hardest to secure given the veto held by other permanent members of the Security Council. This new mechanism is not vulnerable to being blocked by any of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

Furthermore, the United States maintains the ability to unilaterally reinstate the sanctions lifted under the JCPOA following significant Iranian non-compliance. These are the sanctions that were the most powerful in driving Iran back to the negotiating table.

Question 2. February 3 you said in a statement: "The continued assault by Syrian regime forces—enabled by Russian airstrikes—against opposition-held areas, as well as regime and allied militias' continued besiegement of hundreds of thousands of civilians, have clearly signaled the intention to seek a military solution rather than enable a political one." This statement was made well after the passage of the U.N. Security Council Resolution in December that established a timeline for a political transition in Syria and called for end to the bombardment of opposition-held areas. Now, the deadline for a "cessation of hostilities' has passed and we are still not any closer to establishing conditions that could bring the parties back to the negotiating table.

- Mr. Secretary, is it still your view that Russia and the Assad regime intend to seek a military solution rather than enable a political one that can end the Syria civil war?

Answer. While Russia wants to keep its only strategic ally in the region in power, it knows that its military support to the regime will not bring an end to the conflict. Knowing this, in November 2015, Russia signed onto the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) Statement reaffirming key Geneva Communique principles, most importantly, a commitment to a political transition, including agreeing to free and

fair elections administered under U.N. supervision within 18 months. In December, Russia also voted in favor of UNSCR 2254, which explicitly requested that the U.N. convene formal negotiations on a political transition process between the regime and the opposition. Per UNSCR 2254, the Syrian parties are supposed to reach agreement on the shape of a transition within six months.

The United States is committed to seeing this process through to a political transition away from Bashar al-Asad. Discussions over the last several weeks have not been easy. Intensified military operations by Russia and the Asad regime have worsened an already-dire humanitarian crisis in Syria, but we are hopeful that the cessation of hostilities will reduce violence and allow for the freer movement of humanitarian goods and greater access throughout Syria.

This is a moment for action. The world can see in writing what has been agreed. This will be a difficult deal to implement, and we know that obstacles abound. Setbacks will be inevitable. But it is in all of our interests, and especially the interests of the Syrian people, to give this process a chance. This is a real opportunity to reduce the violence the Syrian people have endured for far too long.

We have been clear with all parties that the transition timeline in UNSCR 2254 must be adhered to, and we expect the U.N. Special Envoy to reconvene talks soon.

Question 3. I am pleased by the President's request for robust funding for Ukraine. This body passed two pieces of legislation to support the Ukrainian government and Ukrainian civil society, and I believe we must continue to show our support for the reformers in the government who are desperately working to institutionalize rule of law, democracy, and good governance in the country. That said, the Ukrainian government must do more to tackle endemic corruption. Recent political turmoil in Kiev has raised concerns about the government's commitment to reform.

- What is the State Department doing specifically to bolster Ukrainian reformers in the government during this challenging period?

Answer. Ukraine is working to resolve the current political impasse. We regularly underscore to Ukrainian officials at all levels that they must unite behind reforms that meet IMF preconditions, accelerate the implementation of reforms, and move forward on Minsk implementation.The wave of activism that emerged during the EuroMaidan protests is the engine that will propel the government towards reform. The Department of State and USAID have therefore continued to prioritize support for civic organizations that hold government accountable, protect citizens' rights, provide fact-based information and promote democratic reforms. Since the crisis began, we have provided over $760 million in assistance to Ukraine, as well as two $1 billion sovereign loan guarantees. While some of our crisis-related assistance was targeted at meeting Ukraine's urgent humanitarian and security needs, the majority of U.S. assistance to Ukraine is helping to advance reforms and strengthen democratic institutions. We appreciate Congress's support for Ukraine's reform efforts.

The Government of Ukraine's commitment to reform and European integration has renewed our ability to engage with government institutions, and U.S. assistance to Ukraine prioritizes fighting corruption and promoting the rule of law. U.S. programs have supported, and will continue to support new anti-corruption bodies; public administration, procurement, and justice sector reforms; transparency measures; civil society and independent media engagement; and the recovery of assets stolen by the previous government.

Question 4. How much of this assistance will support human right defenders operating inside Russia? What is our strategy for helping HRDs improve the human rights situation inside the country?

Answer. The United States is concerned about the Russian government's disregard for human rights and the increased restrictions the government has imposed on civil society, which impede the fundamental freedoms of those active in civil society and their ability to receive international support. We raise these concerns regularly in our dialogue with the Russian government.

Our commitment to engage Russian civil society remains firm. The United States will continue to seek ways to foster links between the Russian and American people, as we do across the rest of the region and around the world. Although the traditional routes for support have been challenged, Russian human rights and civil society organizations continue to express a desire to engage with the United States.We no longer have a dedicated line item in the budget for bilateral assistance for Russia. However, to the extent we can productively use resources in support of Russian human rights and civil society and in support of multilateral settings to address shared global priorities, we will use funds from the Europe and Eurasia Regional budget and from global accounts.

Question 5. When we add funds provided through the 150 and 050 accounts, funding for security assistance in Africa has nearly doubled from FY 2013 to FY 2015, while resources for democracy assistance from over the same period have decreased by approximately 46 percent. Levels for FY 2016 have yet to be determined.

- How are you working with the interagency to ensure we are balancing our security assistance with appropriate levels of DG funding for key allies in the region?

Answer. There is a critical link between democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) programs and security sector assistance within Africa. Many of our security assistance accounts also fund activities that touch on rule of law and human rights concerns. This does not replace the need for core DRG funding, but it is important to note that some of our security assistance contributes to DRG objectives.

The Departments of State and Defense work closely to formulate, plan and implement security assistance in Africa. The Presidential Policy Directive on Security Sector Assistance (PPD-23), released by the Administration in 2013, guides this process. The directive mandates an inclusive, deliberate, whole-of-government approach to U.S. security sector assistance, which aligns activities and resources with our national security priorities. The directive calls for transparency and coordination across the U.S. government to develop long-term strategies for security sector assistance, which build the capacity of our partners in a way that is strategic and sustainable.

The Departments of State and Defense recognize that human rights-sensitive security assistance is important to efforts to strengthen democracy and governance in Africa. In response to the increasing linkages between governance and security, the President's FY 2017 Budget Request includes funds for the Sahel Development Initiative (SDI) and the Security Governance Initiative (SGI). SDI seeks to better link development and security efforts to effectively counter the increasing threat of violent extremism in the region. SGI is a collective approach to strengthen African partners' security institutions' capacity to protect civilians and confront challenges with integrity and accountability.

The Department of State and USAID support democracy and governance programming in the region. Democracy, human rights, and good governance are fundamental objectives in and of themselves: a lack of democratic governance creates an enabling environment for instability, violent extremism, and humanitarian crises, which often are a result of corruption, poor governance, and weak or nonexistent democratic institutions. The U.S. government also recognizes the importance of DRG programing to achieving and sustaining global development goals, as well as key U.S. foreign policy objectives.

While the President's request in recent years has included increasing support for DRG programs in Africa, in the past, annual appropriations bills have reduced funding for the key foreign assistance accounts that support DRG programs, which has made it difficult to fully fund DRG programs included within the President's request, including DRG programs in Africa.

The FY 2017 request includes approximately $343.2 million for DRG programs in Africa—an increase over previous years—that will support programs focusing on transitions of power, reform, and civil society engagement. For many countries, the FY 2017 request reflects an increased level over the FY 2015 allocation and will offer a substantial boost to DRG work in those countries.

Question 6. Secretary, at the release of the 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report, you noted that as the Chairman of the Human Trafficking Task Force, you would "sit down on this, every single Cabinet officer who has a responsibility, whether it's DHS, Department of Justice, they're all there, all coordinating. And [you], as the chair, instructed this year that none of [them] should travel anywhere in the world and fail to raise this issue with our interlocutors, no matter what meetings, no matter where we are. This has to be on the agenda."

- To what extent have you personally been able to raise human trafficking in your meetings with representatives from India, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, Thailand, Cuba, and Mexico? What efforts have resulted from your efforts to address human trafficking with your counterparts?

Answer. The Department of State has engaged numerous governments on this issue directly, using bilateral meetings, multilateral venues, and media platforms to make clear that combating human trafficking is a priority for this Administration—and for me—and is a responsibility for all members of the international community. The governments of Cuba, India, Malaysia, Mexico, and Uzbekistan are among

those I have engaged directly, and I will continue to directly engage with foreign governments regarding their efforts to combat human trafficking.

I, and other senior Administration officials, continue to press the Government of Cuba to expand its anti-trafficking efforts to prohibit and combat labor trafficking, including indicators of forced labor within its overseas medical mission program. Cuba acceded to the Palermo Protocol in 2013 and is working to amend its criminal code to bring it into conformity. We are watching closely to see if Cuba lives up to those commitments. The government has reported efforts to address sex trafficking—including the conviction of traffickers and the provision of services to sex trafficking victims involved in the cases.

I directly communicated the Department's top recommendations from the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report to the Indian government. Our Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Susan Coppedge, is currently working with the Indian government to plan a visit, in support of greater anti-trafficking cooperation.

I, and many others in the Administration, have had robust engagement with Malaysia on human trafficking. As the result of this engagement, the Malaysian government should be very clear on what it needs to do, both in the context of the TIP Report and its commitments under the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This consistent attention has led the government to consult international experts and NGOs in the process of developing implementing regulations for legal amendments to its anti-trafficking law. Malaysia still has a long way to go, and the Administration is working to maintain pressure and help ensure improved anti-trafficking efforts and protection of victims.

In Mexico, we continue to highlight the government's commitments under the Palermo Protocol and have encouraged a victim-centered approach to human trafficking. Mexico has several challenges, such as a broad definition of trafficking at the federal level, inconsistent anti-trafficking laws among the federal and state governments, as well as a lack of funding for victim services. However, we have a great relationship with the Mexican government and regularly seek opportunities for collaboration, such as sharing best practices on prevention efforts, including across all of North America.

We maintain high-level, consistent, and robust engagement with the Government of Thailand on human trafficking. The message has been clear: the government must improve its anti-trafficking efforts, especially in holding complicit officials accountable and significantly increasing its efforts to address labor trafficking. The concerns in Thailand are vast, but the government's level of attention to this problem is high. Thailand must ensure its efforts are effective and sustained.

Finally, I directly discussed the trafficking problem in Uzbekistan, including state-sponsored forced labor. The government has made commitments to prohibit the mobilization of children for its cotton harvest and has allowed international monitors into the country. Unfortunately, forced labor of adults persists and we are very clear that forced labor should be prohibited completely.

These engagements complement those undertaken across the globe every day by many Department officials. Ambassador Coppedge recently visited Cuba, Mexico, Botswana, and South Africa, and the staff in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons has traveled to five continents and over 50 countries in the last six months alone. U.S. missions around the world have sustained and expert engagement that occurs every day in some of the most challenging environments in the world.In each of these cases, the Department has been unequivocal that human trafficking is a priority for which each of these governments must make appreciable progress.

The annual TIP Report not only assesses these efforts, but provides the road map for progress through the country-specific recommendations, which the Department uses to guide year-round engagement and spur continual improvement in combating this crime. Each country is clear on these recommendations and that future tier rankings will be assessed objectively against them by our experts.

Question 7. Senators Coons, Flake and I just returned from Southern Africa where we visited Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia to learn more about their efforts to conserve threatened species. We also saw the startling effects of the extreme and prolonged drought that have caused a water crisis in those countries. This drought is fueled by climate change.

- What are the concerns the State Department has with climate change's impacts on agricultural production, natural disasters, or water resource scarcity and the potential destabilizing effects that these emergencies can have on a country and how does the State Department's budget specifically address these potential security risks?

Answer. The Department of State supports sustainable, climate-resilient development projects in vulnerable nations through the Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI). By building resilience to the effects of increasingly harsh or unpredictable climatic conditions and extreme weather events, our programs reduce the risk of damage and prevent broader instability that can be exacerbated by lack of preparedness. Helping developing countries manage climate and weather-related risks protects decades of progress in reducing poverty and economic growth in vulnerable countries.

For example, USAID Kenya supports the efforts of the Northern Rangelands Trust in developing community resilience strategies, mainstreaming climate adaptation, and increasing access to climate information and decision-making tools. The project has helped more than 30 conservancies in northern Kenya include climate adaptation in conservation, management and planning, particularly under drought conditions. These interventions have led to better management and conservation of natural resources, which, in turn, has significantly reduced poaching and conflicts over land and water. The resulting peace dividend has had wide, positive repercussions in this historically volatile region.

In addition, the President has also pledged $3 billion to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which will speed low-cost financing and grants for low-carbon and climate-resilient work in threatened regions around the globe. Our GCF pledge has already leveraged over $7 billion in additional funding commitments from other donors which will support mitigation and adaptation projects. To ensure that especially vulnerable states are prioritized by the GCF, the GCF Board decided to allocate half of the adaptation support to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and African States.

Finally, the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) emphasizes strengthening climate diplomacy and development, integrating climate change into all of our diplomatic and development efforts, and expanding climate engagement internationally. The Department is also implementing Executive Order 13677, which focuses on integrating climate resilience considerations into all of our international development efforts. As a result of E.O. 13677, the Department will begin in the coming year to take climate risks into consideration when developing relevant programs.

Question 8. What is your confidence level that Sunni communities will receive the necessary resources and support to rebuild and recover? Given the fiscal constraints on the Prime Minister Abadi's government, are there other donors that could help in Iraq?

Answer. The economic crisis in Iraq, caused by volatility in the oil market, the significant costs of the counter-Da'esh fight, and the displacement of 3.3 million Iraqis severely restricts the ability of the Government of Iraq to finance the recovery and reconstruction of communities devastated by Da'esh. Oil price volatility also negatively affected the ability of Iraq's neighbors to provide assistance, while the unprecedented demands caused by other humanitarian crises on traditional donor countries has reduced their capacity to support Iraq. Our partners are making significant contributions to help Iraq, but we are concerned about the lack of resources available for immediate recovery and long-term reconstruction in Iraq, as well as the government's immediate cash-flow constraints, which could delay payments to security forces. We will continue our efforts to generate contributions from the international community to support Iraq as it recovers from destruction caused by Da'esh.

The stabilization of liberated areas is the first step toward recovery. Seventeen international donors have contributed or pledged nearly $100 million to the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS), which funds rapid projects to rehabilitate light infrastructure, provides grants to small business to help jump-start the local economy, provides technical support to local government, and supports community reconciliation. FFIS addresses immediate concerns in the first six months after liberation. FFIS was instrumental in the initial recovery of Tikrit, to which 95 percent of the residents have returned. FFIS money has also been approved for a number of liberated areas, including majority Sunni al-Dour, Baiji, and Ramadi.

Stabilization is not possible without trusted local security. Italy is leading a Coalition police training program to build the capability of local police forces; several other partners are planning to join the program to double the training output. The U.N. has estimated that $15 million will be needed to clear the recently liberated city of Ramadi of unexploded ordinance (UXO) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The United States is planning to contribute to this effort and several Coalition partners are prepared to do so as well. The United States is working with U.N.

and the Coalition to develop a more comprehensive approach to funding the estimated $200 million needed for UXO/IED clearance across Iraq.

Volatility in the oil market has severely cut Iraqi government revenues, resulting in significant challenges for the Government of Iraq to meet its budget obligations. The austere budget adopted by the Government of Iraq includes allocations for assistance for displaced Iraqis and reconstruction, which are in jeopardy due to lower than anticipated revenues. The United States is negotiating a $2.7 billion FMF loan with the Iraqi government, which will help ensure that Iraq has the necessary ammunition, equipment, and training it needs to combat Da'esh and free up Iraqi resources for other Iraqi domestic priorities. The United States is also leading an effort in the G7 and among other partners to generate immediate budgetary support. Kuwait has provided significant financial assistance to Iraq by suspending Iraq's obligation to pay 5 percent of Iraqi oil revenues as reparations due to Kuwait as a result of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait for 2015 and 2016, freeing up billions for Iraq to spend on domestic priorities.

The IMF will play an integral role in to helping keep Iraq solvent during the economic crisis. Iraq has entered into an IMF Staff-Monitored Program (SMP), which requires the Iraqis to implement a series of fiscal reforms. If Iraq meets their obligations under the SMP, they can begin negotiations with the IMF to enter a Stand-by Arrangement, which could unlock billions of dollars to help finance its budget.

The World Bank provided a $1.2 billion Development Policy Loan in late 2015, which the Government of Iraq intends to use for energy-sector improvements, improving expenditure management, reforming state-owned enterprises, and repairing Mosul Dam. The World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development has provided a $350 million loan for reconstruction; a significant portion of these funds will be directed toward re-establishing electricity and transportation infrastructure, housing, and health services in the Sunni areas of Tikrit, Dour, al-Dalooeyya, and al-Alam, and portions of the loan could also be directed toward Anbar reconstruction. The European Investment Bank and the Islamic Investment Bank are also potential sources of funds. The Government of Iraq intends to host a reconstruction donor conference in April, and Germany has already announced a 500 million euro loan for reconstruction.

Question 9. The administration's long-term plan to support Afghanistan's economic sustainability appears to be the New Silk Road initiative, which was announced in 2011 and would promote the country's economic integration into the region. Since then, China has announced plans to invest significantly across the region.

- Is the U.S. coordinating with China on these efforts? Are there any challenges associated with coordination with China on economic development in the region?

Answer. The Administration continues to work closely with the Government of Afghanistan and its international partners to promote long-term Afghan economic development. Our approach has been to support Afghanistan's own reform agenda, the development of strong Afghan institutions, and the growth of Afghan revenue so as to promote sustainability. A critical component of that long-term sustainability will be Afghanistan's continued integration into the regional economy.

China's engagement with the Central Asian states, Afghanistan, and Pakistan has the potential to contribute significantly to regional prosperity. By addressing major infrastructure needs in the region, China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative could contribute to peace and stability in Afghanistan, stimulate economic growth in Pakistan and Central Asia, and complement the New Silk Road vision. At the same time, the United States continues to encourage China to adhere to international standards on governance, environment, debt sustainability, and social safeguards as it becomes more deeply engaged in development finance activities in third countries.

In Afghanistan, we have three joint training projects for young Afghan diplomats, Afghan agricultural professionals, and Afghan health workers that emerged through trilateral U.S.-China-Afghanistan diplomatic engagement. More broadly, the United States and China are in the initial stages of coordinating overseas economic development activities as we build on a development MOU signed during President Xi Jinping's September 2015 state visit. We are also exploring with the Chinese government possible further development cooperation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia. The security situation in some parts of the region hampers both U.S. and Chinese economic development efforts.

Question 10. Can you walk us through—very specifically—a case study of, say, Tunisia or Mali, of exactly what variety of civilian tools that are being used to prevent violent extremism and how we are measuring the results?

Answer. The United States National Security Strategy (2015) calls for a sustainable approach to combat the persistent threat of terrorism. The United States will continue to take measures and engage in collective action with responsible partners to disrupt threats against the United States and our allies. At the same time, effectively addressing these threats requires simultaneous and complementary efforts to counter and prevent the spread of violent extremism. The Department of State leads the U.S. government's international efforts to counter violent extremism (CVE)—in close partnership with USAID—and is elevating CVE as a top priority, as Deputy Secretary of State Blinken laid out in a February 16 speech at the Brookings Institution.

Broadly speaking, our CVE effort aims to identify and address the specific societal dynamics and drivers of radicalization to violence and counter the ideology, messaging, and recruitment methods that extremist groups and propagandists employ to attract new recruits and foment violence.

CVE also requires proactive efforts to engage key stakeholders and prevent support for violent extremism in areas where the threat is more nascent. We are focusing our CVE efforts in a few key areas, including analyzing drivers of violent extremism, assisting national governments in developing national CVE strategies, expanding engagement with sub-national and local government authorities, and strengthening the roles of key non-governmental actors who can play important roles on the CVE front.

ASSISTING GOVERNMENTS

National CVE Action Plans:

We are expanding technical support and assistance to governments as they design and implement national CVE action plans, with the involvement of civil society—in line with the U.N. Secretary-General's new Plan on Action on Preventing Violent Extremism and Hedayah's Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies.

For example, we deployed a team of interagency advisors (e.g., State, DHS, and NCTC) last year to assist the Government of Albania in developing its national CVE strategy targeting the radicalization and recruitment to violence of foreign terrorist fighters. We are now developing a broader regional initiative for the Western Balkans to promote a range of CVE programs and activities involving governments and civil society. The process of developing a national CVE strategy can help governments to refine their understanding of the problem and commit to a holistic approach to addressing the problem, including committing new resources to at-risk communities and populations.

Strategic Communications:

Working closely with the new Global Engagement Center, we are increasing our technical support and assistance to governments, as well as grassroots partners, as they undertake new efforts to counter violent extremist messaging and promote alternative narratives. For example, the United States has worked closely with the United Arab Emirates on the development of the Sawab Center.

We have also funded Hedayah, the CVE center of excellence in Abu Dhabi, to provide training for governments and civil society on messaging strategies, including how to promote the narratives of disillusioned "formers." We are providing specific technical assistance for national governments and law enforcement agencies as they develop their strategic communications capabilities.

Law Enforcement Community-Oriented CVE Strategies:

We provide extensive training and advisory support for law enforcement officials on strategies to partner with communities on CVE initiatives and build trust between police and communities vulnerable to violent extremism. For example, in Indonesia we are implementing a program to institutionalize the role of Community Action Officers within the Indonesian National Police (INP). These officers work to promote positive police-community interactions and higher levels of trust between police and communities, with a goal of marginalizing the influence of extremists. In North Africa, we are providing support to a non-governmental organization to help national police in North African countries better understand and address local drivers of radicalization to violence.

Countering Prison Radicalization:

We are also assisting governments in reducing the threat of prison radicalization, by helping corrections officials recognize and effectively manage violent extremists in their facilities. For example, we have funded Department of Justice advisors to help the Philippines develop new policies for assessing and managing terrorist inmates to impede recruitment of other prisoners. We are also working with governments on developing diversion and juvenile justice programs for low-risk offenders that can help promote rehabilitation and reintegration.

EXPANDING ENGAGEMENT WITH SUB-NATIONAL, LOCAL AND CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

Strong Cities Network:

We are working closely with the new Strong Cities Network, an effort to assist mayors and sub-national authorities to share expertise and build capacity to develop localized CVE strategies. The Network already includes more than 25 cities from around the world and continues to grow. As a result of the Network, European cities are pairing with cities like Amman, Jordan, and Tunis, Tunisia, to help with CVE capacity-building.

Youth and Women Engagement:

We will continue our efforts to engage and empower youth who may be susceptible to violent extremist radicalization and recruitment. We will also deepen our ongoing support for women as family and community actors in recognizing and preventing radicalization into violent extremism. Youth can also play a critical role in mobilizing public support against violent extremism, including in countering violent extremist messaging. In the past, we have funded non-governmental organizations in East Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia that are mobilizing youth-led media campaigns against violent extremism in their communities.

Civil Society Rehabilitation/Reintegration Network:

We are working with non-governmental organizations that have a critical role to play in the rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists—both inside and outside of prison settings. For example, we are funding an effort to build the capacity of civil society organizations in East Africa, the Sahel-Maghreb, and Southeast Asia that are involved in rehabilitation and reintegration work, with a focus on returning foreign terrorist fighters. We are also funding a new training course for government and non-governmental actors on designing strategies to handle returning foreign terrorist fighters.

Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism (RESOLVE):

We will expand our knowledge base by working with researchers around the world to better understand the local drivers of violent extremism and how communities can build resiliencies against it. Launched by the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations and USAID and guided by a steering committee composed of research institutions around the world, the RESOLVE Network will leverage local research to promote exchanges between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to build effective and sustainable responses to the drivers of violent extremism. In the next few months, the network will launch an online platform and develop a shared research agenda to focus efforts and resources on the top CVE research questions.

Question 11. The 2015 National Security Strategy, 2015 Quadrennial Development & Diplomacy Review, and the U.N. Secretary General's new report that came out last week on the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit all make clear, stark calls for greater political leadership, investment and innovations to prevent and reduce violent conflict. However, the numbers aren't adding up. State and USAID's Democracy and Governance accounts have been cut roughly 23 percent in the last four years to make up for Presidential Initiatives and earmarks. A 2015 USAID OIG audit found that Washington is not meeting USAID Mission Directors' requests for governance and conflict mitigation funding, and USAID's Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management has lost nearly all of its core funding despite being one of the most regularly endorsed offices by our civil society partners.

- Secretary Kerry, can you please explain to the Committee how your FY17 budget improves US capacities to prevent and reduce violent conflict?
- What are State and USAID tactically doing right now to rejigger our foreign policy investments towards prevention?

Answer. On May 18, 2016, the President signed Executive Order 13729 and in so doing enshrined a comprehensive approach to atrocity prevention and response,

including through the creation of the Atrocity Prevention Board (APB). As outlined in that E.O., the APB is an interagency body that seeks to ensure mass atrocities and the risk thereof are effectively considered and appropriately addressed by the U. S. government. The APB meets on a regular basis and coordinates the development and execution of policies and tools to prevent and respond to mass atrocities.

The Department of State and USAID's FY 2017 Budget Request provides $5 million toward atrocity prevention programming. These funds will be used to support programming in places identified by the APB for the prevention and mitigation of atrocities, as well as post-atrocity activities.

Alongside the establishment of the APB, State and USAID are also making great strides in creating the policy infrastructure necessary to make conflict prevention a clear priority. Unlike crisis response where the needs are great but the challenges are more self-evident, conflict prevention requires stronger analytical, planning, and learning capabilities to discern where conflicts will crop up, how they will impact U.S. interests, and what amount of U.S. and international intervention is required. The Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (J) has tasked the bureaus in the "J-family" of bureaus and offices to focus on conflict prevention. The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) has moved conflict prevention to the heart of its mission and work, with the bureau's top three priorities comprising of: (1) preventing violent extremism; (2) preventing mass atrocities; and (3) preventing destabilizing violence around transitions like elections, ceasefires and peace agreements. To support this critical conflict prevention capacity in FY 2017, the President requested $39.5 million for CSO, including the $5 million for atrocity prevention mentioned above.

The Department of State and UAID also recognize that countries with precarious justice institutions, poor governance, corruption, and human rights violations, create an environment in which instability, violent extremism, and humanitarian crises can flourish. Robust democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) programming that supports the development of government institutions, the inclusion of citizen voices in the political process, and the promotion and protection of human rights is critical to strengthening and expanding our efforts to prevent—rather than react to—the next political crisis, violent episode, human rights violation or mass atrocity. As such, Department of State and USAID's FY 2017 Budget Request includes a robust $2.7 billion for DRG programs, which is $411.8 million (18 percent) above the FY 2016 earmark level for democracy programs.

Question 12. With the current length of displacement averaging 17 years, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are increasingly in need of longer term assistance in addition in short-term emergency aid. Given the protracted nature of many of the current crises (for example—Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan), it is apparent that these refugees and IDPs will not be returning home any time soon. 86 percent of the world's refugees are hosted by developing countries, placing additional strain on countries that were already in need of development assistance. Appropriations for 2016 recognized the need to break down the silos between humanitarian assistance and development assistance by providing new transfer authorities from traditional development accounts to support countries affected by significant refugee flows.

- How are these new authorities being implemented to supporting host communities, for example, in the Syria context?

Answer. The administration appreciates Congress' recognition and support of the tremendous refugee need and the substantial strain placed on host communities. In the context of the Syrian refugee crisis, the Department of State and USAID provide significant development and economic assistance to support refugee-hosting countries and communities, primarily in Jordan and Lebanon, in responding to the refugee crisis by supporting essential services and infrastructure in host communities. In both Lebanon and Jordan, we have re-oriented development assistance to meet the increased needs in geographic areas and sectors where refugees are having the greatest impact on host communities. The United States also provides humanitarian assistance to non-governmental organizations and U.N. organizations delivering assistance to Syrians in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey.

In Lebanon, U.S. development assistance primarily focuses on education, water, economic growth, and community resilience to support communities hosting large numbers of refugees from Syria. In education, our assistance has rehabilitated 183 school buildings, including 55 schools in areas with large populations of displaced refugees. We have equipped classrooms, paid school fees for vulnerable children, and worked to enhance teaching methods and create quality learning opportunities. U.S. assistance has improved the availability of water services by increasing the effi-

ciency of water management, improving water infrastructure and strengthening water governance. These efforts helped build financial management, planning and operations capacity; procure equipment and funding infrastructure for water; and develop customer service and outreach programs. More than 120,000 Syrian refugees are impacted by these interventions.

In Jordan, U.S. development assistance focuses on the education, water, health and economic growth sectors to address the greater strains imposed by the refugee influx. The crisis is having a profound impact on the education sector, particularly public schools. To help meet this challenge, we are investing $231 million to expand 120 schools, renovate 150 schools and build 25 new schools in areas with large numbers of Syrian refugees. In addition, USAID fast-tracked the expansion of 20 schools in overcrowded areas due to the refugee population. Workforce development programs are being reformulated to include Syrians as a result of the Government of Jordan's agreement to issue work permits to Syrians. Assistance will include vocational training and job placement. In the water sector, our assistance is supporting the construction of a new pipeline, pump station and waste water treatment plant that will increase water supply and waste treatment for 1.7 million people in northern Jordan, where a large number of refugees reside. Additionally, U.S. government assistance to the Jordanian health sector includes health facility expansions and renovations, particularly near the Syrian border in areas with large numbers of refugees; this assistance has improved Jordan's ability to deliver high quality reproductive, maternal, and newborn care in communities hosting refugees.

The Department of State's Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) and Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), USAID and other appropriate parties closely coordinate both overseas and in Washington to ensure humanitarian and development assistance programs are complimentary. The Department has also been exploring options along with the World Bank and other donors to provide multi-donor mechanisms that can provide leveraged assistance to Syria's neighbors.

Regarding the FY 2016 Appropriations bill, Section 7063 makes funds available to: expand and improve host government social services and basic infrastructure to accommodate the needs of such populations and persons; alleviate the social and economic strains placed on host communities; improve coordination of such assistance in a more effective and sustainable manner; and, leverage increased assistance from donors other than the United States government for central governments and local communities in such countries. This section does not, however, provide transfer authority between accounts.

Question 13. Having traveled to Central America in recent months, I am deeply concerned about the situation in the region. As past strategy showed the limitations of solely focusing on security assistance, I support the Administration's new push for a comprehensive approach. However, I am concerned that we are over funding economic programs, without making necessary and critical investments in strengthening the rule of law, building democratic institutions, and combating corruption. These programs were the smallest part of the FY 2016 request, and it appears the same in the FY 2017 request.

- Are we spending too little on strengthening democratic governance? Can security take root or economic growth flourish without a strong presence of the rule of law?

Answer. Strengthening governance and democracy are critical priorities for the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America. The Administration's FY 2017 Budget Request seeks $203 million to support governance in the region, an increase of $57 million from the allocation for governance support in FY 2015 ($146 million). Improving governance in Central America requires similar efforts to improve prosperity and security. The request therefore calls for increased commitment to all three of the Strategy's lines of action—security, prosperity, and governance—because advances in one line of action depend on advances in the others.

Our efforts to strengthen democracy by implementing the Strategy have yielded successes, such as anti-corruption efforts that strengthen the rule of law, which will serve as the foundation for new governance programs supported by the request. The U.N. International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), to which the U.S. government has contributed $37 million to date, pursued customs fraud investigations that led to the arrest of former-President Perez Molina, former-Vice President Baldetti, and 35 others, including current and former directors of the tax authority. Honduras signed an agreement with the Organization of American States (OAS) on January 19 to create the OAS Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH), which will also address high-level corruption. El Salvador's

new attorney general, Douglas Melendez, is establishing a public integrity task force, supported by U.S. assistance and training, to investigate corruption cases.

The request seeks to capitalize on and sustain these successes through new prosperity and governance programs, building upon the strong political will in the region to engage as active partners and commit to substantial reform. U.S. efforts will support improved tax administration and revenue collection and encourage the use of internal control systems and internal checks and balances. We will support professionalizing civil services and judiciaries and strengthen municipal governments. The request will also support civil society organizations and help build regional networks to promote civic engagement, the protection of human rights, and increased transparency.

Question 14. During my travel to Honduras, I had the chance meet with at-risk youth and hear first-hand the threats of crime, violence, drugs and the lack of opportunity the faced in their communities. Mr. Secretary, I was pleased to hear you announcement in mid-January that the U.S.—in close cooperation with UNHCR—would expand refugee processing in the region.

- Given the urgent humanitarian situation in the region, what concrete steps are we taking to launch this program and ensure that eligible individuals have access to asylum screening? When will it start?

Answer. The new Central American Minors program will complement our existing initiatives designed to protect Central American minors from the dangers of unaccompanied migration. Unlike our existing Central American Minors program, individuals and families without relatives in the United States will be eligible. We have spoken to a number of partners in the region, including nongovernmental entities, about different aspects of this program. These discussions are ongoing. We hope to begin accepting referrals in the coming months.

Question 15. The prospects of a peace deal in Colombia not only hold the potential to end 50 years of conflict, but also highlight the strategic contribution of U.S. foreign assistance. In the final weeks of negotiations, as some concerns remain over accountability and appropriate punishment for human rights violations. What can we do to support conditions for a sustainable and lasting peace in Colombia? How can the U.S. best use funding requested for the President's new initiative—Peace Colombia—to support implementation of a potential peace accord?

Answer. During President Santos' February 2016 visit, President Obama announced a new framework for our bilateral cooperation known as Peace Colombia. U.S. assistance in support of Peace Colombia is an important expression of our commitment to supporting one of our closest allies as it builds a more secure and prosperous future. We will focus ongoing and future U.S. assistance under three pillars: consolidating and expanding Colombia's progress on security and counternarcotics, while reintegrating demobilized FARC combatants into society; expanding the Colombian state's presence and institutions to strengthen the rule of law and rural economies, especially in former conflict areas; and promoting justice and addressing rights and interests of conflict victims.

The administration requested $391 million in FY 2017 bilateral foreign assistance for the Department of State and USAID, an increase from the FY 2015 level of $307 million for those accounts. The increased funding supports Colombia's efforts to implement a peace accord with the FARC. In addition to the $391 million, the Administration requested FY 2017 funds for other agencies; contributions to Peace Colombia goals, including $44.6 million in Department of Defense counternarcotics programs, for a total interagency peace implementation request of $450 million.

Economic Support Funds (ESF) address rural development, support to victims, reintegration of ex-combatants, and land reform. Increased funding will support Colombia's efforts to bring public services, including justice, dispute resolution, and critical infrastructure, to the populations of former conflict areas. Increasing our support to rural road maintenance and construction is an important priority for the Colombian government; the United States has some ability to provide technical assistance in this area.

In addition, funds will support integrating victims' needs and rights into peace accord implementation. Specifically, funds will support the search for missing persons and strengthen national reconciliation efforts by promoting truth, criminal accountability, reparations (including land restitution), and guarantees of non-recurrence for conflict victims. ESF will also support human rights and judicial training programs.

International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) assistance will support Colombia's effort to implement its new counternarcotics strategy, which places greater emphasis on riverine, maritime, aerial, and land-based interdiction;

manual eradication; seizing assets through anti-money laundering operations; and dismantling organized crime groups through complex criminal investigations. INCLE funds will help the Colombian authorities develop the intelligence to make manual eradication efficient and safe; enhance interdiction; and improve Colombia's ability to conduct complex investigations against criminal organizations. INCLE funding will also support extension of justice services to former conflict areas, a peace implementation priority.

Requested Foreign Military Financing (FMF) will increase the Colombian military's ability to project the state's presence and provide security in former conflict areas. Support will focus on engineering units, counternarcotics battalions, aviation support, and other units that will extend the reach of the Colombian military to new areas. FMF will also support institutional reforms that will enhance the efficiency and flexibility of Colombia's armed forces.

Requested Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and related program funding will support U.S. participation in the Global Demining Initiative for Colombia, co-led with Norway, which the President announced on February 4. The initiative seeks to marshal international resources and technical assistance for Colombia's pursuit of the goal to be landmine free by 2021. Landmines and improvised explosive devises kill or maim thousands of Colombians every year. Supporting Colombia's demining efforts will help the Colombian government deliver a concrete "peace dividend" to the Colombian people; reinforce support for a peace accord; and provide a foundation for rural economic development by facilitating licit agriculture, investments in infrastructure, and access to markets.

FISCAL YEARS 2015–2017 REQUESTS—STATE/USAID ONLY

$ in thousands for all items

	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Request*	FY 2017 Request
Columbia—State/USAID	307,776	288,726	391,253
Economic Support Fund	133,000	141,326	167,328
Food for Peace Title II	6,835	—	—
Foreign Military Financing	27,000	25,000	38,525
International Military Education & Training	1,446	1,400	1,400
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement	135,195	117,000	143,000
Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs	4,300	4,000	21,000
of which, Antiterrorism	800	500	—
of which, Conventional Weapons Destruction (Demining)	3,500	3,500	21,000

*FY 2016 levels are pending allocation by the Department and USAID

Question 16. How does your budget request fund health worker training and health system strengthening priorities worldwide? What are the U.S. goals for the multilateral Global Health Security Agenda for improving the capacity of countries worldwide to detect, prevent, and respond to diseases with pandemic potential? Given the extraordinary challenges we've seen with global health security over the last couple of years; please explain your flat funding request.

Answer. The Department advances our global health mission through diplomacy and robust foreign assistance programs. Healthy people make for stronger, more prosperous, and more stable nations; enhance international security and trade; and ensure a safer, more resilient America. The U.S.-launched Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) is a multilateral, multi-sectoral initiative to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats, regardless of source. Advancing the GHSA is a key U.S. government priority, and the United States is committed to assist at least 30 countries to achieve GHSA targets over the next five years.

The Department's extensive collaborations with partner governments, international organizations, other U.S. government agencies, and civil society contribute

to implementation of these and other health system strengthening activities. Specifically the Department:

- Ensures successful country-level implementation of U.S. programmatic activities; drives GHSA forward by assessing progress, determining where more work is needed, and helps U.S. technical agencies identify the partner(s) best placed to improve performance.
- Leads diplomatic outreach at senior levels to build international support for GHSA with current members, other countries, and regional and multilateral bodies, including the G7, the G20, and the World Health Organization.
- Manages relationships and builds partnerships with major non-governmental and philanthropic partners, especially internationally.

Through our interagency partners including USAID and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), GHSA promotes a strategic approach that fosters developing multi-sectoral collaboration with partners across public health/medicine, science, agriculture/veterinary, interior (security), border and trade, and defense agencies to prevent, detect, and respond to threats posed by the natural emergence of new diseases, as well as the intentional or accidental release of dangerous pathogens that have the potential to jump from animals to humans. A core component within GHSA is expanding the capacity of health care workers to identify and respond to infectious disease threats, expand the capacity of veterinarians and others within the animal health community to prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks that could spread to humans.

The U.S. government—including PEPFAR, the President's Malaria Initiative, and the rest of the broad global health portfolio—puts a high priority on health worker training and health systems strengthening. Funding for these critically important activities are core components of our programs and, while not requested separately, are incorporated into each component of health programming. For example, since its founding, PEPFAR has worked to build health infrastructure and strengthen health systems capacity.

To support PEPFAR's human resources for health (HRH) strategy, PEPFAR has committed significant resources to strengthen the capacity of health workers to address HIV/AIDS across Africa with a particular focus on some of the world's most fragile states. As of the end of FY 2015, PEPFAR has trained more than 190,000 health care workers to deliver HIV and other health services. These efforts not only support patients living with HIV/AIDS but also provide essential health systems that are leveraged for malaria, immunizations, and other health needs.

Additionally, PEPFAR's investments in health systems strengthening (HSS), including building laboratory capacity and creating and supporting strategic information systems, enabled countries with PEPFAR investments to respond to and contain Ebola outbreaks (e.g., Nigeria, Uganda, etc.). PEPFAR's health systems investments cover a wide range of structural and operational elements of a functioning health delivery system.

All PEPFAR country programs include core systems investments in areas of laboratory strengthening, strategic information, HIV and other essential drug and supply chain procurement and management, the production and training of human resources for health (i.e., professional and community health care workers), expanding health financing opportunities through increasing domestic investments, developing and implementing essential policies and practices at the national and subnational and clinical levels, promoting capable and functioning governance structures, and numerous other elements of an effective health service program. For example, HRH investments ensure that health workers with the right skills are in the right places to scale up HIV services to achieve UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets.

Our achievements within HRH include: rapid scale-up of highly trained providers to deliver services in health facilities and communities most affected by HIV/AIDS, major investments in future physicians and nurses, with HRH training and production capacities strengthened in 40 medical schools and 20 nursing schools across 14 sub-Saharan African countries; and strengthened HRH data systems to drive decision making, improved HRH policies and regulations to support both HIV services scale up and quality of services provided, and support for increased HRH retention.

The FY 2017 budget includes funding for continued implementation of GHSA activities in Asia and some African countries. This request complements FY 2016 Ebola emergency funding, which expanded the coverage of USAID's GHSA and emerging pandemic threats portfolio into West Africa, where activities had not been implemented.

Over the last 15 months, USAID has initiated work in 15 of the GHSA designated countries in Africa using the Ebola emergency funding. Technical assistance has been provided in key areas, including risk communications, infection prevention con-

trol, and targeted surveillance. Building health system capacity to sustainably achieve GHSA objectives is core to the USG's approach.

Question 17. Despite the threat that infectious diseases like TB pose to the world, the FY2017 budget request cuts funding for all USAID infectious disease programs, except malaria. How do you justify these substantial cuts in programs targeting such deadly diseases as TB?

Answer. USAID takes its responsibility to combat infectious diseases extremely seriously even in a difficult budget environment. In the example of tuberculosis (TB) that you have highlighted, the FY 2017 Budget Request for TB of $191 million is a reduction of $45 million from the FY 2016 appropriated level. Over the last five fiscal years (FY 2012-16), through USAID-Global Health Programs account funds, USAID's funding for TB reached $1.17 billion. However, these figures do not represent the totality of the U.S. government's response to TB. USAID collaborates with other programs including PEPFAR on TB/HIV co-infection interventions, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) to integrate and expand TB health services and strengthen delivery platforms.

The Global Fund is a major donor for international TB control, and the U.S. government remains the largest donor to the Global Fund. In fact, the U.S. government is the world's leading donor to TB, and USAID is the lead agency for international TB. Furthermore, middle-income countries, which have higher burdens of TB and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), have a greater ability to pay for their programs and are increasingly stepping up to this responsibility by bearing a larger share of the costs. To further increase their share of resources, USAID is continuing its work with these countries on domestic resource mobilization.

USAID will lead the international component of the National Action Plan for Combating Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis (National Action Plan) by introducing new point-of-care diagnostics, new MDR-TB drugs and regimens, and new approaches to improve adherence. USAID is already leveraging additional resources and creating efficiencies through innovative partnerships with two American companies and a global partnership to achieve more with existing resources, which include:

- Janssen Pharmaceuticals will provide $50 million for the National Action Plan, through the donation of new drugs, strengthening of surveillance systems, and improving adherence to MDR-TB treatment;
- Through a partnership among Cepheid (the producer of the Xpert TB and MDR-TB diagnostic), USAID, PEPFAR, UNITAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Cepheid agreed to reduce the price of the Xpert diagnostic cartridge from almost $17 to less than $10.
- The Cepheid diagnostic test price reduction has already increased our ability to accurately and quickly diagnose TB and MDR-TB, and saved over $50 million in two years, including for countries like South Africa's purchasing of tests with domestic resources; and
- USAID has partnered with the Stop TB Partnership's Global Drug Facility to achieve a 50 percent price reduction for MDR-TB drugs, thereby stretching resources for the U.S. government, Global Fund and country partners.

Question 18. Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR) support a broad range of U.S. national interests through critical, security related programs that reduce threats posed by international terrorist activities; landmines, and nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD). It appears funding for these programs in the 2017 budget was reduced by $217m almost 25 percent of their total funding.

- Can you explain why funding for these vital programs was reduced in the 2017 budget?

Answer. The Department's total FY 2017 Request for the Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR) account, including Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds, is $668.5 million, which is a reduction of $217.0 million (25 percent) below the level that Congress appropriated in FY 2016. The primary driver of the decrease in this account is the reduction of the Counter-terrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF) level. The FY 2017 Request for CTPF is $80 million, which is $95 million below the FY 2016 appropriated CTPF level of $175 million.

The Department's FY 2017 Request for CTPF is $80 million, comprised of $21 million in NADR OCO and $59 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF)—OCO for CTPF, which will build on the NADR funds Congress provided for CTPF in FY

2016. We expect that some FY 2016 CTPF-funded programs will be implemented over several years and therefore believe a smaller amount of NADR funding ($21 million requested) will suffice in FY 2017 to sustain and build on our FY 2016 investments, when combined with the request for ESF funding to support activities that will work to counter violent extremism.

Question 19a. The FY17 Congressional Budget Justification for the Diplomatic Policy and Support category included a $1.4 million increase to support cyber security policy coordination. Can you provide for us a detailed summary of what the increase in funds will be used for?

Answer. The Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues (S/CCI) FY 2017 Request is $5.4 million in Diplomatic Engagement resources, which is $1.4 million and one additional Foreign Service domestic position, above the FY 2016 level of $4 million. These funds support contract personnel salaries and benefits, official travel, and professional services.

Question 19b. Please provide a breakdown of the various specific programs under S/CCI and describe how they are connected to our larger strategic goals and objectives, especially as they pertain to the President's International Strategy for Cyberspace ("Strategy"). Please provide a historical breakdown of S/CCI's budget and programs since its creation in 2011.

Answer. The Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues (S/CCI) coordinates with the many offices within the Department of State including functional bureaus (e.g. Economic and Business Affairs; Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; Counter Terrorism; International Organizations Affairs; International Narcotics and Law Enforcement), geographic bureaus and across the U.S. government to advance an open, interoperable, secure and reliable Internet and information security policies and to implement the President's International Strategy for Cyberspace ("Strategy"). Priorities for the office include promoting norms of responsible state behavior, advancing cybersecurity, fighting cybercrime, promoting multi-stakeholder Internet governance, and advancing Internet freedom.

Separately, S/CCI executes its own capacity building and training programs.

Below is a breakdown of S/CCI's budget since its creation in 2011:

S/CCI'S BUDGET SINCE 2011

(in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	S/CCI Budget Total
2011	.400
2012	2
2013	4
2014	5
2015	7
2016	4
2017	5

Question 19c. How would the State Department evaluate its efforts to implement the President's International Strategy for Cyberspace?

Answer. The Department of State leads the U.S. government's diplomatic and development engagement on cyberspace, and is a leading participant in the whole-of-government approach to achieve foreign policy and national security objectives. The Department has devoted significant effort and resources to mainstreaming cyberspace issues within the Department, into building robust foreign diplomatic engagements on cyber issues, as well as building the necessary internal capacity to formulate, coordinate, and implement cyber policy and execute U.S. cyber diplomacy.

Developing and augmenting relationships with other countries using diplomatic and foreign assistance tools is our best means to implement the President's International Strategy for Cyberspace ("Strategy"). One metric to evaluate the Department's efforts is the number of countries we engage diplomatically on cyber policy and/or provide with technical assistance. The Department has steadily increased its

diplomatic and development assistance reach and is on track to meet the goal of 50 countries on or before September 2017.

At the same time, we have been successfully integrating cyber into State-USAID strategic plans and all of the core Department of State core strategic planning documents, targeting new resources, and increasing the capacity of our diplomatic corps. We have trained over 150 officers, from more than 120 embassies and posts, on cyberspace policy via Department-led interagency regional workshops in 2014 and 2015, and will train an additional 100 officers from embassies and posts in April 2016. Additionally, since 2011, we have trained over 200 officers from more than 70 embassies and posts on Internet and telecommunications policy through an annual course at the Foreign Service Institute and through regional training in 2014 and 2015. These trainings ensure officers at posts are fluent in cyber issues and can persuasively engage and influence our international interlocutors.

With consistent and expanded efforts, the number of like-minded countries will continue to grow, and the number of countries engaged with us in dialogues on cyber issues will increase.

Question 19d. How has the State Department leveraged bilateral and multilateral partnerships; international and multi-stakeholder organizations; and private sector collaboration to advance the seven policy priorities enumerated in the Strategy?

Answer. The Department of State, in partnership with other Federal departments and agencies, works bilaterally and multilaterally to lead and shape the international debate around achieving an open, secure, interoperable, and reliable Internet. The Department has leveraged the advent of cyberspace policy as a foreign policy imperative to create a broad range of new, cross-cutting bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagements, and integrated cyber issues into numerous existing diplomatic processes and fora.

We also leverage cyber policy to work closely on cross-cutting issues such as countering violent extremism online. Cyber issues have gained significant traction in virtually every regional and global venue, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the United Nations. The Department also plays a leading role in fostering collaboration between the public and private sector.

Since early 2011, the Department has made significant strides in implementing the President's strategic goals across all of the priorities.

Some specific accomplishments are:

- launching whole-of-government cyber policy dialogues with the European Union, Germany, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea, among others;
- launching a whole-of-government information and communication technology (ICT) and Internet Working Group with Brazil, and new digital economy policy dialogues with Colombia and Taiwan as well as a dialogue partnership with ASEAN;
- negotiating the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Principles for Internet Policymaking (2011), as well as updates to the "privacy guidelines" (2013) and "security guidelines" (2014) that advance strategies aimed at promoting sound Internet policy practices and managing privacy and digital security risk toward economic and social prosperity;
- working with the Department of Commerce and other interagency partners to facilitate the successful negotiation of the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework with the European Commission (to replace the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework);
- collaborating with the United Kingdom to launch the Global Conference on Cyberspace series in 2011, to expand the Strategy vision among a like-minded community of governments, civil society groups, and private sector entities;partnering with the governments of Hungary, the Republic of Korea, and the Netherlands to ensure additional successful Global Conferences on Cyberspace in 2012, 2013, and 2015;
- achieving ministerial commitments, advance polices to increase broadband access and facilitate the free flow of information across borders, and developing global ICT standards through engagements in international organizations, including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU);
- securing several key commitments from China on cyberspace issues after several years of high-level bilateral engagements;
- advancing and preserving the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance at key international negotiations including the U.N. General Assembly's

High Level Meeting on the Overall Review of the World Summit on the Information Society and numerous other global conferences and events;

- enlarging the Group of 7 (G7) 24/7 Network in partnership with the Department of Justice, to 70 countries;
- launched the Freedom Online Coalition as one of 15 founding countries in December 2011, and helped it expand to 29 countries;
- initiating two regional cyber consultations in Europe focusing on cooperation in the Baltic countries and coordination in the Nordic-Baltic countries;
- integrating cyber policy into existing mechanisms such as the North American Leaders Summit and the Gulf Cooperation Council; and
- convening successful U.S.- GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Cyber Working Group meetings in Riyadh in August 2015, which explored the cyber security readiness of Gulf countries and possible areas of cooperation in developing cyber policies.

Taking into consideration the rapidly expanding environment of global cyber threats and the reality that many developing nations are still in the early stages of their cyber maturity, the Department of State anticipates continued expansion of our cyber-focused diplomatic efforts for the foreseeable future, which will require additional resources for diplomatic engagement.

Question 19e. How has the State Department facilitated cybersecurity capacity-building abroad through building technical capacity, cybersecurity capacity, and policy relationships to advance the Strategy's development objectives?

Answer. The Department of State, in partnership with the interagency, utilizes an active, ongoing, and longstanding series of capacity building programs and consultations to expand Internet access and build the capacity of foreign governments across a range of interconnected cyberspace policy issues to combat cybercrime, counter violent extremism online, improve cooperation with global partners to address shared threats, promote a culture of cybersecurity, develop cyber confidence building measures, promote freedom online, and help developing countries improve domestic market and regulatory conditions to catalyze private sector investment.

The Department actively works to advance U.S. strategic interests, in coordination with like-minded partners. Many other foreign countries have followed our lead by drafting national cyber strategies, establishing cyber policy offices in their foreign ministries, and elevating cyber policy to a top diplomatic priority. Since early 2011, the Department has conducted a number of capacity building projects to support cybersecurity. Some specific accomplishments are:

- providing, in partnership with the interagency, cybercrime and cybersecurity training to officials from 35 sub-Saharan African nations;
- conducting cybercrime training for ASEAN countries and the Pacific Islands;
- joining the Netherlands in founding the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise as a global platform for countries, international; organizations, and the private sector to exchange best practices and expertise on cyber capacity building;
- partnering with Japan, Australia, Canada, the African Union Commission, and Symantec on four cybersecurity and cybercrime capacity building initiatives;
- helping launch the Alliance for Affordable Internet, a public-private partnership that works to catalyze policy change to drive down the cost of broadband and unlock rapid gains in Internet penetration rates around the world;
- investing $145 million in tools and technologies to promote freedom online;
- launching the Global Connect initiative that seeks to help bring 1.5 billion people without Internet access online by 2020;
- launching global computer security incident response teams (CSIRT) capacity building efforts via a Carnegie Mellon University Software Engineering Institute program; and
- promoting the development of comprehensive national cyber policies and strategies globally, in close partnership with regional multilateral bodies such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the African Union Commission (AUC) through a MITRE Corporation initiative for the State Department.

Cyber is a relatively new policy area. As the number of countries connected to the Internet continues to grow rapidly, we expect cyber issues to expand at a steep rate, with an increase in areas of focus, and the State Department will continue to use resources made available to address emergent concerns.

Question 19f. How has the State Department advanced the five "principles" (upholding fundamental freedoms, respect for property, valuing privacy, protection from crime, right of self-defense) and the five "emerging norms" (global interoperability, network stability, reliable access, multi-stakeholder governance, cybersecurity due diligence) that the Strategy enumerates?

Answer. As cyber issues have dramatically grown in global importance over the last five years, the Department has prioritized efforts to advance the principles and values described in the President's International Strategy for Cyberspace ("Strategy"). A key aspect of the Strategy is promoting stability in cyberspace through the identification and promotion of certain voluntary norms of state behavior in peacetime. Proceeding from the principles and "emerging norms" enumerated in the Strategy, significant progress has been made to develop international consensus around the concept of norms of state conduct in cyberspace. Specific accomplishments include:

- adoption of U.S.-championed framework of international cyber stability through pivotal negotiations in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security in 2013 and 2015 that resulted, inter alia, in the affirmation of the applicability of existing international law, including the United Nations Charter, to state conduct in cyberspace and the articulation of voluntary peacetime norms of state behavior;
- reaching consensus at the 2014 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Wales Summit on a statement affirming that international law applies to state behavior in cyberspace, and cyber defense is part of NATO's collective defense mission; and
- achieving 2015 Group of 20 (G20) Leaders' commitments to affirm the applicability of international law to state behavior in cyberspace, refrain from conducting or supporting cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property with the intent of providing competitive advantage to companies or commercial sectors, and endorse the view that all states should abide by norms of responsible behavior.

Additionally, the Department advances these principles, outside the framework of identifying voluntary peacetime norms of responsible state behavior, as part of our broader bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts to promote an open, secure, reliable and interoperable cyberspace. Noteworthy accomplishments include:

- helping to expand Budapest Convention membership by 17 countries since 2011, and to recruit another 10 countries that are actively working to become parties to the Convention. Promoted the Convention as a framework for numerous other countries;
- working with partners to secure passage of the 2012 U.N. Human Rights Council resolution affirming that people have the same rights online as offline, and a 2014 resolution reaffirming the same principle; and
- launching global computer security incident response team capacity building efforts, partnering with the Department of Homeland Security and the Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams.

Despite this progress, substantial work remains to realize the vision articulated in the Strategy. Thus, the Department anticipates continued acceleration of our cyber-focused diplomatic efforts for the foreseeable future, which will require additional resources for diplomatic engagement.

Question 20. Diversity Initiatives—I was pleased to see that the State Department Congressional Budget Justification included a request to pursue diversity initiatives that focus on recruitment and retention programs. In particular, it is great to see that many of the diversity reforms included in the "Department of State Operations Authorization and Embassy Security Act, Fiscal Year 2016" which passed unanimously by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were specifically called for in the request.

- Can you provide for us a specific breakdown of how the $5.4 million requested will be used for the new diversity initiatives? This breakdown should include other diversity programs and initiatives the State Department is currently pursuing. In particular, will there be an increase in the Donald Payne Fellowship for USAID? What other new initiatives is the State Department considering implementing to boost its objectives in having a diverse workforce?

Answer. The $5.4 million requested would be spent as follows: Pickering and Rangel Fellowship Programs: $4.5 million, including one Civil Service USDH position; Paid Internships: $400,000; International Career Advancement Program (ICAP): $100,000; Diversity Outreach: $375,000.

The Pickering and Rangel Fellowship programs are the Department's most significant tool for increasing diversity within the Foreign Service. These programs bolster the Department's ability to attract highly qualified and diverse candidates, at the graduate and undergraduate levels, who are interested in a career in the Foreign Service. The Department will expand partnerships with community based organizations such as Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) to facilitate the provision of more internships to students from underrepresented groups.

ICAP is a professional development and leadership program for mid-career professionals in the U.S. international affairs sector. The program's tradition of assisting mid-career professionals advance to more senior positions in international affairs aligns well with the Department's goals to strengthen leadership and to retain and sustain its diverse talent pool. Our Diversity Outreach funding will enable Human Resources (HR) to recruit more effectively for diversity by enhancing the Department's advertising contract and recruitment travel. HR's advertising and marketing strategies contribute directly to identifying, attracting, and engaging with the most competitive and diverse prospects possible to Department of State Foreign Service and Civil Service careers.

USAID's FY 2017 request for their Operating Expense (OE) account includes $850,000 for the Payne Fellowship program to support a total of seven students. This is consistent with their FY 2016 request, an increase of one to two fellows over their FY 2015 levels. The increase of $5.4 million in diversity funding came in State's Diplomatic and Consular Programs (D&CP) account. To further expand the Payne Fellowships, an increase would be needed in USAID's OE account.

Question 21. During a recent CoDel to southern Africa, local government and nongovernmental leaders in several countries identified poor primary education systems as the number one constraint to governance and economic growth. According to the USAID FY17 budget request, FY17 basic education programming is estimated at $561.8 million, $238.2 million (29.8 percent) below the FY15 directive of $800 million, and $38.7 million (6.4 percent) below the FY16 request level of $600.5 million.

- Why the reduction in funds for FY17? How does FY17 programming for basic education address key issues such as teacher training and credentialing and curriculum development?

Answer. At $562 million, the President's FY 2017 basic education request is a 6.4 percent decrease from the FY 2016 request, but an increase from the FY 2014 and FY 2015 requests. The request at this level is a result of a desire to strike a balance between support of basic education key priorities, such as democracy and human rights, food security, and assistance for sectors like health, water, and economic growth.

We recognize that investments in inclusive, quality education play a critical role in promoting long-term economic growth, promoting participatory democracies, and in turn reducing poverty and inequality. To address profound global education challenges, USAID has focused its Education Strategy on ensuring that all children learn to read and that children in crisis situations have access to a quality education, in spite of their circumstances. As a result of focusing efforts, USAID successfully has reached 38 million students with reading programs and improved the quality of education of nearly 12 million children in conflict environments.

FY 2017 programming, in line with USAID's Education Strategy, will continue to address key issues such as teacher training, credentialing and curriculum development. For example, in Malawi, through a partnership with Lakeland College in Wisconsin, USAID supports a teacher education program that emphasizes early grade reading. Teachers in Jordan will be trained on how to provide psycho-social support and use non-traditional learning techniques to better assist students who have been adversely impacted by the Syrian crisis. Mother tongue curriculum development will continue in Ethiopia, ensuring that a generation of students will have access to quality instruction.

In addition to direct assistance for education, USAID prioritizes partnerships to leverage technical knowledge and financial resources, extending the influence of appropriated funds. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, USAID leveraged €36 million committed by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) to jointly support increased access to primary school for out-of-school children; increased retention of children in schools; strengthening

capacities of the parents committees and school management committees; and strengthening the Ministry for Primary, Secondary, and Vocational Education.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO SECRETARY KERRY BY SENATOR RUBIO

Question 1. It has been 48 days since North Korea's nuclear test and 16 days since its missile test, but the UN Security Council has not acted except for statements saying it would "take further significant measures" and "adopt [a new Security Council resolution] expeditiously." Why has the UN Security Council not acted and what signal does that send to North Korea on the consequences (or lack thereof) for its provocations?

Answer. In response to the North Korean's fourth nuclear test on January 6, 2016, and its launch using ballistic missile technology on February 7, 2016, the United States will propose to impose additional binding sanctions on North Korea (DPRK) as these actions are in clear violation of its U.N. obligations. We will push for the resolution to contain the toughest set of sanctions imposed by the Security Council in more than two decades. They will have broader scope and impact by targeting key economic activities that generate funds for the regime as well as further restricting DPRK access to commodities and technologies that support proscribed activities. The UNSCR will also incorporate unprecedented inspection and financial provisions, including mandatory inspections of cargo to and from the DPRK and a requirement to terminate banking relationships with DPRK financial institutions.

For these new, as well as existing, U.N. sanctions to be effective, international cooperation is essential. We will continue to work closely with the Security Council's DPRK sanctions committee and its Panel of Experts, like-minded partners, and others around the globe to ensure the full and transparent implementation of new and all previous U.N. resolutions. We will also continue our outreach to countries that have diplomatic or trade relations with North Korea to prevent activities proscribed by U.N. resolutions or targeted by U.S. sanctions. We maintain regular contact and consultations with our allies and partners to counter—whether through persuasion or pressure—the threat to global security posed by the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Question 2. Following the President signing the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016 into law,

- What steps has the State Department taken encourage other countries to adopt similar measures?
- Has the State Department warned countries on the types of activities that could be sanctioned?

Answer. The United States is actively engaged with our regional partners to coordinate bilateral sanctions aimed at encouraging North Korea to alter their strategic calculus in regards to the development of nuclear weapons. We work closely with our partners in the region to ensure that bilateral sanctions send a strong message to North Korea in the wake of recent violations of previous United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The act requires sanctions on those who knowingly transfer significant amounts of certain metals, minerals, or software to or from North Korea for use by or in processes directly related to certain entities and activities, and we have added into our discussions with other countries guidance as to the types of activities that are sanctioned under the new law. Following the enactment of the act and the adoption of UNSCR 2270, the United States is engaging countries around the world to underscore the importance of vigorous sanctions enforcement.

Question 3. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is an integral component of Iran's economy, terrorist activities and human rights violations, and remains sanctioned under the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. What steps have been taken to warn foreign governments, companies, and financial institutions of continuing engagement with IRGC or IRGC-affiliated companies?

Answer. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) remains firmly under U.S. sanctions for its support for terrorism and other activities. We have no intention of removing these sanctions until the IRGC ceases such activity. Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, which allows us to target terrorists of any stripe across the globe, is employed forcefully against Iran. The IRGC-Qods Force, the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security, Iran's Mahan Air, Hizballah, and over 100 other

Iran-related individuals and entities remain subject to sanctions under this E.O. Further, under Iran sanctions statutes, foreign financial institutions may be subject to secondary sanctions for knowingly facilitating a significant financial transaction or providing significant financial services for any person on the Specially Designated National (SDN) List, which includes the IRGC and IRGC-related officials, agents, and affiliates. These and other authorities allow us to continue to target the IRGC for any activities which threaten us or our allies.

Question 4. The Wall Street Journal reported that the Obama administration agreed to talks with North Korea on a peace treaty just before North Korea's January nuclear test and asked that the discussions also address the nuclear program.

- Did the Obama administration agree to talks on a peace treaty without any concessions on North Korea's nuclear program?
- If so, were South Korea and Japan on board with proceeding with discussions on a peace treaty without any nuclear concessions?

Answer. It was the North Koreans who proposed discussing a peace treaty. The United States carefully considered their proposal and made clear that denuclearization had to be part of any such discussion. North Korea rejected our response. Our response to North Korea's proposal was consistent with our longstanding focus on denuclearization.

Question 5. Mahan Air, an Iranian airline that was sanctioned in October 2011 for its activities with designated terrorist groups the IRGC Qods Force and Hizballah, continues to fly to Europe.

- What has the Obama administration done to prevent a U.S. designated, terrorism-linked airline from continuing to fly to Europe? Has the Obama administration considered using secondary sanctions authorities against companies that provide services to Mahan Air?

Answer. We share your concerns about the activities of Mahan Air. The Departments of Commerce, Treasury, and State have a long history of working to thwart Mahan Air's activities. We share your commitment to enforcement of measures against denied persons and designated entities and will continue to vigorously employ our authorities as part of our broader efforts to counter Iran's support for terrorism and destabilizing regional activities. We have numerous domestic authorities—including sanctions—to counter Iran's support for terrorism or other destabilizing activities. The State Department, Treasury, Commerce and our partners in the Intelligence Community are constantly looking for solid evidence of such activity. When we see evidence, we will build a case, and we will take action.

For years, Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) has investigated and targeted Mahan Air procurement activities using its unique administrative authorities. BIS maintains a Temporary Denial Order (TDO) against Mahan, and its procurement agents, that has been in place since 2008. This TDO is renewed every 180 days pursuant to renewed findings that Mahan Air continues to present an imminent threat of violating U.S. export control laws. BIS has added a number of Mahan front companies and procurement agents to the TDO, as well as to its Entity List, thus prohibiting engagement in transactions involving items subject to the Export Administration Regulations.

Treasury's ongoing efforts to disrupt Mahan Air's ability to operate include numerous designations against the airline and its support networks since Mahan Air's designation in 2011. Treasury continues to vigorously enforce sanctions against this type of activity, designating 16 persons for their involvement with Mahan Air and identifying more than 50 Mahan Air planes as blocked property. Treasury also uses its authorities to disrupt Mahan Air's financial relationships.

The State Department also plays a vital role in the administration's efforts to counter Mahan Air and its networks by engaging with foreign governments to seek their cooperation in disrupting or limiting the activities of Mahan Air abroad. Working together with its interagency colleagues, State's efforts have been successful in disrupting Mahan Air's activities on several occasions.

The Departments will continue working together to actively investigate and aggressively enforce violations of sanctions on Iran to work together to counter Iran's and Mahan Air's malign activities. This effort includes ongoing exploration of options—including by working with friendly countries—to deprive Mahan Air of the use of its aircraft and its ability to engage in further illicit conduct.

Question 6. The politically driven manipulation of the State Department's 2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is a major setback to U.S. efforts against human trafficking around the world. According to whistleblowers within the State Depart-

ment, the administration has announced to the world that it will allow political considerations to trump real reform. The most glaring example is the politically driven improvement of Cuba from the "Tier 3" category to the "Tier 2 Watch List."

- Given the widely held perception that several countries were undeservedly upgraded in this year's report for political reasons, what will be done to rebuild the credibility of the report?
- In regards to Cuba, will you be willing to place Cuba back on Tier 3 for its failure to combat human trafficking?

Answer. Over the past 15 years, the Trafficking in Persons Report has consistently drawn public attention to the problem of modern slavery and foreign government efforts to address it. The report is widely regarded as the gold standard for anti-trafficking information. The Department strives to make the report as objective and accurate as possible, documenting the successes and shortcomings of government anti-trafficking efforts measured against the minimum standards established under U.S. law. The attention that the report generates demonstrates the impact and importance of addressing this crime and protecting trafficking victims. The Department will continue to use the report to elevate the issue on the global stage, to guide its anti-trafficking programming around the world, and to encourage foreign governments to implement recommended improvements in their efforts.

In the report, the Department evaluates government efforts to combat trafficking based on criteria established under U.S. law. I have made combating human trafficking a priority for the Department, and demonstrated this through consistent high-level outreach and dedication of resources.

As of the writing of the 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, Cuba did not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it was making significant efforts to do so. A Tier 2 Watch List ranking indicates there is much room for improvement in the government's anti-trafficking efforts; an upgrade to the Watch List does not mean the government is doing enough to address human trafficking. Cuba was upgraded to Tier 2 Watch List in 2015 because it made significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but did not yet fully comply. In the same manner, the 2016 TIP Report will evaluate the government's efforts and assign Cuba a Tier ranking based on those efforts during the reporting period, regardless of where it was ranked the previous year.

Question 7. In the 2008 reauthorization of the TVPRA, the State Department was authorized to suspend certain categories of U.S. visas (A-3/G-5) used for guest workers at specific diplomatic missions or international organizations that have abused or exploited such workers in the past. Despite several cases, the State Department has yet to suspend any countries A-3/G-5 visa programs for abuse. Will you pledge to ensure that this portion of the TVPRA is enforced?

Answer. The Department is committed to implementing all applicable provisions of the TVPA as reauthorized, including those relating to A-3 and G-5 visas. Although there has not yet been a case of visa suspension under the William Wilberforce Act, the Department has seen that the law has been a factor in persuading foreign governments and their diplomats to address allegations of abuse made by domestic workers, and in some cases, to settle civil cases brought by former domestic workers. In addition, the suspension provision appears to have made foreign missions more attentive to the issue generally and more willing to cooperate with the Department when allegations of abuse are brought to their attention.

Question 8. During the 2013 Annual Meeting of the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons, you announced the launch of a new in-person registration process for foreign domestic workers to prevent trafficking by diplomats. What is the status of this program? Is every A-3 or G-5 visa-holder being served by this program?

Answer. The In-person Registration Program for foreign domestic workers employed by foreign mission and international organization personnel launched in October 2015. The program currently covers foreign domestic workers employed by foreign mission and international organization personnel in the Washington, DC area. The program will continue to be expanded to cover foreign domestic workers employed by foreign mission and international organization personnel throughout the United States.

Question 9. As you know, Christians, Yezidis, and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria have been deliberately and ruthlessly targeted by the Islamic State. This genocidal campaign threatens to wipe out these communities from the lands they've inhabited since Antiquity. The Omnibus bill required the Department, with-

in 90 days of passage, to submit to the appropriate congressional committees and evaluation of the persecution endured by these groups and a determination of whether such attacks constitute genocide.

- Is the Department on track to make that determination in a timely fashion?
- Apart from seeking input from outside groups has the Department undertaken its own fact-finding assessment akin to what Secretary Powell commissioned during the Darfur genocide?

Answer. We are appalled by the horrific acts being committed by Da'esh and will seek accountability for those responsible. The United States is leading a coalition of 66 partners to degrade and ultimately defeat Da'esh.

The Department of State is currently conducting an assessment of whether Da'esh's actions meet legal definitions of internationally recognized atrocity crimes. This effort includes collecting and evaluating available information regarding Da'esh atrocities from all sources. We are working on our response to the report tasked to us in Section 7033(d) of the FY 2016 Appropriations Law.

Regardless of whether Da'esh's conduct satisfies certain legal definitions, including genocide and crimes against humanity, the U.S. government will continue to work to help prevent mass atrocities, particularly against vulnerable communities, and to support those victimized by Da'esh. This is why we have provided nearly $624 million since FY 2014 in humanitarian assistance for vulnerable Iraqis in Iraq and the region. As new areas are liberated from Da'esh's grasp, there will be a great deal more for us to do.

Question 10. As of Thursday, Chinese lawyer Zhang Kai has been in detention for six months. As you know he was detained the day before he was supposed to meet with U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, David Saperstein. After a flurry of public advocacy on his behalf last fall, things seem to have quieted down. When was the last time the Department raised it with the Chinese government? Do you have any update on his case?

Answer. The Department has been closely following developments in Zhang Kai's case since his detention last August just prior to a meeting with Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom David Saperstein. Ambassador Saperstein publicly called for Zhang's release immediately following his detention. In October 2015, Secretary of State John Kerry and Ambassador Saperstein again called for Zhang's release in their public remarks during the rollout of the 2014 International Religious Freedom Report. In the February 26, 2016, daily press briefing, the Department spokesperson expressed concern about the airing of Zhang Kai's purported confession on state media prior to any indictment or judicial process.

The Department will continue to press China, in public and private, to release Zhang Kai and to uphold its international human rights commitments and release all those seeking to peacefully uphold the freedom of religion.

Question 11. Also in the realm of religious freedom, Pastor Gu Yuese, also known as Joseph Gu, was detained in China. He is the highest ranking Christian leader detained since the Cultural Revolution. Gu, who headed Hangzhou's prominent Chongyi Church, was reportedly removed from his post by China's Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), 10 days prior to his detention. He had been vocal in his opposition to the government's cross-removal and destruction campaign in the eastern province of Zhejiang.

- Do you have any update on this case? Has the Department raised it? What do you think it represents in terms of the trajectory for religious freedom?

Answer. The Department has followed Pastor Gu Yuese's case since his detention by Chinese authorities earlier in this year. On February 4, 2016, a State Department spokesperson in a statement to the press called on Chinese authorities to immediately release Pastor Gu and other detained religious leaders and activists, and to cease the apparent cross removal and church demolition campaign in Zhejiang province. In our high level engagements with China, including the 2015 Human Rights Dialogue, we have called on China to release all prisoners of conscience, including those detained for peacefully expressing their religious beliefs. In that same dialogue, we also expressed concern about the ongoing and systematic religious freedom violations in China.

Question 12. The Department was slow to register any sort of concern regarding the recent disappearances of the Hong Kong booksellers. Apart from urging China to "clarify the current status" of the individuals in questions, how else has the Department engaged? Department Spokesman John Kirby, in a daily press briefing,

indicated that these cases "raise serious questions about China's commitment to Hong Kong's autonomy under the 'one country, two systems framework'"

- Have these concerns been raised with Beijing directly and if so how have they responded?

Answer. The State Department and our Consulate General in Hong Kong have been closely following the bookseller disappearances, even before publisher Lee Bo went missing in December, and have made our concerns known, both publicly and in private exchanges with Hong Kong and mainland Chinese officials. In addition to our multiple public comments, the Department has repeatedly raised these cases, including at senior levels, in Washington, in Beijing, and in Hong Kong. Most recently, Deputy Secretary Blinken raised the issue before the Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 2. We do not accept Beijing's assertion that these cases are an internal matter, and we will continue to voice our concerns, shared by many in Hong Kong and the international community, that Beijing's actions contravene its commitment to Hong Kong's autonomy.

Question 13. U.S. law requires that foreign assistance may not be sent to Haiti unless the Secretary of State certifies and reports that the Government of Haiti has taken the steps to hold free and fair parliamentary elections and seat a new Haitian Parliament; strengthen the rule of law in Haiti, including by selecting judges in a transparent manner; respect the independence of the judiciary; and improve governance by implementing reforms to increase transparency and account ability.

- Can you please provide an update on the current political structure, the process for the transitional government and the plan to elect a new President?

Answer. Elections in 2015 resulted in the seating of a new Haitian Parliament. The parliamentarians were sworn in January 12 and the first National Assembly took place in February. Due to the cancellation of a few of the first round races, there remain six (out of 30) Senate seats and 27 (out of 136) seats in the Chamber of Deputies for which a run-off round of voting must take place. Under an agreement signed by outgoing President Michel Martelly and the presidents of both chambers of Parliament, the final round of presidential elections, as well as the final round for remaining parliamentary seats, is scheduled for April 24. The publication of final results is scheduled for May 6, and the installation of the newly elected president for May 14.

On February 14, Haiti's National Assembly elected President of the Senate Jocelerme Privert to serve as interim president and to advance the February 5 political accord toward completion of the electoral process in Haiti. The interim president is charged with nominating a consensus prime minister and cabinet and replacing the nine-member Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), the body that will organize the final round of elections. Provisional President Jocelerme Privert issued a presidential decree February 25 appointing Fritz-Alphonse Jean as interim prime minister following meetings throughout the week with both houses of Parliament. Interim Prime Minister Jean will form a Cabinet and submit his government and statement of policies for review and approval/disapproval by the Parliament.

The CEP has not yet been re-established. Although all nine social sectors were to nominate representatives to a newly configured CEP by February 24, several sectors are still working on their nominations. CEP members represent the media, unions, human rights, universities and educators, the religious community, business, and vodou sectors. Reconstituting the CEP is of utmost importance to keep with the schedule for the April 24 elections.

The United States supports all efforts aimed at finding consensual and constructive solutions that will see the political accord implemented and the electoral process concluded April 24. The Haitian people deserve to have their voices heard and needs met through a democratically elected government. This ongoing effort is a Haitian-led process that must ultimately reflect the will and intent of the Haitian people.

Question 14. President Obama's FY 2017 request provides funds for the promotion of a stable and economically viable Haiti by continuing post-earthquake reconstruction and sustainable development programs. Please provide details of those programs.

Answer. The FY 2017 request supports the Post-Earthquake U.S. Government Haiti Strategy, extended until 2018, with continued focus on four strategic pillars: Infrastructure and Energy; Food and Economic Security; Health and Other Basic Services; and Governance and Rule of Law in three geographic corridors, including the greater Port-au-Prince area, the St. Marc Corridor, and the Cap Haïtien Corridor. U.S. assistance supports ongoing efforts for Haiti's reconstruction through a

Haitian-led response in coordination with the international community. U.S. funding assists the Government of Haiti develop transparent and accountable institutions; make better informed strategic public investments; enforce security and the rule of law; provide energy, shelter, and other productive infrastructure especially for vulnerable groups; increase access to and quality of public services in health and education; improve potable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services; drive economic growth through increased labor income and workforce development; stabilize and secure natural resource management; and implement a country-led, comprehensive food security strategy. U.S. assistance programs emphasize country ownership as well as strengthening local institutions to help Haiti further chart its own development and promote sustainability.

The United States is firmly committed to long-term support for the Haitian people. Working closely with other donors and the Government of Haiti, FY 2017 assistance will continue to foster credible and transparent electoral processes. A top priority is supporting the creation of a permanent electoral council responsible for building public trust in the integrity of the electoral process. U.S. assistance will support local capacity building by helping improve laws and policies in support of decentralization and de-concentration of central government services toward local governments in target communities.

Stability in Haiti will undergird progress across all sectors, and the importance of improving the capacity of the Haitian National Police (HNP) to provide nationwide security will grow as the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) considers a possible further drawdown. FY 2017 assistance will continue to bolster HNP's administrative and operational capabilities through training, the embedding of subject matter experts in key HNP leadership offices, and continued support for incoming cadets. Activities will also support capacity building for the Haitian Coast Guard (HCG) unit, enabling it to enhance control of territorial waters, reduce illegal immigration, combat illicit trafficking, and build the leadership and maritime skills of the HCG through professional military education and technical training to support maritime security operations in Haiti.

Assistance will also help strengthen local government capacity to sustainably increase local revenues and improve the service delivery of Haitian civil society and government institutions. Activities will assist the Government of Haiti to promote an efficient and fair judicial system by addressing pre-trial detention, promoting judicial independence, advancing penal code reform, training community leaders in alternative dispute resolution, and providing free legal aid to low-income communities.

U.S.-sponsored economic growth programs will help Haitian financial institutions create and improve financial products and will facilitate greater access to basic financial services and credit through the use of digital finance solutions that expand reach to underserved markets, thereby increasing financial inclusion and economic opportunity. U.S. assistance will continue to support private-sector capacity building to enhance job creation and improve the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises. Programs will engage the Haitian diaspora to unlock liquidity and spur private investment, provide technical assistance that expands enterprises and fosters innovation, and build and strengthen the Haitian workforce through targeted skills training for workers in select value chains, such as in agriculture, construction, and the garment industries.

In terms of improving access to economic opportunity through education, U.S. assistance will address barriers to quality education with a new focus on out-of-school children and youth, including those with disabilities, and will continue to improve early grade reading outcomes. Activities will design and implement evidence-based reading programs for first through fourth grades and support the Ministry of National Education's development of strategies to build community support for improved literacy outcomes and increased access to education. U.S. assistance will also build the capacity of the Ministry of National Education at the national, departmental, and district levels.

As part of the President's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative, Feed the Future, we will support the efforts of the Government of Haiti to refine and implement a country-led comprehensive food security strategy to reduce hunger and increase economic growth through market-led agricultural development. These strategies aim to reduce hunger, improve nutrition, and promote broad-based economic growth through agricultural development. The program will train local enterprises, farmers, water-users associations, and other organizations and community groups to provide extension services at key points throughout targeted value chains. Moreover, the program will integrate WASH activities to reduce water-borne diseases and improve livelihoods.

U.S. assistance will continue to support the provision of health services, including infectious disease prevention and integrated HIV/AIDS services for approximately

45 percent of Haitians, as well as nutritional support for vulnerable populations. The U.S. government will continue to strengthen referral networks within the development corridors and rebuild and reform the management of essential health institutions affected by the 2010 earthquake. U.S. assistance will support the goals and principles of the Global Health Initiative to achieve major improvements in health outcomes in three globally shared goals: ending preventable child and maternal deaths, creating an AIDS-free generation, and protecting communities from other infectious diseases.

Question 15. President Obama's FY 2017 budget request supports Central American governments for their progress on addressing the migration of unaccompanied, undocumented minors, including improving border security, combating human smuggling and trafficking, and supporting repatriation for migrants returning from the U.S.

- What progress been made on addressing these issues with prior year funds?
- Please explain how have you been able to measure the success of such progress.

Answer. The U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America is addressing the underlying conditions driving migration from the region. FY 2015 funds are supporting efforts of the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to reverse endemic violence and poverty, promote economic prosperity, crack down on criminal networks, and strengthen good governance and the rule of law.

With State Department funding, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is deploying nine advisors to the region to provide the governments with technical assistance, mentoring, and training on border security issues.

DHS has helped the Governments of El Salvador and Guatemala to establish Transnational Crime Investigative Units to combat transnational organized crime, including human smuggling and trafficking. In Honduras, U.S. sponsored and vetted Honduran units are conducting border enforcement operations to disrupt human, narcotics, currency, and weapons smuggling.

With the financial support from USAID, the International Organization of Migration is helping the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to improve their repatriation facilities, enhance their capacity to receive and assist their citizens, and to develop a data management tracking system on migration, child protection, and security related authorities.

Our strategy is designed for long-term success, and recognizes that we must assist the Central American governments as they make systemic reforms. Part of our approach includes continuous monitoring and evaluation of our assistance in the short- and medium-term. Our ultimate vision for success is a safe and prosperous Central America with transparent, accountable, and capable governments.

Question 16. The administration included $3.8 million within their FY 2017 budget request from the Diplomatic and Consular Programs account (D&CP) for infrastructure improvements to convert the U.S. Interests Section to a U.S. Embassy in Havana.

- How does the State Department plan to spend that $3.8 million?
- What facility upgrades are required at the Embassy?
- Is the Castro regime placing any limits on the type of construction or modifications that can be made?
- Will any foreign contractors be involved in any construction efforts?
- What counterintelligence mitigation efforts have been made for any construction activities at the Embassy?
- Has the USG been limited in the types of equipment and materials that can be brought into Cuba to support the Embassy?
- What future plans, if any, are included in this budget in support of the administration's new policy on Cuba?
- How will this budget request be used for democracy promotion and efforts to reach the Cuban people including beyond the geographic limits of Havana?
- How many locally employed staff are at the Embassy?
- What is the status of the State Department in implementation of the reforms in the FY 2016 Intelligence Authorization Act to ensure all supervisory positions are held by U.S. persons?
- Does the State Department believe it's consistent with the purpose and intent of U.S. law, and in the foreign policy interests of the United States, to allow U.S. companies to invest in military owned companies that played a role in smuggling weapons to North Korea?

Answer. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) has been unable to correct long standing building deficiencies effectively and perform regular, routine maintenance and repairs on our facilities in Havana over the last 50 years, spanning the time when the United States had no formal diplomatic relations with Cuba. The Government of Cuba's restrictive import policies and limit on the number and availability of temporary duty (TDY) visas severely hampered OBO's access to Post and necessary materials for projects. The aging facilities thus need major rehabilitation, which would include upgrades to the Chancery's internal systems, security modifications, and other repairs and improvements. Major rehabilitation projects are planned, funded, and managed by the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. The re-establishment of diplomatic relations has provided an easing of the Cuban government's strict import policies and an increase in the number of maintenance visas available. Funding caps or shortfalls would only complicate efforts to address years of neglect.

Our $3.8 million FY 2017 Diplomatic and Consular Program (D&CP) funding request is for a mixture of communication and office infrastructure improvements and increases in staff, including improvements to our aging cabling and internet infrastructure in the Chancery and replacement of 20-year-old office furniture.

The Government of Cuba does not place limits on the type of construction modifications the Department can make to our Embassy. Foreign contractors would not be involved in infrastructure improvements funded by the FY 2017 D&CP funding request. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the counterintelligence mitigation efforts taken for construction activities in a classified setting.

Embassy Havana requires additional U.S. Direct Hire personnel to support an already overburdened platform. A mixture of reporting, public diplomacy, 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. Given the growing number of authorized American visitors to Cuba and the demand for visa services, we have also requested additional consular staffing. Additional staff will free up resources to conduct more trips outside of Havana to connect with average Cubans on a wide range of issues.

The specific number of Cubans working at the U.S. Embassy in Havana varies from time to time. Currently, we have fewer than 300 Cuban nationals working in various administrative and support roles.

We are preparing the report requested in the FY 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Division M, Section 512, regarding the use of locally employed staff serving at a United States Diplomatic Facility in Cuba. This report will be submitted to Congress by the due date.

The State Department does not believe it is in our foreign policy interest for U.S. firms to invest in any entity, Cuban or any other nationality, that would smuggle weapons to North Korea. The comprehensive embargo severely limits U.S. firms' commercial engagement in Cuba. We refer you to the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, which administers and enforces the Cuban Assets Control Regulations, for specific questions on U.S. financial transactions with Cuban entities.

Question 17. As part of the administration's changes to Cuba policy regarding the opening of the U.S. Embassy, Cuba agreed to allow U.S. diplomats to travel throughout the island, albeit with prior notice.

- Has the Cuban regime upheld its commitment to allow travel?
- Please detail trips, including purpose, by U.S. diplomats outside Havana since the Embassy opening.

Answer. We were able to negotiate greater flexibility for our diplomats to travel outside of Havana during the negotiations to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Cuban government. The previous policy required all U.S. diplomats to seek permission from Cuban officials ten days in advance of any travel outside of Havana. Now, four diplomats and their family members are permitted to travel freely without providing prior notification to the Cuban government. All others are required to notify the Cuban government four business days before travel. The new requirement is for notification, not approval of travel. Reciprocal restrictions apply to Cuban diplomats at the Cuban embassy in Washington, DC.

U.S. officials at Embassy Havana have reported no difficulties regarding Cuban government interactions concerning travel outside of Havana or the notification process for this purpose.

Embassy officials have traveled outside of Havana for a variety of purposes when schedules permit. For example, one embassy official traveled to Cuba's second and

third largest cities—Santiago de Cuba and Camaguey—in a week-long over-land trip that facilitated contact with average Cubans. The official spoke with small business owners, church leaders, and municipal government officials, in addition to average Cubans he encountered in the streets and plazas. Another official accompanied a congressional staff delegation to Pinar del Rio to meet with local government officials, church representatives, and members of the Cuban private sector. There has also been some travel outside of Havana for personal travel, something previously not regularly permitted.

Question 18. President Obama had originally said that he will visit Cuba when "the conditions are right, if in fact we've seen progress in the liberty and freedoms of the ordinary Cubans." "He wasn't interested in validating the status quo."

- What are the conditions the President was referring to? And do you believe those conditions have been met?

Answer. President Obama announced plans to travel to Cuba March 21-22. In Cuba, the President will work to build on the progress we have made toward normalization of relations—advancing commercial and people-to-people ties that can improve the well-being of the Cuban people. The trip also provides an opportunity to engage the Cuban government directly on human rights.

In addition to holding a bilateral meeting with Cuban President Raul Castro, President Obama will talk with members of civil society, entrepreneurs, and Cubans from different walks of life.

Our policy of engagement has further empowered a Cuban private sector that now employs at least one in four Cuban workers. For example, people in the United States can send unlimited remittances in support of private businesses, provide microfinance and entrepreneurial training activities, and export a broad range of materials and supplies to Cuban entrepreneurs. The number of self-employed Cubans has grown remarkably, from 145,000 in 2009 to approximately 500,000 in 2015. Just as we are doing our part to remove impediments that have been holding Cuban citizens back, we are urging the Cuban government to make it less difficult for its citizens to start businesses, to engage in trade, and to access information online.

The U.S. government has serious concerns about the human rights situation in Cuba and we regularly convey them to the Cuban government. We also consult with our allies in the region, and raise the human rights situation in Cuba at international fora.

Our policy change has brought greater focus and more public discourse on human rights, both in Cuba and the United States. We speak to democracy and human rights activists on the island and with those who travel to Washington, DC, who regularly tell us that since the policy change they feel more emboldened to express their views, and they are doing so. We continue to see demonstrations on the island; many march peacefully—some on a weekly basis—to advocate for fundamental freedoms. We commend those who defend freedom of expression, assembly, and democratic values. We have not and will not defend the Cuban government's human rights record, nor its response to these demonstrations.

Question 19. The FY 2017 budget request includes support for the implementation of the pending peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC.

- What programs will be supported under this request?

Answer. During President Santos' February 2016 visit, President Obama announced a new framework for our bilateral cooperation: Peace Colombia.

U.S. assistance in support of Peace Colombia will focus ongoing and future U.S. assistance under three pillars: consolidating and expanding Colombia's progress on security and counternarcotics, while reintegrating demobilized FARC combatants into society; expanding the Colombian state's presence and institutions to strengthen the rule of law and rural economies, especially in former conflict areas; and promoting justice and addressing rights and interests of conflict victims.

The administration requested $391 million in FY 2017 bilateral foreign assistance for the State Department and USAID, an increase from the FY 2015 level of $307 million for those accounts. The increased funding will support Colombia's efforts to implement a peace accord with the FARC. In addition to the $391 million, the administration requested FY 2017 funds for other agencies' contributions to Peace Colombia goals, including $44.6 million in Department of Defense counternarcotics programs, for a total interagency peace implementation request of $450 million.

Economic Support Funds (ESF) address rural development, support to victims, reintegration of ex-combatants, and land reform. Increased funding will support Colombia's efforts to bring public services, including justice, dispute resolution, and

critical infrastructure, to the populations of former conflict areas. Increasing our support to rural road maintenance and construction is an important priority for the Colombian government; the United States has some ability to provide technical assistance in this area. In addition, funds will support integrating victims' needs and rights into peace accord implementation. Specifically, funds will support the search for missing persons and strengthen national reconciliation efforts by promoting truth, criminal accountability, reparations (including land restitution), and guarantees of non-recurrence for conflict victims. ESF will also support human rights and judicial training programs.

International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) assistance will support Colombia's effort to implement its new counternarcotics strategy, which places greater emphasis on riverine, maritime, aerial, and land-based interdiction; manual eradication; seizing assets through anti-money laundering operations; and dismantling organized crime groups through complex criminal investigations. INCLE funds will help the Colombian authorities develop the intelligence to make manual eradication efficient and safe; enhance interdiction; and improve Colombia's ability to conduct complex investigations against criminal organizations. INCLE funding will also support extension of justice services to former conflict areas, a peace implementation priority.

Requested Foreign Military Financing (FMF) will increase the Colombian military's ability to project the state's presence and provide security in former conflict areas. Support will focus on engineering units, counternarcotics battalions, aviation support, and other units that will extend the reach of the Colombian military to new areas. FMF will also support institutional reforms that will enhance the efficiency and flexibility of Colombia's armed forces.

Requested Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and related program funding will support U.S. participation in the Global Demining Initiative for Colombia, co-led with Norway, which the President announced February 4. The initiative seeks to marshal international resources and technical assistance for Colombia's pursuit of the goal to be landmine free by 2021. Landmines and improvised explosive devises kill or maim thousands of Colombians every year. Supporting Colombia's demining efforts will help the Colombian government deliver a concrete "peace dividend" to the Colombian people; reinforce support for a peace accord; and provide a foundation for rural economic development by facilitating licit agriculture, investments in infrastructure, and access to markets.

FISCAL YEARS 2015–2017 REQUESTS—STATE/USAID ONLY

$ in thousands for all items

	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Request*	FY 2017 Request
Columbia—State/USAID	307,776	288,726	391,253
Economic Support Fund	133,000	141,326	167,328
Food for Peace Title II	6,835	—	—
Foreign Military Financing	27,000	25,000	38,525
International Military Education & Training	1,446	1,400	1,400
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement	135,195	117,000	143,000
Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs	4,300	4,000	21,000
of which, Antiterrorism	800	500	—
of which, Conventional Weapons Destruction (Demining)	3,500	3,500	21,000

*FY 2016 levels are pending allocation by the Department and USAID

Question 20. In the FY 2017 budget request, institutions funded by the State Department that support freedom and democracy around the world, including the National Endowment for Democracy, the Asia Foundation and other are getting cuts. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) enjoys broad bipartisan and bicameral support in the U.S. Congress yet the administration's budget request calls for a cut of almost 40 percent in the NED's budget—from $170m to $103.5m.

- Can you explain why the administration would want to drastically cut this critically important program at a time when democracy is under attack around the world?
- In addition, the budget submission "encourages NED to compete for specific U.S. Government programs" in order to make up for the large cut in funding. Is the administration not aware that the Congress, in the National Endowment for Democracy Act that President Ronald Reagan signed into law in 1983, expressly stipulated that the NED is an independent institution that should be free of direction or interference from the executive branch, which is why it is a separate line item in the budget.
- Does the administration not accept the status of NED as contained in the NED Act?

Answer. The Department of State strongly supports the work and mission of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). While the FY 2017 request of $103.45 million for NED is a reduction from the level appropriated by Congress in FY 2016, the request reflects a straight-line of funding requested by the administration for NED in the FY 2016 President's Budget.

The Department of State does affirm that NED is an independent institution; however, the Department recommends that external organizations it supports, such as NED, compete for grants and seek additional funding to leverage program funds if they so desire.

Question 21. According to the FY 2017 Budget Request, public diplomacy (PD) spending, including exchange programs, has an increase of 5.4 percent under the FY 2017 request, to a total of $1.21 billion. How do you measure the success of these strategies? What are the taxpayers getting in exchange for this? Is the U.S. image in the world better as a result of this expenditure?

Answer. Public diplomacy is essential to creating and sustaining support for U.S. foreign policy goals among key international audiences, including civil society leaders, journalists, youth, and religious leaders. These non-governmental actors, empowered by new digital technologies, play an increasingly important role in shaping the international system. With a backsliding in press freedoms around the world and countries spending billions of dollars to restrict information, our public diplomacy efforts are increasingly important to reach these audiences.

PD funding enables the Department to regularly engage a vast and growing social media following, currently numbering close to 60 million people, on priority issues. The foreign media hubs successfully amplify U.S. foreign policy messages to upwards of 650 unique media outlets worldwide, ensuring accurate coverage of U.S. policy messages in influential foreign news coverage. Our global network of 700+ American Spaces hosts nearly 37 million visits annually, building and strengthening relationships with foreign audiences by showcasing American culture and values and providing accurate information about the United States. And our exchange programs annually bring more than 55,000 promising future foreign leaders to the United States, and send more than 10,000 U.S. citizens abroad, to create enduring networks of personal relationships that promote U.S. values and national security interests.

These programs have an immediate impact, but they also have a generational impact, because they create connections—with our country, with the American people—that last far into the future. For instance, 395 alumni of our exchange programs are current or former heads of foreign governments, 77 are Nobel Prize winners, and thousands more are leaders of industry, academia, business, science, and the arts—the vast majority of whom have indicated they came away from their program with a greater understanding of the United States.

Informing, engaging, and influencing foreign publics requires a long-term commitment and strategic investment of limited resources. Toward this end, the Department is making increased public diplomacy investments in analytics and evaluations to help us better identify key audiences, measure the impact of our engagement, and stay in front of an ever-changing world.

Question 22. We understand that the administration and the Government of Israel are in the final stages of discussions on a new 10-year Memorandum of Understanding agreement on aid. Can you update us on where talks with Israel stand on a new MOU that will meet Israel's growing threats?

Answer. Our commitment to Israel's security is steadfast, and our close cooperation with the Israeli government on military and security issues continues. As Prime Minister Netanyahu recognized during his 2015 speech to the U.N. General Assem-

bly, "we never forget that the most important partner that Israel has always been, and will always be, the United States of America."

Israel remains the leading recipient worldwide of U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF). The current ten-year $30 billion Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. and Israel, under which Israel currently receives $3.1 billion per year, is just one example of our strong, enduring partnership and the U.S. commitment to Israel's security.

During their meeting on November 9, the President and Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed to resume formal talks on a new MOU to succeed the current one, which expires at the end of 2018. Several rounds of talks with the Israelis have been held since then. We hope to reach a new MOU that will build on the United States' historic and enduring commitment to Israel's security, provide maximum benefit to both Israel and the United States and serve as the foundation for the bilateral security relationship well through the next decade. Even as we grapple with a particularly challenging budget environment, this administration's commitment to Israel's security is such that we are prepared to sign an MOU with Israel that would constitute the largest single pledge of military assistance to any country in U.S. history.

Question 23. The administration has estimated that Iran's sanctions relief windfall would be about $50 billion, while Iran has claimed that the figure is closer to $100 billion.

- Now that Implementation Day has passed, do you have a better estimate of how much money Iran was able to gain access to?
- Do we have an indication of how Iran is using its windfall thus far? Do we see evidence that they are paying down their debts, or using some of the money to further increase support for terrorism?
- Do you have figures for how much Iran provides Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Shi'a militias in Iraq? And for how these figures are likely to increase as a result of sanctions relief?

Answer. On January 16, following the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s verification that Iran had implemented key nuclear-related commitments as specified in the JCPOA, the United States lifted nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. As part of the lifting of these sanctions, foreign financial institutions holding funds owed to Iran in accounts outside of the United States can release such funds to the Central Bank of Iran without being subject to U.S. secondary sanctions. As a result, we estimate that Iran now has access to approximately $50 billion of its own funds.

Iran's destabilizing activities in the region are a threat to us and our allies, and they are a top concern of the administration. We work intensively with our partners in the region, including the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Israel, to deter and disrupt Iranian threats. Iran's ongoing economic difficulties make it harder to divert large portions of its financial gains from sanctions relief away from its domestic economy and toward its regional activities. For example, we estimate that Iran needs about half a trillion dollars to meet pressing investment needs and government obligations.

We have numerous domestic authorities—including sanctions—to counter Iran's support for terrorism and other destabilizing activities. We will continue to enforce aggressively our sanctions, including those related to Iran's support for terrorism, ballistic missile activities, destabilizing activities in the region, and human rights abuses. On March 24, the Treasury Department sanctioned two entities participating in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' ballistic missile program and six entities tied to Iranian airline Mahan Air, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist that provides significant support to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The United States will also continue its efforts to disrupt Hizballah's financial and procurement networks, as it did in two separate actions in January when the Treasury Department designated five entities for providing material support to Hizballah. In addition to its longstanding efforts to combat Hizballah's facilitation network, the administration will utilize authority under the Hizballah International Financing Protection Act to target financial institutions that knowingly facilitate significant transactions or engage in money laundering activities on behalf of Hizballah. We have made significant progress and will continue to disrupt Hizballah's terrorist capabilities by targeting the group's financial support infrastructure. Treasury and State have consistently used and will continue to use our authorities to expose and target Hizballah's financial, commercial, and terrorist activities around the world.

Question 24. During the IAEA's investigation of the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program, the agency received environmental samples taken by Iran from the Parchin military facility. According to the IAEA, the samples Iran gathered revealed two uranium particles that appeared to be chemically man-modified. However, this small number precluded the IAEA from determining whether they were tied to a nuclear program.

- If the IAEA needs to return to Parchin for further inspections, will it be able to?
- Would Iran be in violation of the JCPOA if it denied the IAEA access to Parchin?
- Was a precedent set by allowing Iran to self-inspect Parchin? Or will IAEA inspectors be granted full unfettered access to suspect nuclear sites should the need arise, regardless of their location on a military base?

Answer. We are confident that the JCPOA gives the IAEA the tools it needs to effectively monitor Iran's nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In accordance with its JCPOA commitments, Iran has taken on a legal obligation to apply the IAEA Additional Protocol, which provides the IAEA with a clear basis for access to investigate any indications of possible undeclared material and activities in Iran. In addition, should the IAEA receive credible information indicating that Iran is using Parchin or any other undeclared location for nuclear weapons-related work in the future, the JCPOA provides strengthened tools for the IAEA to demand timely access within a predetermined time period. In accordance with its JCPOA commitments, Iran has also taken on a legal obligation to apply the IAEA Additional Protocol which encompasses all sites in Iran, including military sites like Parchin.

We retain a wide range of options to deal with any failure by Iran to fulfill its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, including failure to provide the IAEA access. If there is a significant violation by Iran of its JCPOA commitments and the JCPOA processes do not lead to a resolution of the concerns, we can unilaterally snap back sanctions. The United States has the ability to re-impose at any time all of the unilateral and multilateral sanctions that have been lifted in response to a violation of the JCPOA.

IAEA access to Parchin was conducted according to the IAEA-Iran Roadmap process, separate from the JCPOA. The IAEA confirmed that both the Director General himself as well as his head of Safeguards visited Parchin in September 2015. This was the first time that the IAEA had visited the location of interest. Before this visit, IAEA safeguards activities were carried out at the Parchin site, including the taking of environmental samples. Verification activities at the Parchin site were conducted in a manner consistent with the IAEA's safeguards practices, and we have full confidence in the IAEA to pursue only procedures that meet its independent verification requirements. We are confident that the IAEA will not depart from its longstanding approach of independent verification in Iran or anywhere else it implements safeguards.

Question 25. Mr. Secretary, what is the U.S. position on using international sanctions and boycotts to pressure our democratic ally Israel, on issues that need to be decided at the negotiating table?

Answer. We have been very clear that boycotts of Israel are unhelpful, and we oppose them.

The United States has worked in the three decades since signing the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement—our first such agreement with any country—to grow trade and investment ties exponentially with Israel. As we advance our trade agenda, we will continue to strengthen these important economic ties.

We will also continue to pursue policies aimed at preserving the prospect of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We continue to believe that the preferred path to the resolution of this conflict is for the parties to reach an agreement on final status issues directly, and we will continue to work to advance the interest we all share in bringing about a lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Question 26. It has long been a congressional priority to see a U.S. consulate established in Lhasa.

- When was the last time this was raised with the Chinese government?
- Is the Chinese government presently pursuing any additional consulates in the United States?
- Has the USG made it clear that any future expansion of their consular presence would be contingent upon a U.S. consulate in Lhasa?

Answer. The Department continues to explore options to expand consular facilities in China. We have proposed a consulate general in Lhasa, Tibet, as well as in other cities in the People's Republic of China, in accordance with relevant statutes and reciprocity requirements. The Chinese have not responded to the Department's request.

Question 27. As you know Congress passed bipartisan legislation which created a Special Envoy for Religious Minorities in the Middle East position at the Department and the president signed the bill into law. After an extended delay the position was finally filled, albeit at a more junior level than was originally envisioned by Congress. The authorizing legislation provided $1 million for the envoy and support staff to accomplish its mandate.

- Has the Special Advisor for Religious Minorities been provided with separate funding or is his budget being carved out of the already limited budget of the International Religious Freedom Office?

Answer. The Department of State is complying with the earmarks contained in the FY 2016 Appropriations Law related to the Office of International Religious Freedom and the Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Middle East and South and Central Asia.

In his first six months, Knox Thames, the Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Middle East and South and Central Asia has undertaken a robust agenda, including travel to Beirut, Baghdad, Erbil, Doha, Islamabad, Karachi, and elsewhere to advocate for the rights of religious minorities in these difficult regions. In addition to working with foreign governments in support of religious freedom, Mr. Thames has met with a broad spectrum of civil society groups representing the minority groups under threat. He has also launched an interagency initiative to protect religious and cultural heritage in the Middle East and South and Central Asia. Planning is underway for a series of multilateral conferences to address the plight of religious minorities under threat.

Question 28. As Venezuela is facing food shortages and opposition lawmakers have recently declared a "food emergency", please provide details of the U.S. government assistance and involvement to respond to the current ?economic conditions in Venezuela.

Answer. Venezuela faces serious economic challenges, including significant economic contraction, triple-digit inflation, widespread shortages of food and medicine, and depleted reserves. We remain in close communication with the contacts in Venezuela, international nongovernmental organizations, and multilateral organizations about the availability of food, medicines, and other essentials.

We have expressed our concerns to governments in the region about the worsening political, economic, and social situation in Venezuela. We know that many others share these concerns and have communicated them to the Maduro government.

We believe the only solution to these shortages and other economic issues in Venezuela is a meaningful dialogue among Venezuelans on sustainable policies that reverse years of economic mismanagement. We continue to call for dialogue in Venezuela.

The United States frequently provides humanitarian assistance to countries around the world at the request of the executive branch of a receiving country. In addition, there are appropriate mechanisms by which the international community and multilateral institutions could consider support to Venezuela. The Maduro administration has made no such request.

Question 29. Could you please provide an assessment of the Bahrain government's implementation of the Bahrain Independent Committee of Inquiry Report? Within the assessment please include a determination if each of the 26 recommendations has been fully implemented.

Answer. Bahrain has implemented some important reforms, including key recommendations made by the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry such as the establishment of the Ombudsman's Office, the Special Investigative Unit, and human rights training for police. The Government has investigated claims of torture, which have led to convictions in several cases; rebuilt demolished religious structures; reinstated employees who were wrongfully dismissed in 2011; and compensated families of victims of state violence.

However, more work remains to be done. We remain concerned by the government's criminalization of freedom of expression, selective application of the law, denial of due process guarantees, and other issues relating to the detention process and prison conditions as specified in the BICI recommendations.

We will continue to press the government on all of these issues of concern and urge it to work with opposition groups and civil society to continue pursuing full implementation of the BICI recommendations in a manner that meets international standards. Beyond just the BICI recommendations, additional progress is needed to build trust across Bahraini society.

The Department's forthcoming report, "Steps Taken by the Government of Bahrain to Implement the Recommendations in the 2011 Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI)" was requested by Congress and will provide a detailed analysis including an assessment of Bahrain's progress on each of the BICI report's 26 recommendations.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO SECRETARY KERRY BY SENATOR BOXER

Question 1. With this legislation in mind, how is the U.S. government ensuring the Kurds have the support and supplies they need in the fight against ISIL?

Answer. The FY 2015 Iraq Train and Equip Fund (ITEF) budget of $1.6 billion is supporting training and equipment for two Peshmerga brigades, and additional FY 2016 ITEF programming totaling $715 million includes additional support for Iraqi Kurdish fighters. Nearly 10,000 Peshmerga have already received basic and specialized training at the Build Partner Capacity (BPC) sites, and the first of two Peshmerga brigades selected for training with U.S. Special Operations Forces will begin training next month.

These efforts have already shown success as U.S. and Coalition-trained Peshmerga troops stationed on the Forward Line of Troops (FLOT) in northern Iraq have proved critical in maintaining the FLOT in Ninewa and elsewhere as these areas came under assault from Da'esh. The United States is committed to assisting all Iraqis in their mission to defeat Da'esh. As of February 7, 2016, the U.S. and the Coalition have provided the Peshmerga with more than 60 million rounds of rifle ammunition; more than 100,000 mortar rounds; tens of thousands of grenades and anti-tank rounds; tens of thousands of other weapons such as rifles and heavy caliber machine guns; counter-IED equipment; and vehicles, including ambulances and mine resistant vehicles. The Coalition is doing everything it can to provide the necessary weapons, munitions, and advisors to support the Peshmerga in the counter-Da'esh effort.

Question 2. Specifically, are there any delays in the shipments of weapons and supplies from Baghdad to Erbil? If so, how is the State Department addressing these delays?

Answer. There are no delays. The shipment of weapons and supplies provided by the Coalition through the Government of Iraq to the Kurdistan Regional Government is running smoothly and efficiently. Equipment transferred through Baghdad never leaves U.S. or Coalition custody, and we have assurances from U.S. personnel in Baghdad that the equipment destined for the Kurds is processed in the most expedient manner possible. KRG officials have confirmed to senior U.S. officials that they receive the equipment in full and without delay.

Question 3. How is the State Department working with Afghanistan to preserve the gains that have been made in women's rights, specifically with respect to economic and political advancement?

Answer. The United States has prioritized the promotion of gender equality and rights of women in all of our activities in Afghanistan. As a result, Afghanistan has adopted some of the most expansive protections of women's rights anywhere in the region, and the Afghan government has taken steps to ensure that women are represented at all levels of government. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul consults closely with government leaders, parliamentarians, and provincial officials as they work to increase women's participation in all levels of the government. We are also advocating for the full implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women.

In addition to our political engagement, our development and assistance programs complement and underpin our advocacy for the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. The Afghan Women's Leadership in the Economy (AWLE) project, which is part of USAID's Promote program for Afghanistan, will provide thousands of women with the skills, and resources to contribute to Afghanistan's economic development and poverty reduction goals as well as to influence service delivery, education, and workplace policies. AWLE also supports educated women between the ages of 18

and 30 in finding new or better jobs by providing them with knowledge, skills, networks, and support. In April 2016, the USAID Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) project and the Afghanistan Institute of Banking and Finance recognized 100 professional women who successfully completed a six-month "Women in the Financial Sector" Internship Program. The internship program provided participants with the knowledge and networking opportunities needed to succeed in Afghanistan's private financial sector. Fifty percent of the participants have already secured employment in various financial institutions. Employment negotiations are underway for the rest of the graduates.

Question 4. What is the State Department doing to help Afghan women assume leadership roles in the political and security sectors?

Answer. In addition to broad support provided by the United States to support opportunities for women in the private and public sectors, we also have specific programs targeted on the justice and security sectors. We have also continually advocated for Afghan women to be represented at all levels of government.

For example, USAID is working to close the gender gap in the ministries by training 3,000 young women interested in joining the Afghan civil service. This past February, the Afghan government, in coordination with USAID, placed 17 female interns in government ministries after they completed a six-month classroom-based training at the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI). The Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), in order to decrease the gender disparities within the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics (MCN), supports an annual fellowship and internship program at the MCN for female Afghan students. In FY 2015, there were six undergraduates with summer internships and three graduates with one-year paid fellowships. In late August 2015, another 13 recent graduates began fellowships with the Ministry. In addition, our Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) provides tuition and fees for 20 young women to attain an undergraduate education coupled with human rights-focused training and skill-building through specific coursework, internships, and post-graduate fellowships. Through coursework, leadership positions in extracurricular activities, and internships with civil society organizations, these women are gaining the skills to become Afghanistan's next generation of women leaders and human rights advocates.

Since 2012, INL's Justice Training Transition Program (JTTP), implemented by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) has built the capacity of women working in the Afghan justice sector through training and coaching. Over the life of the program, JTTP has transitioned from an externally provided training service into an Afghan government-owned continuing legal education program. In April 2016, IDLO and INL launched a follow-on program which will assist the ministries to further operationalize the training units and ensure the success of continuing legal education efforts. In FY 2015, women comprised 10 percent of all Advanced Continuing Legal Education for Afghanistan (ACLEA) participants and 12 percent of all Continuing Legal Education (CLE) participants. Additionally, 118 women legal professionals were provided 765 hours of one-on-one coaching on legal substance.

The Resolute Support (RS) Gender Advisor's office reports a significant increase in the recruitment of women into the Afghan National Army (ANA) as a result of offering scholarships as a recruitment incentive. According to the RS Gender Advisor, as of late April the ANA had recruited 193 women since mid-February, a figure that surpasses ANA recruitment of women over the past three years. There are now also 69 female members of the ANA's officer corps. Additionally, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) recently recruited 250 women to begin police training in Turkey starting this summer. While increased recruitment is a definite sign of progress, the Afghan government, with the support of the State Department and other international partners, is taking steps to ensure the successful integration of women into the security sector. For example, the Women, Peace, and Security Working Group, co-chaired by the United Nations and the Finnish Embassy in Kabul, reports that the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) is spearheading an initiative to establish an Ombudsman Office, which will be a joint agreement between the Ministry of Defense (MoD), MoI, and the Directorate of Security (NDS), giving the AIHRC access and opportunity to monitor and address gender based violence and other forms of harassment and violence committed against women in the security institutions.

Department and USAID programs enjoy the strong support of the Ghani administration, which is strongly committed to gender equality in Afghanistan. In addition to increased numbers of women in the security sector, we have seen the appointment of two women to senior leadership positions within the High Peace Council. Notably, Afghan women's rights civil society groups were reportedly invited to meet

informally with representatives of the Gulbuddin Hekmatyar-led Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), which is currently engaged in peace negotiations with the Afghan government. Such interactions, even informal, are vital to ensuring women have a voice in the peace process and to guard against any erosion of the rights they have gained since 2001.

Question 5. Based on the results of the comprehensive review of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security in 2015, what impact has the NAP had on our efforts to promote women's participation in peace and security processes worldwide?

Answer. In accordance with E.O. 13595, "Instituting a National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security," the U.S. Departments and Agencies—in particular the Department of State, the Department of Defense (DoD), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in coordination with the National Security Council staff—conducted a review of policy, programming, challenges, and lessons learned in the first three years of implementing the NAP. In 2015, during the course of the review, the State Department, USAID, and DoD conducted consultations with partner governments, multilateral organizations, and civil society. These efforts were undertaken with a view toward updating the NAP based on findings from the first three years of implementation.

The Department of State's review identified several key findings related to the impact of the NAP on the Department and its operations. In brief, these successes include appreciable impact in several areas.

First, the NAP and its implementation plan have provided a coherent framework, and common language, for pursuing the many gender issues that cut across policy, public diplomacy, and foreign assistance.

Second, as a framework for accelerating progress, the NAP gave life to several new initiatives. Catalytic outcomes include the Africa—Women, Peace, and Security Initiative and the Global Women, Peace, and Security Initiative, both of which are small grant programs that enhance security through the political and economic empowerment of women. In the realm of public diplomacy, the NAP inspired an ongoing series of exchanges through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) flagship Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) program, "Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security." In a select set of specific contexts, the NAP implementation process sparked policy commitments, reinforced by parallel foreign assistance allocations, for women-led civil society. A survey of key NAP stakeholders revealed that 95 percent of respondents indicated that the NAP has at least incrementally influenced U.S. policy in conflict-affected areas.

Lastly, in addition to spurring new action, the NAP expanded ongoing efforts. Where existing work was already underway on WPS-related topics prior to the NAP's 2011 release—such as in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, and Sierra Leone—the NAP has offered a high-level policy mandate for further elevating issues affecting women in war, conflict, violence, and insecurity. In Afghanistan, for instance, women's empowerment was a United States government policy priority for over a decade, but the emergence of the U.S. NAP has helped provide an overall framework for action and a common language to discuss women, peace, and security with Afghan government and civil society leaders, including women's inclusion in peace and reconciliation processes and development of laws that protect women's rights. Within the U.S. mission, the U.S. NAP helped to cement the rationale for establishing internal coordination processes and an embassy-specific gender strategy. The NAP also helped to inform key indicators to measure progress on the rights of Afghan women and girls through multilateral agreements within the international donor community and Afghan government. In the embassy's work with donors and international organizations, the NAP has appreciably strengthened U.S. credibility and leverage, especially in efforts to promote better cooperation.

In summary, we have seen impressive short-term successes, and while transformative change takes time, we have found that progress is often a function of leadership, political will, and resources. As we look to the future, it will be important to bear in mind that regardless of an update, the NAP remains one tool among many (e.g. leadership, political will, and resources) necessary to bring women into decision making about peace and security issues.

Question 6. What have been the biggest challenges to the NAP's implementation?

Answer. Challenges associated with the implementation of the NAP stem from both external and internal factors. Often, the most important areas for promoting Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) are those characterized by the insecurity that limits the scope of United States government efforts. These insecure local backdrops for NAP implementation can be exacerbated by additional barriers, including cul-

tural perspectives that limit the full participation of women across political, economic, and societal spheres. In addition, limited capacity among government counterparts can undercut the political will necessary to convert international commitments into action and continues to preclude the development of budgets and institutional capabilities that drive local implementation and enforcement. At the civil society level, partners' limited capacity can at times pose challenges to sustainability.

Internally, resource and staffing limitations, limited training opportunities on gender-sensitive policy and programming, insufficient funding for WPS-oriented initiatives, uneven political will, and differentiated monitoring practices can limit the Department of State's ability to more fully integrate WPS goals.

Question 7. As we move forward, how will the United States update the NAP to meet emerging security threats, such as violent extremism?

Answer. The NAP review reflects agencies' commitment to relevant implementation and rigorous learning of how to best optimize women's participation, and protection, in the prevention and resolution of conflict. During the review process, agencies identified successes, opportunities, and challenges associated with NAP implementation and recommended several changes to the NAP to accelerate implementation. Any update to the NAP should lay a foundation for long-term NAP implementation, meet emerging security threats, and reflect shifting policy priorities. This includes strong interest in devoting increased attention to the intersection of the WPS agenda and transnational challenges, including countering violent extremism, displacement and migration, natural disaster response, atrocity prevention, and climate change.

Question 8. In November, 2015, I wrote to President Obama urging him to draft and implement a new Foreign Military Financing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Israel to help address the serious and ongoing threats to Israel's security. In its response to my letter, the State Department mentioned that formal talks between the U.S. and Israel would begin in December. What is the current status of those negotiations?

Answer. The administration is engaged in discussions with Israel regarding a new, ten-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) on security assistance that would replace the current MOU when it expires at the end of fiscal year 2018. An interagency delegation traveled to Israel to begin discussions on the MOU in early December 2015. In the ensuing months, we have held additional rounds of talks in Israel and Washington.

We hope to conclude a new MOU that will build on the United States' historic and enduring commitment to Israel's security, provide maximum benefit to both Israel and the United States and serve as the foundation for the bilateral security relationship well through the next decade. Even as we grapple with a particularly challenging budget environment, this administration's commitment to Israel's security is such that we are prepared to sign an MOU with Israel that would constitute the largest single pledge of military assistance to any country in U.S. history.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO SECRETARY BY SENATOR FLAKE

Question 1. The State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report is an important tool that can provide us with leverage to push other countries that have real problems with human trafficking into taking action against it. But in order for that leverage to be effective, it is important for our reports, their recommendations, and the criteria against which a country's progress in combatting trafficking is measured, all be very precise.

The TIP report's authorizing statute includes four minimum standards a country should meet for the elimination of trafficking, and progress toward meeting these standards serves as the basis for determining a country's ranking. One of these minimum standards is whether a government has made "serious and sustained efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons." A list of very broad criteria are then listed in the authorizing language as factors that should be taken into account when determining a country's "serious and sustained efforts" to eliminate trafficking.

- How do you ensure that the same metrics to weigh a country's "serious and sustained efforts" to eliminate trafficking, or lack thereof, are applied evenly and precisely? Who makes the final determination as to whether a country has made "serious and sustained efforts" to eliminate trafficking?

Answer. The annual TIP Report reflects the State Department's assessment of foreign government efforts in 188 countries and territories during the reporting period to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons established under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). The TVPA spells out four minimum standards, and breaks the fourth standard down into 12 indicia that guide our assessment on whether or not a government has undertaken "serious and sustained efforts" to eliminate human trafficking during the reporting period. Department staff consider whether a government's efforts satisfy each of the relevant indicia. That judgment is then factored into our overall assessment of the country's efforts against all four minimum standards across the "3Ps"—prosecution, protection, and prevention. This final assessment is the basis of all tier ranking recommendations made to me. I assign the final tier rankings.

The country narratives in the Report include facts collected by the Department throughout the year and an analysis of how a country has or has not taken action with respect to the relevant TVPA minimum standards. Collecting and verifying these facts is a whole-of-Department effort involving experts in Washington and U.S. missions overseas. The Department strives to make the report as accurate and objective as possible, documenting the successes and shortcomings of government anti-trafficking efforts. The report applies the criteria and requirements as statutorily required. These criteria and requirements are comprehensive and therefore the Department's process to produce the annual Report is both extensive and rigorous. The assessments contained in the TIP Report reflect each government's efforts in addressing human trafficking problems during the current reporting period, compared to that government's own efforts in the prior year.

Question 2. How does the J/TIP office work with the governments of countries on the margins to help them understand what our metrics are and how we define various terms of significance in this process?

Answer. The Department works year-round to encourage progress by foreign governments to combat modern slavery, as well as to explain the TVPA's minimum standards and international legal standards. This occurs at all levels, both in Washington and overseas. I have engaged numerous governments on this issue directly in many forums, using bilateral meetings, multilateral venues, and media platforms to make clear that combating human trafficking is a priority for this Administration and is a responsibility for all members of the international community. My efforts are supported by robust engagements by many Department officials, such as Ambassador Coppedge's recent trips to Cuba, Mexico, Botswana and South Africa. In addition, working-level travel by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons has covered five continents and more than 50 countries in the last six months. These efforts complement the sustained and expert engagement that occurs every day through our missions abroad.

Although this engagement is not always easy, our professional staff and their ability to encourage countries to pursue recommendations in the TIP Report have contributed to the Report's 15-year legacy of progress and to the United States' leadership on this issue. We have Congress to thank for its vision in the passage of the TVPA and its continued interest in making sure all governments, including our own, are working to eliminate the scourge of modern slavery.

Question 3. The Bipartisan Budget Act from last year sets "targets" on OCO funding of $14.9 billion for each fiscal year 2016 and 2017 for the international affairs budget function. These targets are not caps, and there is nothing that would prevent Congress from appropriating additional OCO funds beyond these targets. The Administration's OCO request for international affairs for FY 2017 is $14,894,989,000.

- Do you see any reason why OCO funding for State and Foreign Operations accounts should be increased beyond what you've requested in this fiscal year?

Answer. The FY 2017 Request is in line with the OCO levels set in the Bipartisan Budget Agreement (BBA) of 2015. This agreement provided a higher percentage of the Department's resources in OCO than has been the case in recent years. Consequently, the Department shifted a number of programs into OCO that were traditionally supported with enduring funds. In the FY 2017 Request, OCO funds support programs that will allow the Department of State and USAID to prevent, address, and recover from man-made crises and natural disasters and secure State and USAID global operations. While the Department acknowledges the current challenging fiscal climate which necessitated this shift from base to OCO, an appropriation that increases OCO above the FY 2017 request would prove challenging to accommodate, given the limited number of programs remaining in the Enduring request that could not fit an OCO definition.

Question 4. What challenges does it present to the State Department from a budgeting perspective when Congress appropriates more in OCO funds than the Administration requested?

Answer. The BBA level of OCO funding also complicates budget execution because OCO funding must be managed separately from enduring funds. OCO and enduring funds must be kept separate and therefore accounting procedures must be employed to avoid comingling of funds. Additionally, OCO funding is intended for use in specific situations. This reduces the resources available to the Department of State and USAID when unexpected contingencies arise in programs and regions that do not generally program OCO funds.

Base funds are critically important to ensuring long term support for critical Department of State and USAID programs. We look forward to working with Congress to re-establish the Department's enduring base funding as we move toward the FY 2018 budget.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO SECRETARY KERRY BY SENATOR SHAHEEN

Question 1. The JCPOA has resulted in Iran slashing its stockpile of enriched uranium by at least 97 percent and surrendering most of its uranium enrichment capacity, disabling more than 13,000 uranium enrichment centrifuges and ceasing all uranium enrichment activities at its underground Fordow facility. Iran also modified its Arak heavy water reactor to prevent the production of weapons-grade plutonium.

- Does the administration's budget request ensure the IAEA has the funding necessary to fulfill its role and hold Iran accountable?

Answer. Yes. Resources requested in the administration's FY2017 budget, together with international extrabudgetary support already pledged, will fully cover IAEA costs in fiscal year 2017.

The IAEA's monitoring role is essential to the success of the JCPOA. Costs associated with the IAEA's role in the years to come will need to be met through a combination of assessed dues toward the IAEA's regular budget (paid through the Contributions to International Organizations account) and extra-budgetary contributions (paid through the Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related programs account). The FY2017 budget request includes resources for U.S. contributions through both of these mechanisms.

Thanks to sustained and strong Congressional support for the U.S. voluntary contribution to the IAEA, we have maintained the ability every year to support urgent, high-priority projects like IAEA monitoring of the JCPOA.

We will continue to work with international partners and with Congress to ensure that necessary resources are made available to the IAEA throughout the duration of the JCPOA.

Question 2. What are we doing to push back against Iran's continued destabilizing activities, including its support to Hezbollah? How is the Administration using the new authorities in the Hezbollah Sanctions Act passed by this Congress last year?

Answer. Iran's destabilizing activities in the region threaten our interests and our allies. They are a top concern of the Administration, and we are working intensively with our partners in the region to deter and disrupt Iranian threats. The September 25, 2015 seizure of a dhow carrying Iranian weapons that were likely bound for the Houthis in Yemen is a recent example.μ

Additionally, we have expanded our security engagement with Gulf partners following the President's summit at Camp David last May through the establishment of six U.S.-GCC working groups on ballistic missile defense, military preparedness, counterterrorism, arms transfers, cybersecurity, and intelligence sharing.

While Iran received relief from nuclear-related sanctions under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, our sanctions to counter Iran's destabilizing activities, support for terrorism, ballistic missile development, and human rights abuses remain in place and we will continue to enforce them.

The administration fully supports the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (HIFPA) as a valuable tool in our overall strategy to dismantle Hizballah's global financial network. Before the passage of this legislation, we targeted the nodes of Hizballah's international financing by designating 99 Hizballah-affiliated individuals and entities, and we sanctioned five more individuals and entities in January 2016 alone.

We will use our authority under HIFPA to target financial institutions knowingly facilitating significant transactions or engaged in money-laundering activities on behalf of Hizballah. The State Department, Treasury, and our partners in the Intelligence Community are constantly looking for solid evidence of such activity. When we see evidence, we will build a case, and we will take action.

We have made significant progress and will continue to further disrupt Hizballah's terrorist capabilities by targeting the group's financial support infrastructure. Treasury and State have consistently used and will continue to use our authorities to expose and target Hizballah's financial, commercial, and terrorist activities around the world.

Question 3. Secretary Kerry, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration's most recent National Drug Threat Assessment Report, Mexico and Colombia continue to supply almost all of the heroin that reaches U.S. markets. As you know, the number of heroin-related overdose deaths in the U.S. have more than doubled in the past five years. The President's request for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement assistance to Mexico is reduced when compared to the current budget by more than 25%.

- Given that the DEA Threat Assessment report concluded that "Mexican traffickers are making a concerted effort to increase heroin availability in the U.S. market," shouldn't the State Department be looking for ways to deepen our joint efforts with Mexico to combat drug trafficking?

Answer. Our bilateral dialogue with the Government of Mexico on counternarcotics, and specifically on heroin, has led to enhanced collaboration on this critically important issue. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), under the Merida Initiative, is working with the Government of Mexico to help build the capacity of Mexico's law enforcement and rule of law institutions to disrupt drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and to stop the flow of heroin and other drugs from Mexico to the United States. Beyond financial support, we are providing training and capacity building for police, enhancing Mexico's interdiction capabilities through the donation of non-intrusive inspection equipment (NIIE) and support for canine units, and assisting Mexico's transition to an accusatory justice system. We are also augmenting Mexico's capacity to identify and dismantle clandestine heroin and methamphetamine labs.

The United States and Mexico are working to increase communication and information sharing on the topic of heroin and methamphetamine. In the last year, we funded bilateral heroin and methamphetamine seminars, which brought together leading experts from both countries to share information and strategies. We will provide additional programming as needs are identified through our partnership with the Government of Mexico.

Question 4. This budget would increase assistance to Colombia by $100 million. What portion of that funding will go towards counter-drug efforts?

Answer. Of the total FY 2017 budget requested by the Department of State for assistance in Colombia, $95 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds and $90.46 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) will support counter-drug efforts. Compared to the FY 2016 budget request, this represents an overall increase of $23.115 million; a decrease of $350,000 to INCLE and an increase of $23.465 million to ESF, which correlates to the Government of Colombia's increased emphasis on alternative development as a counter-drug tactic.

INCLE funds will support the Government of Colombia's effort to implement its new counternarcotics strategy. In October 2015, the Government of Colombia issued regulations halting all aerial eradication. Going forward, Colombian efforts will place a greater emphasis on interdiction operations, manual eradication, seizing assets through anti-money laundering efforts, and complex criminal investigations to dismantle organized crime groups. Sustained levels of assistance will be required to support Colombia's continued commitment to our shared counter-drug objectives.

ESF funds will help Colombian authorities improve the quality and volume of licit crops; strengthen the competitiveness of rural producers to respond to new and expanding market opportunities; leverage private investment to generate business opportunities; promote the provision of market-based rural financial services for micro-, small- and medium-sized producers and businesses; address the challenges of illegal and informal mining; and provide support to Colombia's rapid response programming for peace accord implementation.

Question 5. The President's budget has requested that Congress restore two-year appropriations for Diplomatic & Consular Programs funding. Could you outline how this change would improve Departmental function and efficiency?

Answer. The Department seeks two-year authority for the Diplomatic and Consular Programs (D&CP) appropriation to facilitate implementation of interagency funding agreements and enable efficiencies in executing annual appropriations. The Department would capitalize on the following benefits:

- Make better use of GSA Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWA) for construction projects that extend beyond one year. GSA recently prohibited the use of "incremental funding" for most multi-year projects, meaning that State can no longer fund a GSA-managed project by applying appropriations from a current year and a subsequent year. State will have to break projects into phases with a single-year RWA for each phase, which will increase costs. Each RWA will incur a GSA project management fee of up to $30,000, and savings achieved during any phase on an RWA can no longer be spread to related activities, resulting in lost opportunities to utilize savings. With two-year funding, State could avoid the extra costs and inefficiencies associated with creating multiple one-year RWAs, and could apply savings before they expire.

- Facilitate financial arrangements with foreign governments and international organizations that do not operate on the U.S. fiscal calendar. Some bureaus use D&CP funds to pay for expenses of U.S. participation in international organizations, which implemented through agreements that may cross over into the next fiscal year. Two-year authority would prevent D&CP funding from expiring at the end of the first fiscal year, and thus being unavailable to meet U.S. commitments.

  For example, State regularly enters into memorandums of understanding (MOU) with the Community of Democracies (CD)—a coalition of democratic nations promoting representative government—under which D&CP funds are used to pay the U.S. costs of participating in the CD. CD bases its financial planning on calendar years, but State's obligations are based on the fiscal year. As a result, the Department cannot obligate expired funding for expenses incurred by the CD between the end of the fiscal year and the calendar year, even when such expenses were budgeted for.

  In 2015 CD incurred significant expenses related to U.S. participation from October to December, a period the 2015 MOU with State was meant to cover. CD could not access the funding provided by that MOU after the U.S. fiscal year ended on September 30th. Securing FY 2016 funds to fulfill State's 2015 agreement with CD required revisions to the MOU, and a lengthy funds recovery and reallocation process. This disrupted CD's work. Absent a last-minute year-end contribution from Poland, CD may not have been able to continue operating while waiting to receive the full funding promised by the United States.

- Eliminating the requirement for two Treasury accounts for each period of D&CP availability. The current process for carrying over a percentage of D&CP funds into the two-year appropriation is highly complex, involving numerous time-consuming steps that require OMB and Treasury approval. In FY 2015, up to $650 million were made available for two fiscal years. The following steps were required to extend those FY 2015 D&CP funds into FY 2016.

  1. Unobligated balances were identified as the end of FY 2015 was drawing to a close;

  2. Balances were withdrawn from the FY 2015 account and prepared for transfer;

  3. New FY 2015/2016 accounts were created for the transfer;

  4. New apportionment document submitted to OMB for approval;

  5. New transfer document submitted to Treasury for approval;

  6. Upon receipt of approval from OMB and Treasury funds are available for obligation;

  7. New allotments documents were created to allocate funding to various bureaus/programs

- As expired FY 2015 D&CP balances become available, all of these steps (except #3) are being repeated to transfer expired FY 2015 balances into the FY 2015/2016 account during FY 2016.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO
SECRETARY KERRY BY SENATOR PERDUE

Question 1. Looking at your overall budget request for the International Affairs budget for FY 2017, it represents a 25 percent increase since FY 2008 in constant dollars.

- Can you help me understand what accounts for this increase in the budget since FY 2008? The rest of the accounts that make up our budget certainly haven't increased by this amount.

Answer. Increases in spending by the Department of State and USAID since 2008 are primarily due to greater investments in humanitarian aid and the rising costs of maintaining the safety of our employees stationed overseas.

The Department and USAID have expanded foreign assistance programs in recent years to address increasing global challenges, including addressing conflict and insecurity in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and elsewhere. As part of this effort, humanitarian assistance needs have greatly increased, and we have responded robustly. In recent years, we have also expanded resources to address global health needs and the underlying causes of the migration crisis in Central America, and to invest in Asia's part of the Administration's Asia Rebalance effort.

Question 2. Overall, this budget request appears to have some shifting priorities since FY 2016. The overall request has gone down by about 1 percent. The request for diplomatic engagement, however, has gone up 4 percent (background: diplomatic engagement includes worldwide security protection, embassy construction and maintenance, staffing and HR, the regional bureaus in DC, contributions to international organizations, public diplomacy and exchanges). However, the overall foreign assistance request has decreased by 3 percent.

- Is that the right direction we should be going in? How do you account for spending more here in DC and less on foreign assistance?

Answer. The increase in the Diplomatic Engagement portion of the State Department budget from FY 2008 to the FY 2017 request is largely attributable to an increase in funding for security projects over this timeframe. Authority for non-security spending has remained essentially flat, while security related spending has more than doubled.

There are three major factors which have contributed to the increase in security related authority:

First, the Department's priority on maintaining a presence in conflict areas has required funding to protect our persons and assets in those areas. The Department sees great value in having Americans observing at the ground level in conflict areas worldwide. This is true of our missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. America needs a diplomatic presence in conflict areas to counter terrorism, sectarian violence, and the spread of conflicts beyond borders.

Second, the military draw-down in Iraq and Afghanistan has required that security of American persons and assets be provided by State resources. As the military presence has been reduced in these two vital missions, the State Department has taken on the role of maintaining a secure environment from which United States government personnel can operate. The security situation in these two countries is not only very different now than it was in 2008, but the number of military personnel is far smaller than in 2008.

Third, internal reorganizations have moved security-related spending to a handful of accounts, increasing these security accounts and reducing the administrative accounts from which the funds were moved. In FY 2008, much of the funding for Diplomatic Security was in the Diplomatic and Consular Programs (D&CP) ongoing operations account. Over time this funding has been moved to the Worldwide Security Protection (WSP) account. Similarly, security-related funds in the Embassy Security, Construction, and Maintenance (ESCM) account have moved into the Worldwide Security Upgrades (WSU) account.

The table below groups Diplomatic Engagement budget authority into four categories:

D&CP Ongoing Operations	The non-security portions of the D&CP (19-0113) account
Other Diplomatic Engagement	All other non-fee, non-security appropriated accounts except International Organizations (IO)
Security Programs	WSP, WSU, Protection of Foreign Missions and Officials
International Organizations	Contributions to International Organizations (CIO), Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA)

COMPARISON OF APPROPRIATED BUDGET AUTHORITY FOR DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT

(FY 2008 Actual Versus FY 2017 Request)

Non-Adjusted Dollars in Millions	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2017 Request	Percent Change (Non-Adjusted)	Percent Change (Constant Dollars) *
Diplomatic and Consular Programs	5,639	4,957	-12	-21
Other Non-Security Diplomatic Engagement	1,439	1,852	29	16
Security Related Programs	1,949	5,332	174	146
Worldwide Security Protection	1,179	3,715	215	183
Worldwide Security Upgrades	747	1,587	112	91
Protection of Foreign Missions and Officials	23	30	30	17
International Organizations	3,473	3,932	13	2
Contributions to International Organizations	1,409	1,387	-2	-12
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,064	2,545	23	11
Total Administration of Foreign Affairs	12,500	16,073	29	15

* Dollars adjusted using CPI-U BLS full year average for CY 2008 and OMB President's Budget FY 2017 Assumptions for FY 2017.

Question 3. The two-year budget deal reached late last year increased the International Affairs Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) budget by approximately 60 percent compared to FY 2015. The growth in OCO has also made the International Affairs Budget dangerously dependent on a funding mechanism that was originally intended only to cover temporary, generally war-related programs. The use of OCO for the State Department Budget has shifted from being exclusively for "frontline" states, like Afghanistan and Iraq, and is now to be used to quote "respond to, recover from, or prevent, including armed conflict as well as human-caused and natural disasters," according to your FY 2017 Congressional Budget Justification.

- Can you explain the expansion of the use of OCO beyond "frontline" states? (frontline being Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan traditionally)
- Isn't responding to and recovering from international crises a normal part of State department and USAID operations?

- What are the short-and long-term implications of this growing dependence on OCO, and how does the Administration propose to strengthen the "base" or long-term international Affairs funding in the future?

Answer. The OCO portion of the FY 2017 request for the Department and USAID is $14.9 billion, consistent with the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. The OCO request will support Department of State and USAID efforts to prevent, address, and recover from man-made crises and natural disasters and secure State and USAID global operations. The United States is currently simultaneously engaged in more places with more issues of consequence than in recent history.

In support of this increased engagement and assistance, the FY 2017 request includes OCO increases for several major programs. For Embassy Security, Construction, and Maintenance, we will be relying more heavily on OCO to construct more safe and secure diplomatic facilities in India, Kenya, Uganda, and Afghanistan. It will also enable us to contribute to peacekeeping mission, shield allies and partners from potential threats, aid Afghanistan and Pakistan, step up our efforts to destroy Da'esh, and confront and recover from other crises in the Middle East and Africa.

While we appreciate that the OCO increase was instrumental to securing an overall increase in funding for FY 2016 and FY 2017 above levels included in the Budget Control Act, the Department is concerned about the shift in balance between base and OCO funding. Programs supported with base funding serve as the foundation of core, ongoing Department operations and assistance programs. Base funds support vital development and diplomacy programs, including health, democracy, and diplomatic security.

The Department looks forward to working with Congress to restore the Department's enduring funding levels for long-term programs as we move toward the FY 2018 budget. The President's Budget anticipates this by planning for the restoration of $8.7 billion to the International Affairs base budget in FY 2018.

Question 4. The growing dependence on OCO to fund America's development and diplomacy programs means that a broad range of programs and accounts that are designed to meet long-term commitments, and historically were funded in the base budget, now receive a significant share of their funding through a temporary funding mechanism. Given the strain on discretionary resources, this flexibility is important in the short-term but has led to a significant shift in funding from base to OCO for certain programs. For example, nearly 100 percent of U.S. assistance to Jordan is funded through the OCO account in this year's budget request. In another example, the line item for "Contributions for International Peacekeeping" went from being fully base-budget funded in FY15 to now 66 percent of the amount has been shifted to OCO in FY 2017. Could you expand on the Administration's thinking behind these major shifts in funding for long-term programs specifically?

Answer. The OCO portion of the FY 2017 request for the Department and USAID is $14.9 billion, consistent with the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. The Department is also concerned about the shift in balance between base and OCO funding, particularly the substantial increase in OCO funds as compared to base. The Department looks forward to working with Congress to restoring enduring funding levels as we move toward the FY 2018 budget. The President's Budget actually anticipates this by planning for the restoration of $8.7 billion to the International Affairs base budget in FY 2018.

Question 5. 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. 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?

Answer. Humanitarian assistance remains a top priority for the Administration. The United States continues to be the largest bilateral contributor of humanitarian assistance funding.

The FY 2017 request includes $6.2 billion in humanitarian assistance, which is over $500 million above the FY 2016 Request of $5.7 billion.

In concert with the significant resources provided by Congress in FY 2016, the funding included in the FY 2017 request will help to meet humanitarian assistance needs globally over the next two years.

Question 6. Can you describe State's strategies for delivering assistance to these areas? Approximately, in what percentage of the country have State and USAID been able to operate?

Answer. There are 13.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria; 6.4 million are IDPs, 1.3 million people are hosting IDPs, and nearly 4.5 million people are living in hard-to-reach locations, including 360,000 people in besieged areas. Priority humanitarian needs for 2016 include emergency food assistance, health care, shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) assistance.

We cannot provide a percentage of the country in which State and USAID have been able to operate in delivering humanitarian assistance. However, we work closely with countries in the region—mainly Turkey and Jordan—as well as with the United Nations and our NGO partners to get assistance into Syria through all possible means. Approximately half of the more than $5.1 billion of humanitarian assistance that we have provided has gone to humanitarian needs inside Syria. Our international organization and NGO partners hope that the cessation of hostilities in Syria will allow for more systematic access to the besieged areas and hard-to-reach locations. As the cessation of hostilities holds we continue to work with the U.N. and members of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), particularly Russia, to expand access and assistance to more priority areas inside the country.

Since the cessation of hostilities in Syria came into effect on February 27, humanitarian access has significantly improved for many of the hard-to-reach and besieged locations prioritized by the ISSG. As of March 8, 10 interagency convoys comprised of nearly 300 trucks have provided emergency relief assistance to more than 225,000 people, or approximately 46 percent of the estimated 486,700 people living in U.N.-identified besieged areas.

Approximately 500 U.N. interagency trucks crossed into northern Syria via the Bab al Salaam and Bab al Hawa border crossings, providing emergency relief supplies to people in Afrin, Azaz, and Mar'a sub-districts in Aleppo, as well as Harim and Idlib sub-districts, Idlib Governorate. The Turkish Red Crescent, which facilitates NGO utilization of the humanitarian lanes at the borders, also reported an uptick in NGO cross-border deliveries, noting that an estimated 800 trucks passed through the Atmeh, Bab al Hawa, Bab al Salaam, Kobane, and Yamadiah border crossings in February.

Question 7. Due to restrictions in place, aid is often delivered using networks of volunteers in Syria

- What requirements or specific policies does State and USAID have in place to vet volunteers or networks that assist in the delivery of this humanitarian aid?
- What types of monitoring activities do State and USAID implement to ensure accountability of assistance delivery?
- What percentage of deliveries in Syria has been affected by fraud or diversion? How does the U.S. track this?

Answer. The State Department and USAID vet beneficiaries of Syria assistance as part of our strategy to mitigate the risk that U.S. government non-lethal assistance could benefit groups or individuals associated with terrorism. Further, the vetting process is intended to ensure that U.S. government assistance is not provided to individuals or entities that are human rights violators:

- Vetting coordinators from each implementing office coordinate with the Intelligence Community to identify derogatory or potentially derogatory information.
- In addition to vetting, we closely monitor and evaluate our assistance through a network of Syrian in-country monitors who interface directly with beneficiaries to ensure assistance is delivered, hand receipts, photographs, and tracking devices.

State Department:

- There are unique challenges to working in Syria, given the ongoing conflict, the range of actors on the ground including designated terrorist organizations, and the lack of U.S. presence on the ground. However, we have a range of monitoring procedures in place to help mitigate the risk that assistance falls into the wrong hands and ensure that the assistance is used appropriately by recipients. These efforts include:
- Meetings with the recipients of State Department assistance in Turkey or Jordan to ensure they know the responsibilities of accepting U.S. assistance.
- Having recipients sign a letter of assurance before receiving support that details the responsibilities of accepting U.S. assistance and declare that they will not

use the assistance for any other than its intended purpose or divert equipment to designated terrorist organizations.

- Follow up meeting with beneficiaries to assess the usefulness of the assistance to further refine their needs assessments and target the appropriate assistance
- Survey reports from recipients via email/phone to report on the use of the assistance.
- Syrian field monitors are contracted to observe and survey beneficiaries for the provision of heavy equipment. When security allows, photographs are taken of in-kind assistance. When the security situation cannot allow monitors, phone calls are used to query the recipients on the current location and status of equipment.

USAID

USAID works closely with partners to ensure that its assistance is reaching the intended beneficiaries. USAID exercises considerable oversight over our programs, and our partners have developed a variety of multi-layered monitoring and tracking mechanisms to make sure that our assistance gets to those it is intended to reach.

- Partners are required to provide prompt, regular updates on the progress of their activities and any security concerns. USAID staff closely and systematically track the reports, are in regular direct communication with partners, and immediately follow up on any reported issues.
- USAID works closely with all its partners to collect performance and situational data to monitor activities and gather enough information from different sources to verify assistance is reaching targeted areas and beneficiaries, including through geo-tagged photos and videos of distributions, independent field monitors, and feedback hotlines for beneficiaries. Partners are required to provide regular program updates on the progress of their activities and any security concerns, and we require them to report any diversions, seizures, or losses immediately, without exception, for immediate follow-up and investigation.
- The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in Jordan and Turkey meets regularly with partners to discuss programming, issues that impede humanitarian activities, and partners' risk mitigation mechanisms. The DART also meets with the broader humanitarian community, and communicates directly and indirectly with Syrian organizations that provide added layers of ground-truth to partner reporting. The DART also attends cluster and donor coordination meetings, which provide an opportunity to triangulate information about partners' performance.
- In addition, USAID utilizes a third-party monitoring system to verify and provide independent confirmation of a number of USAID programs. By providing independent, field-based monitoring of activities and verification of outputs, as well as monthly progress reporting, third party mechanisms supply USAID with the level of assurance that comes from field visits that are the basis of USAID monitoring in more stable environments, but also contribute to program learning.
- USAID staff in Washington also maintains regular contact with all humanitarian partners, including U.N. agencies, other international organizations, and NGOs, concerning their assistance activities in Syria. The U.S. government humanitarian response inside Syria is coordinated by the Middle East Crisis Response (MECHR) Management Team, which is inclusive of both USAID's Office of Food for Peace and USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. USAID leadership also regularly engages with U.N. agency emergency directors and other senior U.N. staff in a variety of forums, including Emergency Directors Group meetings, Syria Top Donor Group meetings, and other events.
- As part of its mandate, the OIG writes a quarterly Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) report detailing events of the quarter. The investigators explore a variety of issues to help understand and review USAID/OFDA and USAID/FFP operating principles, methods for ensuring accountability of funding, and efficacy of programming.

Known losses comprise less than 4 percent of State Department non-humanitarian assistance provided through the START and SSAP platforms. To date, less than 0.05 percent of USAID program funds for the Syria humanitarian crisis response has been lost to fraud or diversion. Approximately 0.04 percent of total Office of Transition Initiatives funded non-humanitarian assistance is known to be lost or diverted.

We take all battlefield losses of U.S.-provided equipment very seriously and have a range of risk mitigation steps in place to limit these losses. However, given that Syria is an active war zone, some losses are unavoidable. It is important that we maintain our commitment to supporting the moderate opposition in Syria as they seek to counter extremists and defend against the regime, with the goal of ultimately creating the conditions for a negotiated political solution. Losses accounting is a joint effort between START and SSAP, USAID and State Department, implementing partners, and grantees. As losses come to light, START and SSAP staff work closely with implementing partners and grantees to confirm all relevant details, which are then tracked in Washington.

Question 8. ISIS's branch in Libya is expanding its reach across a broadening area of Africa. They are taking advantage of the chaos and security vacuum in Libya to expand territory, and grow. CIA Director John Brennan told the Senate earlier this month that quote, "Libya has become a magnet for individuals not only inside Libya, but from the African continent as well as from outside," in terms of terrorist recruitment. This year's budget request focuses most of its counter-ISIS measures at Iraq and Syria, as well as immediately neighboring countries like Jordan and Lebanon. While ISIS in Iraq and Syria is certainly the more immediate threat, we should work to prevent this emerging threat in Libya from getting out of hand.

- Could you outline for me what State plans to do to counter this developing threat in Libya?

Answer. The United States remains committed to supporting the Libyan people in their fight against Da'esh. We are actively supporting the U.N.-facilitated Libyan political process to form the Government of National Accord, putting Libya on the path to regaining control of the country's ungoverned space. We and our international partners will work together with the Government of National Accord to counter the growing threat from violent extremists and Da'esh-aligned groups and rebuild a national security force to restore stability in Libya.

To that end, we are committed to providing the Government of National Accord technical, economic, humanitarian, security, and counter-terrorism assistance, as requested. We are pursuing our counterterrorism and governance efforts so that they proceed in parallel and are mutually reinforcing. A unified, capable national government is our best hope for a sustainable effort to counter Da'esh and other extremists.

At the same time, we will not ignore immediate threats from Da'esh or other extremists. As President Obama has made clear, we will not hesitate when it comes to defending U.S. national security interests and to taking direct action when necessary. Actions like the U.S. strike on a Da'esh facility in Sabratha, Libya, which we announced on February 19, are part of our comprehensive approach to degrading and ultimately destroying Da'esh. Last November, the United States conducted an airstrike against Abu Nabil, an Iraqi, who was at the time the leader of Da'esh in Libya. These actions show our commitment to dislodging Da'esh from Libya.

Question 9. I, and many of my colleagues, disagree with the U.S. peacekeeping assessment level set by the U.N. General Assembly. Since FY1992, with few exceptions, Congress has enacted a cap on U.S. payments to U.N. peacekeeping at levels below the established U.N. assessment. Your budget request this year is based on the U.N. peacekeeping assessment for the U.S. of 28.56 percent, rather than the amount recognized by U.S. law, which is 27.14 percent.

- What is the Administration's position on this issue?
- How has the cap impacted recent budget requests and appropriations?
- More broadly, what impact, if any, has this issue had on U.N. peacekeeping operations?

Answer. The U.S. role as a global leader demands that we continue to pay our U.N. peacekeeping assessments in full, at the rate assessed, so U.N. peacekeeping missions have appropriate resources available to carry out their life-saving mandates. While Congress passed legislation in 1994 (P.L. 103–236) capping our use of appropriated funds for peacekeeping assessments at a rate of 25 percent, Congress also raised the cap for calendar years 2001 through 2012 to authorize the use of appropriated funds to pay U.S. assessed peacekeeping expenses in full.

The current U.S. peacekeeping assessment rate for calendar year 2016 is 28.57 percent. However, the Department only has the authority for fiscal year 2016 to make payments from appropriated funds at the calendar year 2012 assessed rate of 27.14 percent. Because of the Administration's commitment to paying U.S. treaty obligations in full and on-time, the President's request is based on the current U.N.

peacekeeping assessment rate, and accordingly requests raising the statutory cap so that the United States can pay our assessments in full.

If the funds are appropriated without an associated cap lift, the United Nations may apply U.N. peacekeeping credits to pay the difference, to the extent such credits are available. If there are not adequate credits to address the difference, the cap will cause the United States to accrue new arrears. The reliance on credits is not a sustainable practice as there may not be sufficient peacekeeping credits to address future shortfalls caused by the statutory cap.

The gap between the actual U.S. assessment rate and the amount of the U.S. payment will deprive the United Nations of the full amount of funding that the General Assembly appropriated for peacekeeping missions. Reductions in U.S. payments can strain important U.N. peacekeeping operations or cause delays in reimbursements to troop contributing countries, which can affect future troop rotations. Timely and full U.S. payment has helped to solidify the U.N.'s ability to attract and retain peacekeeping forces, strengthened U.S. leverage with troop contributing countries, and allowed us to more effectively shape and reform peacekeeping operations to deliver maximum impact. For example, in September 2015, President Obama convened the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, which resulted in new and significant pledges of troops, police, and enabling capabilities to U.N. peacekeeping from over 50 countries and regional organizations. Paying late and accruing arrears undermines U.S. credibility and influence at the U.N., particularly on matters dealing with budget, finance, and management reform. In the past, this has affected world opinion regarding U.S. commitment to multilateral engagement and respect for the role of multilateral organizations, and has diminished our own U.S. influence even with our closest allies.

Question 10. The State Department, as requested, has been provided by the Congress with a substantial influx of additional resources since FY 2013 to address global diplomatic security needs.

- How are these resources contributing to the security of our diplomats abroad?
- To what extent are the requests for higher levels of spending likely to persist into future years?
- How are you balancing funding for and attention to securing high threat posts against the possibility that less threatened posts will be targeted—bearing in mind that Kenya and Tanzania were not considered high threat when they were bombed in 1998?

Answer. Diplomatic Security programs protect thousands of Chief of Mission (COM) personnel, and the facilities and data systems on which these personnel rely, at 275 overseas posts and 125 domestic offices. The Department's budget request reflects the Administration's commitment to:

- Prepare U.S. government personnel posted overseas under COM authority for assignments to critical and high threat posts. Manage a full spectrum of counterterrorism, criminal, and special investigations to include violations of laws regarding U.S. passports and visas, defensive counterintelligence programs, and interagency liaison functions. Investigations include analysis involving terrorist threats, incidents, and hostile activities directed against U.S. government personnel, facilities, and interests around the world:

1. Provide robust and nimble information security protection that keeps pace with changing technology.
2. Leverage the latest physical and technical countermeasures for use worldwide.
3. Conduct initial and periodic vetting of all employees and contractors in positions that require security clearances, access to sensitive intelligence, or public trust certifications.

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security conducts regular, integrated budget and performance reviews over the course of the fiscal year. These reviews inform resource requirements, and provide for the informed and accountable development of future budgets. Resources are finite. Therefore, the Department carefully manages its resources to ensure that emergent priorities are addressed as quickly as possible in order to keep our people safe at all of our posts worldwide. We apply the lessons learned from previous attacks to all of our facilities.

Although the unique conditions at each post dictate a specific approach to providing security for facilities and personnel, such as a post-specific travel policy, there are a number of programmatic commonalities that apply worldwide, regardless of threat levels and local security environments, including:

- The need for construction of hardened, secure facilities with setback where older facilities fall short.
- The use of appropriate technical and physical security technologies and countermeasures.
- The development and maintenance of a well-trained, well-equipped and flexible cadre of security professionals across a variety of disciplines.
- Training to deal with enhanced-risk environments: the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course will be required for all Chief of Mission employees serving overseas by January 1, 2019.
- The deployment of a wide range of technical security equipment needed to protect our facilities and people.
- Close cooperation with interagency partners and host country security agencies to detect, deter and disrupt threats directed against U.S. interests abroad.
- Soft target funding for physical and technical security improvements at international schools.

While risk can never be completely eliminated from our diplomatic duties, we work to constantly mitigate it, regardless of the threat level. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security is also fortunate to retain no-year availability authority on Worldwide Security Protection funding. Continuation of this authority provides the Department essential flexibility to sustain complex, global security programs, and to adjust mitigation responses as security threats evolve, not only at high threat posts, but at all diplomatic locations.

Additionally, the Department prioritizes the construction of safe and secure embassy and consulate facilities to replace those that are most vulnerable. Under the direction of the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations, 129 projects have been completed since the 1999 enactment of the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act—moving more than 35,000 people into safer and more secure facilities. Funding in Fiscal Years 2013-2015 has allowed us to move forward with the following projects:

- FY 2013—New Embassy Compounds (NEC) in N'Djamena, Chad; Nouakchott, Muaritania; Paramaribo, Suriname; and The Hague, Netherlands; as well a new office annex in Amman, Jordan and new housing in Karachi, Pakistan.
- FY 2014—NECs in Ankara, Turkey; Ashgabat, Turkmenistan; Harare, Zimbabwe; Maputo, Mozambique; and Pristina, Kosovo; as well as New Consulate Compounds (NCC) in Erbil, Iraq and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. In addition, Marine Security Guard Residences were funded in Belmopan, Belize; Guayaquil, Ecuador; and Tijuana, Mexico.

Question 11. Operations in the challenging environments of the three countries termed "frontline states"—Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq—continue to rightly be a focus of attention by the Department. Together, these three countries (at a total of $2.62 billion) make up roughly 22 percent of the State Department's overall request for operational funding. NEA and SRAP:

- Please describe your long-term plans for presence in the frontline states.
- Does the significant investment of resources necessary to maintain a full presence in these challenging conditions come at an opportunity cost elsewhere?
- What lessons from the Iraq transition (from military to civilian lead) are being applied to our presence in Afghanistan?

Answer. First, as laid out in the U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement and the Bilateral Security Agreement, the United States maintains a long-term commitment to support Afghanistan's social and economic development, security, and institutions so that Afghanistan may never again serve as a safe haven for terrorists who would attack the United States and its allies. The Department is continuing the consolidation of security, development, and diplomatic activities in Kabul to allow the U.S. to ensure that as few people as necessary remain in harm's way, and that remaining staff have the security and resources they require to do their jobs.

From more than 1,200 U.S. direct-hire staff at the peak of the surge, the Department is working toward a steady state of roughly 500 direct hires (supported by about 4,000 contractors providing life support and security). This number will provide sufficient U.S. staff to enable core diplomatic activities and ensure proper implementation and oversight of approximately $1 billion in annual civilian assistance.

The current presence in Iraq consists of Embassy Baghdad, Consulate General Erbil, Consulate General Basrah, and the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center at

the Baghdad International Airport. The current policy priority in Iraq is degrading and defeating Da'esh. As the Iraqis, with Coalition support, continue to liberate territory from Da'esh, the Department will maintain a significant presence there in order to prevent the spread of violent extremism and help the Iraqis rebuild their country.

As set forth by the Strategic Framework Agreement, the United States has an enduring partnership with the Government of Iraq to support its democratic institutions, enhance its regional and international status, promote cultural and social exchanges, facilitate growth of education and scientific institutions, promote human rights, support economic growth, and strengthen its defense and security forces. Toward that end, the Department expects to maintain the current presence for the foreseeable future, with construction of a New Consulate Compound (NCC) in Erbil slated to begin the end of this year, and a site search for a Basrah NCC in progress.

As demonstrated by U.S. engagement under the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, the United States will stay engaged with Pakistan to advance shared interests in regional stability and security, to include countering terrorism and violent extremism; strategic stability and non-proliferation; defense and military-to-military cooperation; economics and finance; education; and energy. The completion of the new chancery in Islamabad in 2015 and the scheduled completion of the entire New Embassy Compound project in FY 2018 will ensure that the Department has safe and secure facilities to support these shared interests.

Second, FY 2017 priorities, such as the normalization of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan ongoing operations into the base budget, have necessitated constraints to other program and management priorities in order for the FY 2017 request to fit within the spending caps set by the Bipartisan Budget Act. The annual State Department budget is spread across missions and programs worldwide, requiring trade-offs during the budgeting process.

FY 2017 Diplomatic Engagement trade-off assumptions include:

- Reduced operational spending by embassies and Washington bureaus to ensure payroll obligations are met for hiring to attrition;
- Holding funding for independent commissions and foundations to levels previously requested by the Administration;
- Increased reliance on a projected surge in consular fee collections to fund IT investments;
- Budgeting for reduced peacekeeping assessments based on the anticipated drawdown of selected missions.

Third, while the Iraq transition experience has been instructive in our planning for our diplomatic presence in Afghanistan, sustaining an enduring presence in Afghanistan will present a number of challenges distinct from those encountered in Iraq relating to security, geography, and overall development levels. The U.S. military and NATO partners also will maintain a presence in Afghanistan through the end of 2016, which will require continuing coordination.

The Department has, however, benefitted from political and practical lessons learned in Iraq, to include:

- Planning based on expectations of the bilateral relationship, not the military model.
- Recognition of the political capital and trade-offs required in negotiating an enduring platform.
- Holding realistic assumptions about host country's capacity to complete new tasks.

Question 12. As this administration contemplates the way forward in Afghanistan, I hope that we have learned the lessons of Iraq, and don't find ourselves with another power vacuum. The intelligence community testified earlier this month that, quote, "Afghanistan is at serious risk of a political breakdown in 2016."

- To what extent does the aid request (of $1.25 billion) for FY 2017 seek to prevent or mitigate the effects of such a potential breakdown?
- What criteria will the administration use to determine whether the Afghan government is meeting the conditions to receive the total amount of the aid?
- With the U.S. presence in Afghanistan diminishing, how is the use of U.S. economic assistance monitored?
- What programs have been most successful in promoting governance reform and economic growth?

- How flexible are U.S. programs to augment those that are working and phasing out those that are not?

Answer. The FY 2017 foreign assistance request and already-appropriated resources at work in Afghanistan are essential to the success of our strategy to help Afghanistan build sustainable stability. A main focus of our assistance programs is to improve the functioning of the Afghan government. It is in our interest that the Afghan government be able to meet the needs of the people who elected it. Our programming enhances the effectiveness of Afghan governance in many ways. For example, we are implementing programs focused on improving the delivery of education and health services, which has an immediate impact on all Afghans and impacts local perceptions of the credibility of the government. We are working in a similar fashion to improve the functioning of the Afghan justice and correctional systems.

In 2017, we expect to continue the innovative New Development Partnership (NDP) that was initiated during the visit of President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah in 2015. The NDP will provide up to $800 million to the Afghan government through 2019 if it meets specific, pre-determined reforms and development results. The NDP conditions the provision of full U.S. assistance on Afghan government progress in addressing corruption, improving the government's fiscal sustainability and management, reducing poverty, and empowering women. Incentive funds are released only after the government has demonstrated that they have met predetermined benchmarks established at the outset of the partnership. In 2015, the government achieved most of the NDP result targets agreed upon for the calendar year and qualified for $180 million of the $200 million that was available.

Since 2001, U.S. assistance to Afghanistan has had a significant and positive impact:

- The average number of years that Afghan children attend school has risen from 2.5 years to 9.3 years since 2000, and 67 percent of Afghans are satisfied with the education that their children receive. In 2002, roughly 900,000 boys and zero girls were enrolled in school; by 2014, nearly eight million children attended school, with girls comprising one-third of the student population.
- With help from USAID and other donors, the government provides basic health services to 2.3 million Afghan citizens a month. Since 2002, infant mortality has decreased 53 percent; child mortality rate has decreased 62 percent; and maternal mortality has decreased 77 percent. Furthermore, the Government of Afghanistan—in conjunction with the Department of State—reaches approximately 28,000 patients per year in more than 100 drug treatment centers.
- Women hold 27 percent of seats in Parliament, three cabinet positions, and 165 judicial positions.
- We have also helped the Afghan government and private sector spur a communications revolution with nearly 90 percent of Afghan households owning a cell phone, and fostered the birth of a vibrant, free media.

While there is still much to work to be done, particularly with regard to sustainability, we continue to achieve significant gains. For instance, in 2015, after years of targeted assistance from USAID, the Afghan government successfully acceded to the World Trade Organization, and the Parliament is on track to ratify the accession agreement by summer 2016. WTO membership will anchor Afghanistan in a rules-based trading system, and foster regional trade. Also in 2015, USAID completed the last segment of paved highway in eastern Afghanistan from Gardez to Khost. This road will link to another road under construction to the Pakistan border and open another strategic trade route for Afghan and transit goods.

In addition, the Department continues to support the Counter Narcotics Justice Center (CNJC), which tries all high-level and government official narcotics cases. With support from specialized enforcement units mentored by the Drug Enforcement Administration, and operations and maintenance support from the Department of State and the Government of Britain, the Afghan government has arrested and the CNJC has successfully prosecuted a U.S-designated drug king pin and provincial officials implicated in the drug trade.

We have established an innovative multi-tiered monitoring approach for all of our programs in Afghanistan that draws on information from multiple sources and allows us to assess in real-time how our programs are functioning and whether they are achieving the intended results. This monitoring information allows the United States to expand programs that are working well and terminate programs that are not achieving results. We have learned, to date, that most of our programs are working well.

On rare occasions, we have changed course to refocus our resources on more productive programs that have greater impact on Afghanistan's development. For example, referring to the aforementioned Gardez-Khost road, USAID originally contracted with an external firm on the project; however, after monitoring efforts revealed the contractor was struggling to build community support for the project, which was causing delays, USAID turned project implementation over to a local firm. As a result, the project proceeded much faster and was recently completed.

As we fine tune our development activities, we also recognize that progress on many issues takes many years and sustained effort, and we employ multi-year, national-scale projects to maximize impact. The key is to monitor these programs closely to ensure results are being achieved and refinements are made to address identified issues.

Question 13. We're seeing some troubling developments in Ukraine—earlier this month, Ukraine's economic minister and his full team, resigned citing ingrained corruption as their reason for stepping down. A major focus of our assistance to Ukraine has been centered around countering this rampant corruption.

- Is Ukraine making sufficient efforts to fight corruption and enhance the rule of law? If so, how?

Answer. The Ukrainian government is implementing an ambitious anti-corruption and rule of law reform agenda. Although Kyiv has made tremendous progress, much more must be done. Our highest priorities for rule of law reforms are focused on improving the effectiveness of the operations of the new anti-corruption institutions; reform of the prosecutorial and judicial system; and police reform.

Regarding the new anti-corruption institutions, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) has been established with a special anti-corruption prosecutor, and is currently conducting investigations. The PGO's new Inspector General Unit is also now functioning, and we are hopeful that the prosecutorial reform process will be rejuvenated now that the Prosecutor General, Victor Shokin, has resigned.

In 2015, the Rada passed legislation to reform judicial self-governance, change the processes for appointments, discipline, qualifications, and training for judiciary members. Constitutional amendments required to bolster judicial independence are moving through the Rada now.

The most visible and celebrated reform has been the establishment of the new patrol police that replaced the notoriously corrupt traffic police. In 2016, the new patrol police will be expanded to all oblast capitals. Government transparency will be enhanced by new laws on e-procurement, public official's asset disclosures, and openness on media companies' ownership.

These reforms will be critical to Ukraine's future and have been valiantly fought for by ordinary Ukrainians. The United States will continue to encourage further reforms during this critical time in Ukraine's history.

Question 14. Ukraine is still facing Russian aggression—both militarily and via propaganda.

- Is U.S. aid helping Ukraine's armed forces enhance its capabilities?
- Is non-lethal aid sufficient to help deter Russian aggression, or is some level of lethal aid needed?

Answer. In response to the crisis, we have committed over $266 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine's forces better monitor and secure their borders, operate more safely and effectively, and preserve Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our security assistance has saved lives while helping to build Ukraine's long-term defense capacity. We have delivered non-lethal defensive equipment, including counter-battery radars, secure communications, Humvees, and medical equipment to help Ukraine protect its forces while defending against Russian aggression.

We have stood up a multinational joint commission to better understand Ukraine's defense requirements, and have embedded advisors to promote long-term defense reform. In November 2015, we completed a $19 million train and equip program for Ukraine's National Guard utilizing the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF). In addition, we are providing training and equipment to the Ministry of Defense.

We have not ruled out sending lethal weapons to Ukraine. We continue to believe that there is no military resolution to this crisis, but Ukraine has the right to defend itself.

Question 15. What is the U.S. doing to help Georgia to hold free and fair elections later this year? Are there concerns about Georgia's democracy and adherence to the rule of law?

Answer. In FY 2015, the U.S. government allocated more than $20 million to promote democracy in Georgia. These programs work to advance democratic political processes, strengthen civic participation, bolster independent media, and support the rule of law. The October 2016 parliamentary elections will represent another key moment in the consolidation of Georgia's democracy, which has made significant progress since independence. Moving toward the elections, it will be important for Georgia to maintain media freedom, promote political pluralism, and ensure independence of the judiciary.

We are currently assessing the electoral environment to identify any unmet needs in advance of the elections. We will fund observation missions by international and local NGOs and plan to contribute observers to the OSCE observation mission. Electoral reform and safeguarding media freedom, civil society and political pluralism during the election season will be a key focus of the upcoming U.S.-Georgia Democracy Working Group.

Question 16. President Obama's budget is set to provide additional assistance to Georgia to combat Russian aggression, but beyond military concerns, there are also opportunities to further link Georgia and the United States through trade. In fact, a U.S. company, Conti, is now leading efforts to develop a new multi-billion deep water port in Georgia. Will you support intensifying discussion related to a U.S.-Georgia Free Trade Agreement?

Answer. The United States is committed to maximizing economic cooperation with Georgia, including by strengthening our bilateral trade relationship and encouraging reforms that create a welcoming investment environment for American businesses. We also advocate vigorously for U.S. businesses at every opportunity. The deep water port that you cite is a good example of recent progress on this front. We will continue to engage with Georgia and discuss ways to strengthen trade and investment between our countries, including the possibility of a free trade agreement. A successful U.S.-Georgia High-Level Dialogue on Trade and Investment was held in Washington in October 2015, and the Strategic Partnership Commission's Economic Working Group will convene in Tbilisi in April this year.

Question 17. 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. As violent conflict continues, humanitarian needs of those affected by natural disasters have also increased. In addition to responding to conflict in Iraq, Syria, South Sudan, and Yemen, the U.S. and the humanitarian community is responding to other conflicts and natural disasters such as the earthquake in Nepal, floods in Burma, and the typhoon in Micronesia. The total U.S. humanitarian assistance request is for $6.156 billion, which is about 20 percent less than the FY 2016 estimate (a decline that may be attributed to relatively high funding levels in FY 2016 and to high-level responses to crises in Yemen and South Sudan, which are expected to be scaled back in FY 2017). State Department officials have also suggested that the proposed funding reduction assumes an increased share of the humanitarian assistance burden will be taken on by other donors.

- Is responding to humanitarian needs brought on by political crisis, such as in Syria and Iraq, different from those brought on by a natural disaster, such as the earthquake in Nepal or typhoon in Micronesia?
- Does the cause of the suffering come into play when the United States prioritizes recipients of humanitarian assistance?
- How do you respond to critics who argue that humanitarian assistance may actually prolong political crisis?

Answer. While there are some similarities in the response to natural disasters and complex emergencies—including addressing immediate humanitarian needs such as access to temporary shelter, food, clean water and sanitation—there are important differences in response. For example, the Government of Nepal generously welcomed international assistance after the 2015 earthquake. But the politics of humanitarian aid are starkly different in a case like Syria, where the government is a party to ongoing conflict that is displacing large numbers of people and is the primary cause of growing humanitarian needs.

Despite differences in response, the United States prioritizes humanitarian assistance based on need, whether that need arises from a man-made or natural disaster. While natural disasters often lead to quick responses, complex disasters caused by conflict may continue for years. Long-term, unceasing violence or oppression may

mean that uprooted people are not able to return home. For example, some 45 percent of refugees today have been displaced for five years or more. A child born in a refugee camp at the start of a crisis will often spend his or her entire childhood away from home.

In addition to the United States, other traditional humanitarian donors include Western European governments, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and, more recently, Korea. At critical junctures in the past few years, the Saudis, Kuwaitis and Emiratis also have given hundreds of millions of dollars to help cope with the emergencies in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. We are working to expand cooperation with India in this area and to encourage China to become more engaged on humanitarian issues.

Our efforts to increase engagement on humanitarian issues include diplomacy in addition to assistance programs. The United States is a leader in diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflicts at the root of humanitarian suffering, and we pursue political solutions both bilaterally and multilaterally. Humanitarian assistance does not prolong conflict, although it can sometimes distract leaders from focusing on political engagement.

Humanitarian programs save lives, reduce suffering, and work toward durable solutions for those displaced by conflict and natural disaster. U.S. humanitarian assistance strives to advance America's humanitarian values, maximizing diplomatic and programmatic efforts to provide effective protection and assistance worldwide. The FY 2017 humanitarian assistance budget request seeks to balance rising humanitarian requirements and a difficult budget reality in order to meet basic needs and sustain ongoing programs.

Question 18. Do you anticipate that the outbreak of the Zika virus in Latin America, which came to international attention after this budget request was formulated, will impact plans for global health assistance allocations in FY2017?

Answer. At this time, there are no changes to the FY 2017 Global Health request. The response to Zika requires immediate action. The FY2016 emergency supplemental appropriations request would be our primary response to Zika. We are also exploring additional authorities to use available funds, including remaining funds in the Ebola supplemental appropriations.

We should not divert funding from other important Global Health challenges for Zika. This would undermine our ability to achieve important global goals—such as ending child and maternal deaths and protecting communities from infectious diseases, including completing the response to Ebola, building global health security capacity, and addressing tuberculosis. These issues currently claim millions of lives each year—and most of these deaths are preventable, and doing so has been a priority of the U.S. government for many years. The experience over the last several years with outbreaks of Ebola, SARS, MERS-CoV, avian influenza and Zika has underscored the point that infectious disease outbreaks will happen and they can have devastating impacts locally and globally if they are not prevented and mitigated.

Ensuring effective prevention, detection and response of such outbreaks is at the heart of global health security. If Zika continues to spread around the world, and response needs exceed the emergency funding capacity we have requested, we will have to explore and review the options available to address the changing epidemic.

Question 19. Budget documents suggest that the proposed boost in malaria program funding would come in part from unobligated emergency funds to counter Ebola, if authorized by Congress.

- What is the status of emergency Ebola funds?
- Why are the funds no longer needed to address Ebola?
- If not necessary for Ebola programs, why did the Department choose not to apply them to addressing the Zika virus instead of seeking an emergency supplemental?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID were appropriated $2.5 billion in Ebola emergency funds. As of December 1, $1.2 billion in foreign assistance and $34.3 million in Diplomatic Engagement funding has been obligated for the State-USAID Ebola emergency response and recovery efforts. There is nearly $1.3 billion in unobligated foreign assistance and $2.1 million in unobligated Diplomatic Engagement balances. The bulk of the unobligated funding is planned for our ongoing Ebola response and recovery efforts in West Africa; for activities to support the Global Health Security Agenda; and to ensure our ability to rapidly and effectively respond in the event of a new Ebola outbreak and tackle the effects of Ebola.

While the height of the Ebola epidemic is over, we are continuing to support Ebola recovery efforts and survivor issues in the affected countries and stand ready to re-

spond to flare-ups as they occur. While we do plan to maintain some resources to ensure we can meet ongoing Ebola needs, we anticipate some flexibility with remaining Ebola funds.

Malaria remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a number of high burden countries in West and Central Africa. Malaria globally infects over 200 million people and kills over 400,000 people annually. As such, the FY 2017 Budget proposes to allocate approximately $129 million from remaining USAID Ebola funds to fight malaria. The Administration believes that this is an appropriate use of remaining Ebola emergency funds because malaria is a dangerous infectious disease that continues to kill many, particularly children under five.

While we anticipate some flexibility with remaining Ebola funds, a majority of the funds are still needed to sustain our ability to support Ebola recovery efforts and maintain our readiness to respond to flare-ups as they occur. The FY 2016 Zika supplemental request of $376 million reflects our best estimate, given current information, of potential State and USAID needs for the Zika response at this time; however, there remains significant uncertainty around the scope of the Zika challenges we will face.

As such, the President's FY 2017 Budget and the FY 2016 Zika supplemental request authority to use unobligated Ebola funds for other infectious diseases, such as Zika, in addition to Ebola. This authority would allow us to consider the use of Ebola funds to address Zika and other future infectious disease outbreaks, if needed, beyond the currently identified needs. We should not short-change our ability to address either of these important health challenges.

Question 20. How does the current allocation of foreign assistance, both regionally and by sector, reflect larger U.S. foreign policy priorities?

Answer. The President's FY 2017 request for the Department and USAID includes $34 billion for foreign assistance programs. This request supports key national security, foreign policy, and development mission objectives. Regionally, the request includes $4 billion to counter Da'esh, respond to the crisis in Syria, and support humanitarian needs in the region. It requests $750.6 million to bolster the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America and $873 million to support economic development and security efforts as part of the Asia Rebalance effort. It also requests $7.1 billion to support our goals in Africa, including advancing democracy, health, education, economic growth and security throughout the region.

As part of these regional efforts, the Department and USAID are also requesting funds to support important investments in critical sectors across the globe. The request includes $2.7 billion for democracy, human rights and governance programming, one of the core strategic goals of this Administration. It also includes $983.9 million to support the Global Climate Change Initiative and $561.8 million for basic education. These are just examples of the important cross-cutting programs requested as part of the FY 2017 Request. All of these investments, plus many others, are critical to ensuring the success of our broader foreign policy and development goals.

Question 21. How could aid, as a tool for foreign policy, be allocated to more effectively address strategic priorities?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID always work to ensure the funds are allocated to address strategic priorities. The development of the President's annual budget request for the Department of State and USAID begins at embassies and USAID missions around the world. These requests are based on country-specific priorities and strategies and are organized by mission objectives when they are submitted to the Department of State and USAID in Washington, DC.

Department and USAID leadership then review the submissions from the embassies and missions overseas, and make tough decisions to ensure the request supports the most critical regional and global strategic priorities. In coordination with the Office of Management and Budget, this results in a final budget request that advances the U.S. government's most important foreign policy, national security, and development objectives. The President's request reflects these priorities when it is submitted to Congress each year.

Once an appropriation bill is passed, the allocation of funds must abide by funding directives included in the bill as well as the Statement of Managers, as required. Within these guidelines, the Department and USAID work to ensure the best allocation of resources in support of strategic foreign policy priorities.

Question 22. How will you manage foreign assistance programs differently, if at all, in the absence of congressional directives?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID have many shared priorities with Congress. While many congressional funding directives support these shared goals,

including advancing democracy or education across the globe, we must be able to respond to changing circumstances and adapt as needed. Often, the world looks different between the time we submit our request and the time we receive our final appropriation. We need to remain nimble.

In the absence of congressional directives, we would allocate funding according to the President's request, which sustains projects, programs, and activities supported by Congress, taking into account changing circumstances, prior year funding availability, and any new needs that have emerged since the request was submitted. This would reduce our dependence on transfer authorities, which, while incredibly valuable, can be time consuming to execute and thus hinder our ability to move funds and respond quickly.

Question 23. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is one of the most effective initiatives of its kind. But I am concerned about how long the United States is going to have to keep serving as the world's number-one source of finance for HIV care and prevention.

- What is the United States doing to help developing countries take on more of a leadership role in serving their own citizens, to make sure that the countries we are trying to help have all the tools they need to manage their way to an AIDS-free generation?

Answer. PEPFAR is committed to the end goal of country-led sustainable responses, where partner countries will lead, manage, coordinate, and increasingly finance the efforts needed to achieve an AIDS-free generation and an effective, efficient, and durable response. First and foremost, PEPFAR is focused on supporting countries to ensure viral load suppression within their populations to stop transmission of the AIDS virus, which is key to the ability of countries to reach sustained epidemic control and reduce the costs of the epidemic.

As part of this process, PEPFAR has prioritized helping governments understand the use of program and epidemiological data to inform where to invest resources to have the greatest programmatic impact. It is essential that governments be able to evaluate cost data and evolve their service delivery models to become more efficient in the implementation of HIV/AIDS programs.

New game changing guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO) in the fall of 2015 provide tremendous opportunities to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS immediately. Policy changes are essential to the elimination of HIV as a public health threat and we have worked with countries to encourage them to exhibit leadership on changing their policies and adopting WHO guidelines when they are released within weeks and months instead of years.

The new guidelines related to "Test and Start" treatment, service delivery guidelines that will reduce the number of clinical interventions needed, and guidelines related to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) can change the course of the epidemic. Nearly two-thirds of the cost of treatment is service delivery, not the cost of drugs. Additionally, a change in policy to having stable patients switching to having medical appointments every 6 months and facilities tendering 3-6 month supply of drugs will allow each treatment site to add 75 percent more clients on treatment with the same facility personnel and cost.

One of the five pillars of PEPFAR 3.0 is the Sustainability Action Agenda, whereby the U.S. government aims to engage both partner governments and civil society in service and systems strengthening. PEPFAR's Sustainability Agenda focuses on:

- The policy, administrative, and legal environment that would ensure access to services and social protection for vulnerable populations.
- Rapid adoption of the 2015 World Health Organization guidelines that will substantially increase the effectiveness of PEPFAR investments.
- The financing and delivery of necessary HIV/AIDS services and what can be done to support increased domestic investment in these areas.
- The systems and capabilities to facilitate the strategic use of data.
- The accountability of partner country governments to be responsive to stakeholders for achieving results and to be good stewards of HIV/AIDS funding.

A key component of the Sustainability Action Agenda is the development and use of the Sustainability Index and Dashboard (SID), a measurement tool that provides a periodic snapshot of the elements central to a sustained and controlled epidemic. The implementation of the SID, in collaboration with country stakeholders, allows PEPFAR and its partners to objectively track progress toward sustainability goals. These goals are "owned" by the country and have been supported by PEPFAR. The Index targets 15 elements organized under four overarching domains:

- Governance, Leadership, and Accountability;
- National Health System and Service Delivery;
- Strategic Investments, Efficiency, and Sustainable Financing; and
- Strategic Information

The SID was implemented for the first time in 33 countries in 2015 and has been revised and refined for implementation during COP 2016 ("SID 2.0"), the results from which are intended to serve as the baseline going forward. The findings from periodic implementation of the SID will contribute to a shared understanding of each country's sustainability landscape, help identify strengths, gaps, and weaknesses within the national HIV response, and inform the annual planning of PEPFAR investments.

Recognizing the importance of full participation by non-governmental partners, including the private sector to the success and sustainability of efforts to combat HIV, the revised SID more explicitly reflects and assesses the role these groups play in national HIV responses. In addition, to further ensure increased participation and integration of civil society in HIV/AIDS planning and implementation, all PEPFAR countries were directed to actively involve civil society throughout the development of their annual Country/Regional Operational Plans.

During the COP 2015 in-person reviews, each country was empowered to invite members of civil society, host country governments, multilaterals and other stakeholders to participate in high-level discussions with Ambassador Birx around the annual PEPFAR planning process.

Question 24. I certainly appreciate the steps this administration has taken to make U.S. foreign assistance more transparent. One of these steps was the creation of the foreign aid dashboard, managed by the State Department, where American taxpayers can review how and where the U.S. is spending foreign aid dollars. Every federal agency that provides foreign assistance funding is required to share its information on this website

- What is the agency participation rate for the site?
- What agencies lag behind in sharing their data, and what is the reason for the delay in sharing this information with U.S. taxpayers?
- What is the status of the State Department's own data on this site?

Answer. ForeignAssistance.gov contains data from 10 agencies representing 98 percent of the U.S. foreign assistance portfolio. These 10 agencies are: the Department of State; USAID; the Millennium Challenge Corporation; the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Health and Human Services, and the Treasury; the African Development Foundation; the Inter-American Foundation; and the Peace Corps.

The Department is engaged with non-reporting agencies and working to improve the quantity and quality of data reported by agencies. Progress is being made incrementally; however, there are a number of challenges to reporting including that agencies are often compiling and reconciling data from multiple systems that were not designed to collect or report on the detailed level of reporting currently requested.

The Department of State chartered a Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR) working group to understand and document issues related to managing and tracking foreign assistance within the Department and recommend a path forward. The first phase of the FADR produced a report that examines the current foreign assistance data environment and recommends improvements. The full report is available online at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/250931.pdf.

Question 25. I was disappointed that the State Department did not meet its international commitment to post its own foreign assistance data online by December 2015.

- Do you have a plan for the State Department to comply with this commitment? And would you please share it with the Committee?

Answer. The Department of State has been reporting core data fields to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard since 2012. While we are not reporting every one of the IATI fields, the Department has made great progress in opening up and publishing its foreign assistance financial records, performance data, evaluations, and budget planning data over the last few years.

To improve its IATI data reporting, the Department chartered a Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR) working group to understand and document issues related to managing and tracking foreign assistance within the Department and recommend a path forward. The first phase of the FADR produced a report that exam-

ines the current foreign assistance data environment and recommends improvements. The full report is available online at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/250931.pdf. The FADR group is continuing its work to carry out these recommendations.

Question 26. U.S. development assistance should foster long-term self-sufficiency and ultimately support partner countries transition from foreign aid. The FY 2016 Omnibus Appropriations bill included an important provision requiring all future country development strategies to include a plan for transitioning over time away from foreign assistance.

- How are you approaching these transition plans?
- Have you considered developing clear, measurable, and realistic benchmarks for country transition, such as benchmarks for social and economic progress across social groups, public sector capacity, or the enabling environment for civil society and the private sector?

Answer. Transition planning is already being incorporated into USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS). Decisions about the necessary scope of transition planning for a particular mission are made during the early stages of strategy development, including the type of transition a mission is planning and over what timeframe. For example, transition could include phasing out of a particular sector, planning to transition assistance from programmatic to advisory, or phasing out of a country entirely. Development strategies, including any transition planning, are cornerstones of our whole-of-government Integrated Country Strategies (ICS) and we will be requiring all of our missions to consider foreign assistance transition planning more broadly in ICS development going forward.

As part of its efforts to transition away from historic levels of assistance, USAID recently has reduced its Full Mission presence to either a non-presence status or a smaller office in the following countries: Mongolia, Namibia, Benin, Albania, and Macedonia.

Setting end goals for foreign assistance and benchmarks toward achievement of those goals are integral to our approach to transition planning for development. These goals and benchmarks will be dependent on particular country contexts, rather than set at a corporate level. Given the variety of contexts in which we work, and the range of U.S. government interests in those countries, our approach is to develop broad guidelines while preserving adaptability so that it may be responsive to local and U.S. government realities.

Question 27. In order to support implementation of its new Cuba policy, $3.8 million is requested within the Diplomatic and Consular Programs account for infrastructure improvements to the U.S. embassy in Havana (converted from an interests section last year), and additional funds are requested for additional staffing at the embassy.

- Could you describe what impact, if any, that the conversion of the Interests Section to an Embassy has had on our bilateral relationship?
- What further steps, if any, are contemplated in the context of this budget in support of the new Administration's Cuba policy?

Answer. U.S. Embassy officials are able to travel more freely in Cuba since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. For the first time in decades, some Embassy staff can travel throughout the island without providing advance notification to Cuban government officials. Free travel allows us to make contact with average Cubans.

U.S. officials at the U.S. Embassy in Havana are also able to more effectively engage with a broad range of Cuban government counterparts since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. As a result, U.S. and Cuban officials, with participation from U.S. Embassy officials, were able to negotiate an arrangement to restore scheduled air service between the United States and Cuba, sign a joint statement on environmental protection cooperation, and agree on a pilot program for the direct transportation of mail between the United States and Cuba. These instruments, as well as others we are negotiating related to counternarcotics cooperation, law enforcement cooperation, and oil spill prevention and response, put in place the mechanisms for bilateral cooperation on these issues going forward.

Additionally, re-establishing diplomatic relations has facilitated bilateral dialogues with Cuban government officials in important areas in which we had not previously engaged, such as U.S. claims against the Cuban government.

The FY 2017 budget request for Diplomatic and Consular Programs would allow U.S. Embassy Havana to increase staff and improve the embassy's unsafe and aging

facilities. At present, our diplomats work in poor and deteriorating conditions, and the budget request would support basic repairs. The U.S. Embassy requires additional American personnel to support an already overburdened platform. 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.

Question 28. Could you describe the department's public diplomacy strategies in countering Russian propaganda efforts in Europe? How do you measure the success or failure of these strategies? To what extent do the BBG's broadcasting efforts contribute to their success? Is the budget request adequate to ensure the strategy's success?

Answer. The Kremlin is rapidly disseminating disinformation, part of a concerted effort to undermine trust in Western institutions and erode freedom of the press. Research shows that despite Moscow's efforts and resources devoted to this objective, they have limited effectiveness abroad: less than one third of Europeans polled outside of Russia are confident that Putin will do the right thing in world affairs or see Russia favorably. In these same European countries, views of the United States are much more positive; 69 percent viewed the U.S. favorably.

Capitalizing on this public goodwill, the State Department is leading a coordinated effort to support the free flow of information, expand independent media, root out corruption, and refute Russian government disinformation. Our efforts extend across a range of diplomatic tools as we proactively amplify key U.S. government messages, correct disinformation, engage opinion leaders, encourage independent voices, and forge and maintain people-to-people ties.

The Department employs a combination of short-term messaging strategies with medium- and long-term programs to boost resilience and build capacity to recognize and reject Russian government disinformation. The State Department supports our overseas posts in times of heightened Kremlin messaging. Armed with the facts, our missions abroad are able to adapt the content and materials we supply to their own audiences and rapidly amplify the truth. We have also increased our capacity to proactively deliver our messages in Russian by forming a cadre of Russian-speaking officers to engage with the media and introducing a Russian-language, policy-oriented Twitter handle. We augment this messaging activity by providing foreign audiences with opportunities to engage directly with experts, opinion leaders, and third party groups.

The State Department is implementing programs that support independent media and investigative journalists in countries throughout the region, including Azerbaijan, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine, and the Baltics. We have developed exchanges to encourage independent media voices, including workshops on digital skills and investigative journalism, and support for a Digital Communicators Network of more than 1,000 members who bring accurate, objective information to regional audiences.

At the same time, we are supporting efforts to engage ethnic Russian populations by expanding our English language training programs and professional exchanges. These cost-effective programs create lasting educational and professional linkages and increase English proficiency of students and educators, helping remove language as a barrier for thought leaders to understand U.S. policy and culture.

U.S. public diplomacy also includes NATO and U.S. military outreach and media engagement. These high visibility engagements help dispel the Russian government's anti-NATO messages and serve as opportunities to explain our security partnerships. Last year the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs provided a new fund to support embassy public affairs teams in developing new, innovative public outreach projects pegged to U.S. military exercises in Europe. These interactions between people are the cornerstone of our strategy and absolutely essential in refuting disinformation.

We continue to use our public diplomacy tools to deepen people-to-people ties in an admittedly challenging political environment. In the past year, the State Department has designed and implemented a range of programs in the region that build relationships based on common interests and perceptions. Based on participant feedback, we know these programs are having a positive net effect. In addition to anecdotal evidence, we also conduct evaluations of our programs to ensure impact.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors receives steady input from the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, who serves on the BBG to ensure its strategic planning is aligned with broader U.S. foreign policy goals. The BBG is an active participant in an ongoing working group at State, through which

it apprises the Department of its efforts and provides analysis of current media trends. In its own work, the BBG maintains a robust response to Russian disinformation through the combined work of Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which employ flexible, innovative, and cross-platform programming around the world to counter the Kremlin's strident anti-American messaging with fact-based journalism.

The bureaus undertaking this important work ensure that our limited resources are directed, in the most effective way, toward implementing priority programs focused on countering Russian government disinformation.

Question 29. As Iran is receiving billions in sanctions relief and oil funds in the wake of the nuclear deal, I'm concerned that they are seeking to expand their aggressive behavior. The press has reported that Russia is planning to sell fighter jets, comparable to American F-15E fighter bombers, to Iran. As you know, the sale of combat aircraft to Iran would violate the U.N. arms embargo, but the U.N. Security Council could approve the sale in advance.

- Do you plan to raise the issue of this proposed sale with Russia?
- How can this sale be stopped?
- What would the U.S. do in reaction, should Russia go ahead with the sale?
- Since Russia is a member of the U.N. Security Council, would any repercussions from the U.N. be blocked?

Answer. We have seen the reports of a possible sale of Russian combat aircraft to Iran but have no confirmation of such an intention. If we saw indications that such a sale was moving forward, we would, of course, raise it.

The United States would be able to block U.N. Security Council approval of any such sale while the restrictions under UNSCR 2231 remain in force. We do not see a circumstance in which we would consider allowing the Council to approve such a transfer.

Whenever the United States has information about any country taking actions prohibited by UNSCRs, we treat it as a very serious matter. Such a violation would become a serious issue in our bilateral relationship and affect our cooperation on a range of issues, including Iran. As we have in the past, we would raise any reported violation directly in the U.N. Security Council to emphasize the degree to which such actions are unacceptable.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia can block the Council from taking any substantive decision in response to such a violation. However, Russia could not prevent us from reporting the matter to the Council, and could not prevent the Council from discussing it. By shining an unwelcome spotlight on such actions in the Security Council, we can expose the irresponsibility of any country that violates U.N. Security Council resolutions, especially a permanent member of that Council. Russia would also be unable to prevent us from taking appropriate domestic measures, unilaterally or in coordination with multilateral partners.

Question 30. I'm also very concerned by Russia's delivery of advanced S-300 air defense missile systems to Iran.

- Can you confirm if this transfer has taken place?
- What impact might this defense system have on Iran's behavior?

Answer. We do not have information indicating the transfer of an S-300 missile system from Russia to Iran has taken place. On numerous occasions, we have strongly urged Russia not to proceed with the sale of an S-300 system to Iran as the transfer of advanced surface-to-air weapons systems to Iran would add to instability in the region and be clearly inconsistent with our common nonproliferation goals.

We remain concerned that introduction of any advanced defensive weapons system such as the S-300 into Iran's inventory would further raise tensions in the region. We will continue to work intensively with our partners in the region to deter and counter any Iranian destabilizing activities.

Question 31. Mr. Secretary, there is a long history of nuclear and missile cooperation between Iran and North Korea. North Korea has already demonstrated its capability to explode a nuclear device. Iranian officials reportedly traveled to North Korea to witness each of its three nuclear tests—in October 2006, May 2009, and February 2013. Just before North Korea's third test, a senior American official said that, quote, "it's very possible that the North Koreans are testing for two countries." And, Director of National Intelligence Clapper's 2016 Worldwide Threat Assessment stated that Pyongyang's "export of ballistic missiles and associated materials to sev-

eral countries, including Iran and Syria, and its assistance to Syria's construction of a nuclear reactor ... illustrate its willingness to proliferate dangerous technologies." This is truly alarming.

- How confident are you that if Iran were to use North Korean nuclear facilities, we would know about it?
- If we did, would that lead to a full snapback of sanctions?
- Can you inform me of the State Department's current efforts to halt this sharing of nuclear technology between North Korea and Iran? What more can be done?

Answer. The United States closely monitors and reviews all available information on the DPRK's dealings related to its WMD programs and its proliferation activities worldwide, as well as any efforts by Iran to acquire proliferation-sensitive materials or technologies. We continue to take concerted efforts, both nationally and multilaterally, to impede the DPRK's proliferation activities, including through the full suite of relevant U.S. unilateral sanctions measures and by urging all countries to implement relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning the DPRK.

We also continue to do the same with respect to Iran, both unilaterally and multilaterally, in accordance with UNSCR 2231 (2015) and the provisions of the Joint Comprehensive Plans of Action (JCPOA). We are committed to ensuring that Iran fulfills all of its nuclear-related commitments in a verifiable and complete manner. Because there is comprehensive IAEA monitoring of the entire fuel cycle within Iran, we are confident we will know if Iran attempts to cheat, including through the introduction of foreign technology or material into Iran's nuclear fuel cycle that is contrary to the JCPOA.

Should Iran violate its commitments under the JCPOA, we retain a wide range of options to respond, whether in the case of significant non-performance by Iran or more minor instances of noncompliance, including the ability to snapback both national and multilateral nuclear-related sanctions. This provides us with significant leverage to deter Iranian noncompliance and allows us to respond appropriately and proportionately to any Iranian violations.

Question 32. Today in Syria, we have a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. Millions have been displaced from their homes and tens of thousands are dead from violence—not only from violent extremists, but also at the hands of President Asad. Russia's support for President Asad has truly served as a game-changer in international negotiations on Syria. While I applaud your efforts, Secretary Kerry, for coming to an agreement on a "cessation of hostilities" to begin later this week, I have some concerns. Russia is the key player in this ceasefire, and yet their recent track record is marred. Multiple ceasefires have been negotiated for Ukraine, which Russia continues to violate on a, quote, "daily" basis, according to U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Samantha Power.

- I'd like to ask you, Secretary Kerry, what are the consequences for Russia, should they violate this ceasefire, as they have violated over and over the ceasefires in Ukraine?
- How does this cessation of hostilities take into account non-state actors, such as ISIS or Jabhat al Nusra?

Answer. We are committed to seeing this process through and are pressing hard to keep the Cessation of Hostilities on track. We have no illusions about activities by Russia and the regime to date in Syria and will judge their commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities by their actions. The discussions over the last several weeks have not been easy, and this will continue to be a challenging process. Thus far the cessation of hostilities has reduced the violence while allowing for the freer movement of humanitarian goods and greater access to besieged communities throughout Syria.

In the initial days of the cessation of hostilities, the emphasis has been on getting the cessation to take hold and defusing tensions as we see reports of violations. Given the intensity of fighting and the number of actors involved, putting this cessation fully into effect is going to take time.

If the COH should break down due to Russian actions, the U.S. will consider a range of options to advance our objectives of countering Da'esh and ending the conflict in Syria through a process that includes a political transition from Asad.

As announced in Munich, this cessation of hostilities applies to all parties in Syria except for Da'esh, al-Nusrah, and other terrorist groups designated by the U.N. Security Council.

Question 33. According to the State Department, Iran continues to be the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. In its quest to dominate the Middle East and expel American influence, Iran has exploited terrorism as a tool of statecraft to oppose U.S. interests and objectives in Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories. All restrictions preventing Iran from repatriating its foreign held oil revenues have now been lifted since Implementation Day.

- How have Iran's terrorist activities been affected by the JCPOA and the subsequent lifting of sanctions?
- Has Iranian support for terrorism increased or decreased?
- Does the U.S. have an estimate of the amount of funding Iran provides to Hezbollah?
- How are these funds being transferred?
- If we see an Iranian bank transfer funds for the benefit of Hezbollah, will the U.S. immediately sanction that bank?

Answer. Over the past three decades, Iran has used some of its resources to support terrorism. For that reason, Iran is and remains a designated State Sponsor of Terror. This is also why our non-nuclear related sanctions on Iran remain in place, and why we will continue to work with our partners in the region to counter Iran's malign activities, regardless of the source of funds for those activities.

After the IAEA verified that Iran had met key nuclear-related commitments as specified in the JCPOA, the United States lifted nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. As part of the lifting of these sanctions, foreign financial institutions holding funds owed to Iran in accounts outside of the United States can release such funds to the Central Bank of Iran without being subject to U.S. secondary sanctions. We estimate that, as a result, Iran now has access to approximately $50 billion of its own funds.

Iran's ongoing economic difficulties make it harder to divert large portions of its financial gains from sanctions relief away from its domestic economy and toward its regional activities. For example, we estimate that Iran needs about half a trillion dollars to meet pressing investment needs and government obligations.

We have numerous domestic authorities—including sanctions—to counter Iran's support for terrorism and other destabilizing activities. We will continue to enforce aggressively our sanctions related to Iran's support for terrorism, ballistic missile activities, regional destabilization, and human rights abuses.

We will use our authority under the Hizballah International Financing Protection Act to target financial institutions that knowingly facilitate significant transactions or engage in money laundering activities on behalf of Hizballah. The State Department, Treasury, and our partners in the Intelligence Community are constantly looking for solid evidence of such activity. When we see evidence, we will build a case, and we will take action.

We have made significant progress and will continue to further disrupt Hizballah's terrorist capabilities by targeting the group's financial support infrastructure. The U.S. government has consistently used and will continue to use our authorities to expose and target Hizballah's financial, commercial, and terrorist activities around the world.

I would be happy to discuss more details regarding Iran's funding Hizballah in a classified setting.

Question 34. Since implementation day of the JCPOA went into effect, any hope that Iran would somehow moderate its malign behavior has been dashed. If anything, Iran has become more aggressive in preserving the regime of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, has become more confrontational against America's presence in the Persian Gulf, and has escalated its threatening rhetoric against the U.S. and Israel. The administration repeatedly promised during the Congressional review of the JCPOA that the U.S. would continue to confront Iran in the region. In response to Iranian illegal ballistic missile tests, the U.S. imposed sanctions on 11 entities and individuals for the provision of missile related technology to Iran. The Iranians paid for that technology, but no financial institution was sanctioned for the transaction. The technology arrived in Iran by boat or plane, yet no shipping line or airline was sanctioned.

- Mr. Secretary shouldn't we be going after the infrastructure that allows Iran to continue its missile program? Do you have any plans to do so?
- Beyond the 11 entities sanctioned for supporting Iran's missile program, has the administration imposed any sanctions targeting Iran non-nuclear activities since the JCPOA was reached? Any sanctions for supporting terrorism? Any

sanctions for supporting the Assad regime? Any sanctions for human rights violations? Any sanctions for supporting Shiite militias in Iraq?

- What is the U.S. doing to prevent Iran from transferring advanced weaponry to non-state actors in the region who might use those weapons against our allies?

Answer. We continue to deploy a wide range of multilateral and unilateral tools to address Iran's ballistic missile development efforts. Iran's efforts to develop increasingly capable ballistic missile systems are a significant nonproliferation challenge and a very real threat to regional and international security.

In response to Iran's ballistic missile launches, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control on January 17 designated three individuals and eight entities, including five Iranian officials, involved in the procurement of materials and equipment for Iran's ballistic missile network.

Additionally, the United States is constantly working with partners to interdict missile-related transfers to Iran and target Iranian missile proliferation activities in third countries, including Iran's procurement of equipment related to building a domestic infrastructure for missile development.

Finally, in addition to enforcing measures on Iran's ballistic missile activities, we will continue to enforce our sanctions related to Iran's support for terrorism, destabilizing activities in the region, and human rights abuses. We will continue to act on any information of sanctionable activity.

Regarding Iran's transfer of weapons to groups in the region, we continue to work intensively with our partners, especially Israel and the Gulf states, to deter and disrupt Iranian threats and proliferation. Examples of such cooperation include diplomatic and sanctions pressure on Mahan Air, ongoing security cooperation with the GCC following the Camp David summit, sanctions on a range of Iranian entities for actions in Syria, Israel's seizure of the Klos C vessel carrying weapons bound for Gaza in 2014, military and diplomatic efforts to prevent an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) naval flotilla from docking in Yemen in April 2015, and the September 25, 2015, seizure of the Nasir dhow carrying weapons from Iran that we assess were bound for Yemen.

Question 35. Since the JCPOA went into effect, Iran's hard-liners have taken pains to consolidate their economic and political power and to sideline would-be reformists who are more amenable to a rapprochement with the West. It was hoped that the openings created by the JCPOA would engender Iranian moderation, but instead, extremists have reaped the benefits while tightening their grip and escalating their malign behavior.

- Does the U.S. have a strategy to combat the retrenchment we see on the part of Khamenei, his allies, and the IRGC?
- What will the long-term repercussions be as the JCPOA progresses, particularly with regard to Iran's foreign policy, if extremist elements continue to dominate Iran's economic and political scene?

Answer. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) remains firmly under U.S. sanctions, which we have no intention of removing until the IRGC ceases the activities for which it has been sanctioned, including its support for terrorism. Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, which allows us to target terrorists and those who support them across the globe, is employed forcefully against Iranian entities that provide support to terrorism. The IRGC-Qods Force, the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security, Iran's Mahan Air, Hizballah, and over 100 other Iran-related individuals and entities remain subject to sanctions under this E.O. Further, under Iran sanctions statutes, foreign financial institutions may be subject to secondary sanctions for knowingly facilitating a significant financial transaction or providing significant financial services for any person on the SDN List, which includes the IRGC and IRGC-related officials, agents, and affiliates. These and other authorities allow us to continue to target the IRGC for any activities which threaten us or our allies.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was never intended to resolve all our issues with Iran. It is about eliminating the biggest and most imminent threat—a nuclear-armed Iran. Our governments have significant disagreements, but our experience on the nuclear deal demonstrates that engaging directly with the Iranian government on a sustained basis created a window to try to resolve important issues. This engagement is clearly in our interest. Iran has a choice about how it moves forward. If Iran chooses to build on the constructive outcomes of the nuclear deal reached with the international community, it would lead to a better future for the Iranian people.

Question 36. The administration has estimated that Iran's sanctions relief windfall would be about $50 billion, while Iran has claimed that the figure is closer to $100 billion.

- Now that Implementation Day has passed, do you have a better estimate of how much money Iran was able to gain access to?
- Do we have an indication of how Iran is using its windfall thus far? Do we see evidence that they are paying down their debts, or using some of the money to further increase support for terrorism? You indicated during the hearing that you would get back to me in a classified setting on this issue. I would like to request a follow-on briefing in a classified setting.
- Do you have figures for how much Iran provides Hizballah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Shi'a militias in Iraq? And for how these figures are likely to increase as a result of sanctions relief?

Answer. After the IAEA verified that Iran had met key nuclear-related commitments as specified in the JCPOA, the United States lifted nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. As part of the lifting of these sanctions, foreign financial institutions holding funds owed to Iran in accounts outside the United States can release such funds to the Central Bank of Iran. We estimate that, as a result, Iran now has access to approximately $50 billion of its own funds.

Iran's ongoing economic difficulties make it harder to divert large portions of its financial gains from sanctions relief away from its domestic economy and toward its regional activities. For example, we estimate that Iran needs about half a trillion dollars to meet pressing investment needs and government obligations.

I would be happy to discuss your question of Iran's funding of groups in the region and our assessment of Iran's use of released assets in a classified setting.

Question 37. As you know, the State Department went ahead with the purchase of land last summer at Ft. Pickett and awarded a contract while there was a great deal of questions and opposition coming from Congress. In fact, we did not have an independent cost benefit of analysis on the project until December of last year. The State Department then halted the contract, upon reviewing language in the State Authorization Act passed out of SFRC and the SFOPs appropriations bill calling for the independent cost-benefit analysis. As a result of halting the contract, we were told that State paid a $10,000 per day penalty. I'm concerned about the lack of disregard for Congressional intent shown by this process. Why did State not wait to move ahead until the known Congressional requirements were satisfied? How much did the penalties on the contract at Ft. Pickett cost the taxpayer to date?

Answer. Beginning in 2009, the Department and U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) conducted an extensive site selection process, reviewing over 70 sites before selecting Fort Pickett as the preferred site for FASTC. The Department and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), working with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), also extensively reviewed the FLETC site in Glynco, GA. The Administration ultimately relied on the Department's unique understanding of diplomatic missions abroad and its training needs, which led to the selection of Fort Pickett in April 2014.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), the principal investigative arm of Congress, unofficially advised in May 2015 that the Fort Pickett alternative was the only site that fully supported the FASTC functional requirements and was fiscally the best course of action. Based on the cumulative results of these multiple reviews and to avoid further delays, particularly in light of the increased security training implemented following the Benghazi Accountability Review Board, the Department determined that moving forward with construction at Fort Pickett was a logical course of action.

However, in response to additional Congressional concerns about the project, the Department halted construction in July 2015 in order to conduct additional due diligence. GSA contracted with Deloitte to conduct an independent "apples to apples" Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) of Fort Pickett, FLETC, and the Bill Scott Raceway in Summit Point, WV. In December 2015, the CBA confirmed that Fort Pickett would be less expensive, could be completed sooner and presented less risk than any other option. The finalized GAO report also agreed with this finding. The Department and GSA have since discussed the CBA results with Congress. On February 25, 2016, the Department restarted construction activities for FASTC at the Fort Pickett site.

The CBA cost $527,000 and supported previous results in the Department's, OMB's and GAO's separate analyses. Prior to the restart date of February 25, GSA estimated that delay costs would accrue at the rate of $620,000 per month when the construction hold was issued in August 2015. Now that all project phases are proceeding, GSA will continue coordinating with contractors to determine actual delay costs. GSA estimates it will be at least several more weeks before a final delay cost is known.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO SECRETARY KERRY BY SENATOR BARRASSO

Question 1. Does your budget eliminate any program? Please provide a complete list of programs eliminated in the administration's FY 2017 budget for State and USAID?

Answer. The Department does not propose the elimination of any Diplomatic Engagement programs in the Fiscal Year 2017 Request.

In the five-year period between FY 2012 and FY 2016 the non-OCO portion of the non-security D&CP operations account has been reduced by 19 percent. The Department's FY 2017 Request includes a recommendation to increase funding in this account for the first time in five years. This request would still remain 11 percent below the FY 2012 level.

The D&CP account is the primary source of funding for all of the administrative functions, excluding buildings and security, performed by State. The Department considers all of these functions to be essential to the security and diplomatic presence of the United States. At the same time the Department looks for every opportunity to reduce the cost to the taxpayer through rightsizing, identifying greater operational efficiencies, and having no tolerance for waste.

Question 2. In November 2014, President Obama unilaterally pledged $3 billion for the U.N. Green Climate Fund. Congress has not authorized or appropriated any money for it. According to the Congressional Research Service, Congress did not appropriate any funding for fiscal year 2016. A few media reports indicate that you plan to divert funds from other line items in order to pay for the United Nations Green Climate Fund.

- Does the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriation bill specifically provide funding for the U.N. Green Climate Fund? If yes, what appropriations were funded specifically to the U.N. Green Climate Fund and to what accounts? If no, what accounts are you planning to divert and reprogram funds from in order to meet this unilateral commitment?

Answer. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is an independent institution and not part of the United Nations. The GCF is governed by an independent Board that has full authority over funding decisions. The United States has a seat on the Board.

The Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2016 (Div. K, P.L. 114-113) did not earmark funds specifically for the GCF, but it also did not contain any restrictions on the use of FY 2016 funds for the GCF. The administration plans to provide funding to the GCF from the Economic Support Fund (ESF) account that is available for this purpose.

Question 3. What is the process through which the administration determines appropriate commitments to multilateral funds such as the Green Climate Fund? What consultation with Congress is involved when commitments to multilateral funds are being considered?

Answer. The administration undertook an interagency discussion to determine the amount of the first U.S. funding to the GCF in light of the U.S. pledge to provide up to $3 billion to the GCF not to exceed 30 percent of total confirmed pledges during the initial resource mobilization period of the GCF. The administration consulted with Congress before the GCF pledge was announced and discussed the FY 2016 request for the GCF in the course of conference negotiations regarding the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2016.

Question 4. President Putin is attempting to change the battlefield dynamics to bolster the Assad regime and weaken the opposition in any negotiations for a peace deal. Russia continues to support the Assad regime but is now bombing civilians and opposition groups in Syria. The most recent example is the Russian bombings in Aleppo.

- What leverage does the international community have to pressure Assad to leave when he is currently winning the civil war on the battlefield with the assistance of Russia?

Answer. Bashar al-Asad continues to be the President of Syria because he is being propped up by Iran and Russia. While Russia wants to keep its only strategic ally in the region in power, it knows that its military support to the regime will not bring an end to the conflict. In November 2015, Russia signed onto the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) Statement reaffirming key Geneva Communique principles, most importantly, a commitment to a political transition, including agreeing to free and fair elections administered under U.N. supervision within 18 months. In December, Russia also voted in favor of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254, which explicitly requested that the U.N. convene formal negotiations on a political transition process between the regime and the opposition.

The United States is committed to seeing this process through to a political transition away from Asad; that is what the upcoming negotiations in Geneva under the auspices of the U.N. are supposed to do, and UNSCR 2254 provides a timetable for it. We are pressing hard to support implementation of the cessation of hostilities and get greater humanitarian access throughout Syria which will help to support negotiations between the Syrian opposition and Regime.

The ISSG is made up of over 20 other countries and entities. As a result of our ongoing diplomatic exchange with Russia, Russia has pressured the regime to agree to the cessation of hostilities, as well as allowing more humanitarian aid into besieged areas of Syria, but more needs to be done.

Question 5. How will the ceasefire affect the rules of engagement for our special operations forces that currently operate in Syria?

Answer. The cessation of hostilities will not affect the rules of engagement for U.S. special operations forces in Syria. I direct you to the Department of Defense for a more detailed response about the rules of engagement for U.S. special operations forces in Syria.

Question 6. Is Russia in violation of the political agreements and ceasefire commitment in Ukraine?

Answer. Russia continues to arm, train, direct, and fight alongside separatist forces in eastern Ukraine. The number of ceasefire violations in eastern Ukraine is at the highest level since September 2015, and according to reporting from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Special Monitoring Mission (OSCE SMM) a majority of ceasefire violations originate from separatist-controlled territory. Attacks by combined Russian-separatist forces have often involved prohibited heavy artillery, mortars, and multiple-rocker launchers, including a confirmed March 3 use of 40 Grad rockets fired on Ukrainian positions. The SMM reports also make clear that Russia-backed separatists continue to obstruct its mission by delaying or blocking monitors, jamming OSCE unmanned aerial vehicles, and, in some cases, directly intimidating and even firing at monitors to threaten their safety.

Russia is a party to but has not implemented the Minsk agreements, which it signed in February 2015 and in September 2014. Under the Minsk agreements, Russia and the separatists it backs have committed to a series of steps including: abide by the ceasefire; permanently withdraw heavy weapons from the line of contact; allow OSCE monitors full access throughout areas under separatist control, including up to the international border; hold local elections in areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in keeping with Ukrainian law and OSCE standards and observed by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; withdraw foreign forces and equipment from eastern Ukraine; and return control of Ukraine's international border to the Ukrainian government. Russia has not fulfilled these commitments.

As President Obama stressed to President Putin in their conversations, the United States expects Russia to fully implement the Minsk agreements, and until it does, sanctions will remain in place. Separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place as long as Russia occupies that piece of Ukrainian land.

Question 7. What does Russia's repeated violations of its ceasefire commitments in Ukraine say about the prospects of Russia abiding by and the international community enforcing a ceasefire in Syria that was just announced?

Answer. Our diplomacy in both Ukraine and Syria is focused on supporting ceasefires in order to advance political negotiations to end the conflicts. In Syria, we are committed to implementing the cessation of hostilities (COH) in Syria announced on February 22 because it represents the best chance for stability, humanitarian access, and a resumption of negotiations in pursuit of a political solution to end the Syrian civil war. The COH offers a visible international platform so that the international community can see what Russia has agreed to do.

Our emphasis is on getting the cessation to take hold and defusing tensions as reports of violations inevitably surface. Given the intensity of fighting and the number of actors involved, putting this cessation fully into effect is going to take time. Nevertheless, as of March 11 we have seen a marked reduction in violence, corroborated by local reporting from within Syria.

Once the cessation of hostilities is on solid footing, the focus will shift to monitoring and reporting on compliance. As co-chairs of the COH Task Force, we are in contact with the Russians to report and de-escalate COH violations. We are also in touch daily with the U.N. Office of the Special Envoy (OSE), based in Geneva, which maintains a small in-country presence in Syria. The OSE will serve as secretariat of the Task Force and a conduit and hub of information for all.

In Ukraine, our clear message to Russia is the importance of implementation of the ceasefire. As President Obama told President Putin in their February 22 phone conversation, we expect Russia to implement the Minsk agreements fully, including the ceasefire and heavy weapons withdrawal, and sanctions will remain until place until Moscow does so.

Question 8. What is your plan to ensure Russia keeps its word and is held accountable for any ceasefire violations in Syria? What consequences and sanctions should Russia face for targeting Syrian civilians and members of the opposition?

Answer. We are committed to implementing the cessation of hostilities (COH) in Syria announced on February 22 because it represents the best chance for stability, humanitarian access, and a resumption of negotiations in pursuit of a political solution to end the Syrian civil war. The world can see what Russia has agreed to and is watching very closely for any sign that Russia will try to manipulate the situation further or renege on its commitments under the COH.

As we have said from the beginning of this process, challenges are to be expected. We are closely monitoring reports of COH violations by all parties. We are treating such allegations seriously and continue to urge all parties to practice restraint. We anticipate obstacles, but as of March we have seen a marked reduction in violence, corroborated by local reporting from within Syria. Dedicated teams in Washington, Geneva, and the region have been and will continue coordinating closely with the U.N., Russia, and other International Syria Support Group partners to defuse violence where it arises and prevent any violations to the COH. It is in Russia's interest and indeed the interest of all who seek an end to the violence—especially the Syrian people—to ensure this process succeeds.

Should the Syrian regime and Russian forces precipitate the failure of the COH, the United States will consider all available options to advance our goals of a political process in Syria away from Asad and defeating ISIL.

Question 9. What consequences and sanctions do you support in order to pressure Russia to meet its international commitments in Ukraine?

Answer. Our sanctions related to Russian aggression in Ukraine are strong and strategic. They are carefully calibrated to impose maximum pressure on the Russian government, while safeguarding, to the extent possible, global financial markets and the global economy.

We will continue to coordinate our sanctions with the EU, the G7, and other international partners to maintain pressure on the Russian government for its destabilizing activities in Ukraine, including its occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea.

Sanctions will remain in place until Russia fully implements its commitments under the Minsk Agreements, and we are prepared to impose additional costs if Russia escalates its destabilizing activities in eastern Ukraine. Our Crimea sanctions will remain as long as Russia continues its occupation of that piece of Ukraine.

Question 10. Do you agree with Admiral Haney's assessment? Are you aware of support from the Department of Defense for this treaty?

Answer. The administration, including the Department of Defense, supports the full implementation of the Open Skies Treaty. The images taken by Treaty sensors are similar in quality to images available through other sources, such as commercial satellite imagery, and are available to all Treaty parties. The Treaty is designed to enhance confidence and transparency by allowing its 34 member states to obtain in-

formation on the military forces and activities of other Treaty partners through aerial observation flights.

The Treaty contributes to European security by providing images and information on military forces and activities, and by permitting observation flights to verify compliance with arms control agreements. The Treaty establishes procedures for certifying sensors to confirm that they are compliant with Treaty limits on resolution for image quality and data processing. Moreover, the Treaty permits inspections prior to each flight as well as on-board observers during each observation mission to verify that requirements are being met.

Question 11. Do you believe that this treaty has out lived its original intention and the United States should withdraw?

Answer. No. The purpose of the Open Skies Treaty is to promote transparency and confidence-building among the 34 parties. The observation flights conducted under the Treaty are as important now as they were when the Treaty was signed in 1992. The Treaty continues to play an important role in European security and the administration believes we should continue to be an active party to the Treaty.

Question 12. How would an Iraq government without Prime Minister Abadi affect the U.S. led coalition against ISIS?

Answer. Abadi and his government have proven to be key partners in the fight against Da'esh, and we continue to support his efforts to promote reform and a more inclusive society. We believe Prime Minister Abadi retains the support of a sufficiently broad coalition to continue to govern. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad maintains relationships with nearly every political party and constituent group involved in Iraqi national politics. Iraqi leaders are aware of the benefits and the importance of a relationship with the United States.

If there were a new Prime Minister, which we would not expect before the next parliamentary elections in 2018, it would in all likelihood be someone we already have a relationship with and would be able to work with to defeat Da'esh. A sustainable military victory is not possible without the support of the Government of Iraq.

Question 13. Do you believe that Prime Minister Abadi will be inevitably forced out of office? If so, what do we believe Iran will do in reaction if Prime Minister Abadi is forced out?

Answer. Prime Minister Abadi was selected as a consensus candidate after the 2014 elections, and we believe he retains the support of a sufficiently broad coalition to continue to govern. We do not expect a new Prime Minister before the next parliamentary elections in 2018.

Iran has a great deal of influence in Iraq, but does not control its neighbor. Since the collapse of the Saddam regime, Iran has worked assiduously to increase its influence in Iraq through political and military support, first to former Shia resistance forces against Saddam, and later to Shia militia groups countering the U.S. military presence in the last decade. We expect Iran will continue to use its considerable influence to empower Iraqi politicians whose agenda aligns with Iran.

Question 14. What does the United States government know about those responsible for kidnapping the Americans? Was Iran involved in the kidnapping?

Answer. The United States worked closely with the Government of Iraq to secure the safe release of the kidnapped individuals, including information sharing about the perpetrators. There is no indication that Iran was involved in the kidnapping. The State Department is happy to provide more information in a classified setting.

Question 15. As part of the administration's Iran nuclear deal, Iran was granted over $100 billion in frozen assets. You have previously acknowledged that some of the money received through sanction relief will go to terrorist groups. In January, you stated, "I think that some of it will end up in the hands of the IRGC or other entities, some of which are labeled terrorists." How much of the windfall in cash is being used by Iran to pay down their debts, modernize their military, increase support for terrorist groups and fund destabilizing activities in the region?

Answer. Iran has, over the past three decades, used some of its resources to support terrorism. That is why Iran is and remains a designated State Sponsor of Terror. And that is why our non-nuclear related sanctions on Iran remain, and why we will continue to work with our partners in the region to counter Iran's malign activities, regardless of the source of funds for those activities.

After the IAEA verified that Iran had met key nuclear-related commitments as specified in the JCPOA, the United States lifted nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. As part of the lifting of these sanctions, foreign financial institutions holding funds

owned by Iran in accounts outside of the United States can release such funds to the Central Bank of Iran. We estimate that, as a result, Iran now has access to approximately $50 billion of its own funds.

Iran's ongoing economic difficulties make it harder to divert large portions of its financial gains from sanctions relief away from its domestic economy and toward its regional activities. For example, we estimate that Iran needs about half a trillion dollars to meet pressing investment needs and government obligations.

I would also note that we have numerous domestic authorities—including sanctions—to counter Iran's support for terrorism and other destabilizing activities. We will continue to aggressively enforce our sanctions, including those related to Iran's support for terrorism, destabilizing activity in the region, ballistic missile development, and human rights abuses.

Question 16. What additional sanctions do you suggest imposing on Iran due to its support of terrorist groups and destabilizing activities in the region including in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and the Palestinians territories?

Answer. We are deeply concerned about Iran's support for terrorism, destabilizing activities in the region, ballistic missile development, and human rights abuses. Powerful non-nuclear sanctions, including those targeting Iran's support for terrorism, destabilizing activities in the region, ballistic missile development, and human rights abuses remain in effect, and we will not hesitate to use these sanctions when called for.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control on January 17 designated three individuals and eight entities, including five Iranian officials, involved in the procurement of materials and equipment for Iran's ballistic missile network. These designations effectively cut these entities off from the U.S. financial system, and any non-U.S. person who engages with these designees may also be subject to U.S. secondary sanctions.

Anyone worldwide who transacts with or supports individuals or entities sanctioned in connection with Iran's support for terrorism or development of WMD and their means of delivery, including missiles—or who does the same with any Iranian individual or entity who remains on Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List—may put themselves at risk of being sanctioned.

Question 17. What is the administration doing to prevent Iran from transferring advanced weaponry to non-state actors in the region who might use those weapons against our allies?

Answer. Regarding Iran's transfer of weapons to groups in the region, we continue to work intensively with our partners, especially Israel and the Gulf states, to deter and disrupt Iranian threats and proliferation. Examples of such cooperation include diplomatic and sanctions pressure on Mahan Air, ongoing security cooperation with the GCC following the Camp David summit, sanctions on a range of Iranian entities for actions in Syria, Israel's seizure of the Klos C vessel carrying weapons bound for Gaza in 2014, military and diplomatic efforts to prevent an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) naval flotilla from docking in Yemen in April 2015, and the September 25, 2015, seizure of the Nasir dhow carrying weapons from Iran that we assess were bound for Yemen.

Question 18. Following the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, Congress provided $5.4 billion in emergency appropriations to combat the outbreak, of which roughly $2.5 billion was directed to the Department of State and USAID. The administration recently requested an additional $1.8 billion in emergency appropriations for efforts related to the Zika virus. The request included $335 million for USAID and $41 million for the Department of State. The White House's funding fact sheet also requested flexibility in the use of the remaining USAID Ebola funds.

- How much did USAID and the Department of State spend on Ebola and from what accounts? How much money remains unobligated?

Answer. As of January 1, $1.2 billion in foreign assistance and $34.3 million in diplomatic engagement funding has been obligated for State-USAID Ebola emergency response and recovery efforts. There is approximately $2.1 million in unobligated diplomatic engagement Ebola funding and nearly $1.3 billion in unobligated foreign assistance. The bulk of this unobligated funding is, however, planned for critical ongoing Ebola response and recovery efforts in West Africa, including ensuring our ability to rapidly and effectively respond to new Ebola cases as well as addressing the needs of the survivor population, and activities to support the Global Health Security Agenda over the next five years.

Question 19. How much of the unobligated money would the Department of State and USAID recommend repurposing to help with the international Zika efforts? Would giving USAID and the Department of State the flexibility to use these funds for Zika reduce the administration's emergency funding request?

Answer. The FY 2016 Zika supplemental request of $376 million reflects our best estimate, given current information, of potential State and USAID needs for the Zika response at this time; however, there remains significant uncertainty around the scope of the Zika challenges we will face. As such, the President's FY 2017 Budget and the FY 2016 Zika supplemental request authority to use unobligated Ebola funds for other infectious diseases, such as Zika. This authority would allow us to consider the use of Ebola funds to address Zika and other future infectious disease outbreaks, if needed, beyond the currently identified needs. This request for additional authority for Ebola funds does not change the funding requested in the Zika supplemental.

While we anticipate some flexibility with remaining Ebola funds, a majority of the funds are still needed to sustain our ability to support Ebola recovery efforts and maintain our readiness to respond to flare-ups as they occur. We should not short-change our ability to address either of these important health challenges.

Question 20. What efforts has the Department of State taken to protect embassy staff, employees, and Americans living in impacted areas? Does the Department of State currently have a policy in place for employees to defer travel or leave countries with the virus?

Answer. The State Department's Office of Medical Services works with U.S. government employees in areas with active Zika transmission to inform them of the risks and to help them determine appropriate action given their individual situations. The Department is working with U.S. missions in the region to ensure that mosquito control measures are in place and that effective mosquito repellants are available to mission employees. Our medical personnel at embassies are identifying and counseling pregnant U.S. Government employees or their pregnant spouses who are covered under the Department of State Medical Program and currently posted in a country with a CDC travel alert for Zika. Pregnant women in this group are offered the option of voluntary medical evacuation or curtailment (reassignment).

The health and safety of U.S. citizens living and traveling abroad is a top priority for the State Department. Through a variety of outreach tools, the Bureau of Consular Affairs ensures that U.S. citizens have access to the information they need about the Zika virus, as well as information about steps they can take to protect themselves, based on the latest public health guidance from the CDC. We send messages to U.S. citizens in countries listed in the CDC travel alerts, provide information on our travel information website, Travel.State.Gov and post links to CDC information from U.S. Embassy websites and through social media.

Question 21. The Ebola outbreak certainly highlighted the need for a robust international response to global disease outbreaks. According to the Department of State spokesperson, the Department of State created a Zika coordination team to help lead the U.S. international response to Zika.

- Please provide details on the teams' leadership structure and personnel, their mission and authorities, and current funding sources.

Answer. Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom established a Zika Coordination Team under the leadership of the Acting Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) to ensure a robust and coordinated State Department response and rapid engagement with our interagency partners. In our response to Ebola last year, we learned important lessons about how best to establish a robust coordination mechanism, and we are putting those lessons into practice.

The Zika Coordination Team leverages existing staff and expertise within OES' Office of International Health and Biodefense (OES/IHB) and is led by the director of that office. OES/IHB also manages Department engagement on other priority health issues, including Ebola response and the Global Health Security Agenda. The Zika Coordination Team's funding and authorities are derived from those of OES/IHB.

The Team's mission is to 1) ensure Department activities are fully coordinated; 2) serve as the main point of contact for external coordination, including with the interagency, foreign countries, and non-governmental entities; and 3) provide strategic advice and direction to senior Department leadership. As the central node for Department activities on Zika, the Team works in close coordination with bureaus across the Department, including the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the

Bureau of International Organizations Affairs, the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the Office of Medical Services, and the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance, among others.

Question 22. What is the Department of State doing to prepare for the massive influx of passport renewals in order to prevent long delays and massive backlogs?

Answer. Since 2007, the Department has improved significantly its physical capacity to meet the expected increased passport demand. We added 11 new passport facilities, increasing the number nationwide to 29. These additions serve key population centers and border-crossing areas. The Department also now has four "mega-adjudication centers" capable and prepared to adjudicate high volumes of applications. In this same time frame, the Department increased its passport staff by more than 34 percent and continues to increase its adjudication staff by another 20 percent beyond current levels.

The Department continues to proactively reach out to U.S. citizens to encourage them to apply for passports well in advance of travel. We expect this to help disperse seasonal application spikes. Additionally, we recently increased the number of contractors at our national call center and expanded its hours to better accommodate anticipated increases in call volume. We also worked with the Department of Treasury and its lockbox contractor to expand capacity and create redundancy in our application intake.

All of these improvements support our tiered, trigger system designed to prevent, identify, and address backlogs through a variety of methods. These include increased overtime, dedicated passport application adjudication task forces, and transferring work to less-burdened passport agencies.

Our continued goals are to manage our workload proactively, to retain as little work on hand as possible, and to ensure applicants receive their travel documents in a timely manner.

Question 23. What funding resources do you intend to shift around to ensure that staff at the Department of State is equipped to effectively process the high volume of passport requests?

Answer. In FY 2016, we project to receive 17.4 million applications and in FY 2017, we expect to receive approximately 20 million applications. Our budget requests are tied to forecasted passport demand and increases in high-volume years. The FY 2017 President's Budget Request includes $991.7 million to address passport requirements; this is $459.3 million (86 percent) above the actual spending level for FY 2015. Because consular services, including passport adjudication, are funded fully by consular fees, the portion of the passport fee retained by the Department will help fund the increased workload associated with the passport surge.

The FY 2017 President's Budget Request supports the Department's plans to increase staff by 283 positions over FY 2015 staffing levels to meet growing demand. These employees are dedicated to adjudicating passport applications and providing essential and reliable service to the U.S. traveling public. This funding level also supports the purchase of supplies and inventory for the production of U.S. travel documents. We also are developing contingencies within our fee-based operations to assign consular staff to adjudicate applications on a temporary basis, should the need occur.

Question 24. What outreach to travel groups, schools, tourist organizations, national media outlets, and local officials, including postmasters, is the Department of State doing to get the word out to the American people about this looming problem?

Answer. Since the end of the passport application busy season in fall 2015, the Department has conducted intensive outreach to inform the U.S. traveling public of expected high demand for passports. In all outreach, we promote key messaging that encourages U.S. citizens to apply early in order to avoid delays and receive their passports in time for travel.

The Department's efforts include concerted engagement with the press, conducting interviews with, and providing information to, national and local media outlets. For example, coverage during the last week of January 2016 resulted in more than 250 news articles and sizeable television coverage promoting Department messaging. During this period we reached more than 39.5 million people.

The Department also utilizes social media and our website to inform U.S. citizens of current processing times and to apply early. We have more than 500,000 Twitter followers, allowing us to connect and inform daily.

We have presented information about the upcoming surge to external stakeholders including A4A (Airlines for America), ASTA (American Society of Travel Agents), ACTE (Association of Corporate Travel Executives), AARP (American Asso-

ciation of Retired Persons), and AAA (The American Automobile Association). These stakeholders have in turn relayed our messages to their members.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is a valuable partner and the Department has engaged USPS through various means. We notified USPS senior management of the expected increased demand, and communicated the same messages to local post office acceptance facilities through information notices, newsletters, and an online question-and-answer session.

The Department also reaches out to colleges and universities throughout the year regarding travel safety and passport messages. For example, during 2015 International Education Week, 23 passport agencies and centers interacted with 6,000 students at 57 passport fairs at colleges and universities across the nation.

Finally, passport agencies and centers conduct local outreach to inform local officials and U.S. citizens of the upcoming surge. Local outreach includes participation in travel shows, naturalization ceremonies, and community organization meetings.

Question 25. Why hasn't the United Nations been able to solve the terrible problem of sexual exploitation and abuse of U.N. peacekeepers? Which countries have been objecting to reforms? What steps are you taking to counter the objections and resolve the problem?

Answer. We share your profound concern about the persistent, appalling reports, particularly from the Central African Republic (CAR), of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of vulnerable people by both U.N. and non-UN forces. While the United Nations has taken a number of steps over the past decade to enforce its policy of zero tolerance for SEA by U.N. personnel serving around the world, that effort has clearly fallen short.

The United States has taken every opportunity to express its concern about these recurring allegations with U.N. leadership, including the Secretary-General, and has pushed for urgent action. We anticipate the release in the coming days of the Secretary-General's annual report on SEA in U.N. peacekeeping, and expect that report to include identification of stronger and more effective mechanisms to reduce the risk of SEA, and recommendations to better protect vulnerable populations and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. For the first time, the report will also identify the nationalities of U.N. uniformed peacekeeping personnel against whom there were allegations of SEA during 2015.

This report follows measures launched by the Secretary-General last year to strengthen enforcement of the U.N.'s policy of zero tolerance for SEA, including the establishment of immediate response teams in peacekeeping missions to gather and preserve evidence for use in investigations within 72 hours of an allegation. He is also holding troop- and police-contributing countries more accountable by withholding payments to governments for their personnel against whom there were credible allegations of SEA. Just last month, with encouragement from the United States and like-minded countries, the Secretary-General ordered the repatriation of the entire Democratic Republic of the Congo contingent from CAR, largely because of a pattern of such allegations. Earlier, in August 2015, he demanded the resignation of the head of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in CAR, during whose leadership many of these egregious offenses were committed.

The United States applauds such steps, and will push for their assertive, consistent application. We will also expand our outreach to troop- and police-contributing countries to take immediate, necessary actions to enforce good discipline and to complement the U.N.'s efforts, particularly regarding ensuring appropriate justice and accountability measures.

Question 26. What specific proposals is the administration suggesting the United Nations implement in order to end this abuse and misconduct by U.N. peacekeepers as well as preventing further situations in the future? What measures should the U.S. government take to pressure the United Nations to take the needed reforms?

Answer. The United States is actively engaged with the U.N. leadership to underscore our profound concern about the appalling pattern of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by some U.N. peacekeepers in the Central African Republic and elsewhere, who tarnish the reputation and undermine the work of U.N. peacekeepers everywhere. By their very definition, peacekeeping missions are intended to protect populations at risk, communities under threat, and families in peril. Exploiting or abusing these same vulnerable people is inexcusable.

For its part, the United States will redouble its diplomatic engagement with troop- and police-contributing countries to urge them to enforce good discipline on their peacekeeping personnel, and to take appropriate action, particularly on justice and accountability. That effort will benefit from the Secretary-General's decision to identify alleged perpetrators by nationality—information that was previously un-

available but that we will now employ in our outreach to track cases, press for full investigations, and insist on prosecution when crimes have been committed. We intend to use a range of diplomatic tools in Washington and abroad to pressure countries to do the right thing.

Last year the U.N. Secretary General launched an effort to strengthen enforcement of the U.N.'s zero tolerance policy for SEA. The United States asked for and welcomes the following actions by the U.N.:

- steps to speed and improve investigations;
- improved systems for victims and communities to report allegations against U.N. personnel;
- suspending reimbursement to troop- and police-contributing countries for uniformed personnel against whom there are credible allegations;
- repatriating individuals and contingents where there is a pattern of allegations;
- identification by nationality of those alleged to have committed SEA; and
- establishment of SEA taskforces in all missions to provide operational and strategic advice to the head of the mission.

The United States applauds these efforts but will continue to press the U.N. and troop- and police-contributing countries to do more to end SEA.

Question 27. Is the Department of State considering or willing to withhold funds until it is satisfied that effective safeguards have been implemented to prevent similar conduct in the future?

Answer. While we share your concerns about the shocking allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by both U.N. and non-UN forces in the Central African Republic, we have found that withholding funds is counterproductive to our efforts to promote U.N. reform. What we have seen again and again is that U.N. reforms are more effectively achieved when the United States is in good standing, has a seat at the table, and pursues robust, long-term, sustained engagement, not by withholding funds in contradiction of our treaty obligations.

For example, the withholding of funds to the U.N. in the 1990s almost led to the United States losing its vote in the U.N. General Assembly. When we were in arrears, even our closest allies were less willing to work with us, including on reform issues.

While we do not support withholding funds we have obligations to pay, in 2011 we proposed and the General Assembly approved a historic, first-ever prohibition on payments for troops sent home for disciplinary reasons, including SEA, and strengthened the U.N.'s "zero tolerance" policy for SEA. The U.N. began withholding payments in 2015 to countries whose personnel had been credibly alleged to have engaged in SEA or repatriated for this misconduct.

Question 28. What is the rationale for absolving UNESCO and the Palestinians of the consequences of undermining the peace process? If we do not attach consequences to the Palestinians bypassing the peace process, doesn't that fundamentally undermine the peace process?

Answer. The administration continues to oppose unilateral actions in intergovernmental bodies that circumvent outcomes that can only be negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians, including Palestinian statehood. However, it does not serve the U.S. national interest to respond to Palestinian efforts or those of their allies by withholding our contributions to U.N. specialized agencies.

Withholding of U.S. contributions could hinder the U.N. specialized agencies from carrying out work we value highly, limit U.S. influence in these organizations, and undermine our ability to pursue important U.S. objectives—such as working against anti-Israeli resolutions and initiatives.

U.S. leadership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is critical in combatting anti-Israel bias, promoting freedom of expression, countering and preventing violent extremism, and supporting implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including in the areas of education, gender equality, promoting the health of our oceans and improving weather forecasting, leveraging traditional donor resources by driving innovation and science and technology, and protecting fundamental freedoms and promoting the rule of law.

Because of specific benefits of full participation in UNESCO, the Department seeks Congressional support for legislation that would provide the administration with the authority to waive restrictions that currently prohibit paying U.S. contributions to UNESCO.

Over our objections, the member states of UNESCO voted to admit the Palestinians as a member state in 2011. The United States has not paid any part of the U.S. assessments to UNESCO for calendar years 2011 through 2016 as required by current law. As a result of our arrears, the United States lost its vote in the UNESCO General Conference in 2013. The FY 2017 request includes transfer authority to pay up to $160 million (approximately two-year's worth) of outstanding assessments to UNESCO, should such a waiver be enacted.

Question 29. At a July 28, 2015 hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, you testified that it is a "prerequisite" for sanctions relief under the Iran nuclear agreement that Iran resolve issues related to the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program. More clearly and forcefully, you said on July 24, 2015: "PMD has to be resolved before they get one ounce of sanctions relief." Wendy Sherman as the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs testified to this Committee on February 4, 2014 that Iran will have to "come clean on its past actions as part of any comprehensive agreement. We will work with the IAEA to facilitate resolution of past and present issues of concern. And that is a formula used by the IAEA in addressing possible military dimensions, including Parchin."

In its report on Iranian compliance with the initial requirements of the nuclear agreement, the IAEA described how Iran had in the past installed a large cylinder/chamber at Parchin in which to conduct high explosives testing. When the IAEA went to inspect the facility on September 20, 2015, the chamber was gone. The IAEA went on to say it could not conclude exactly what had happened at Parchin, but it knew that Iran's explanation was false. It further concluded that Iran's sanitization behavior at Parchin "seriously undermined the Agency's ability to conduct effective verification."

- Did we know the explosives testing chamber would not be there when the IAEA inspectors visited Parchin on September 20, 2015? If not, what does that have to say about our capabilities to monitor Iranian compliance with the Iran nuclear agreement?

Answer. When IAEA Director General Amano visited Parchin as a part of the Road Map between the IAEA and Iran, he noted that there was no longer an explosives chamber at Parchin. As to how the chamber was removed and what we knew or assessed when, I would have to direct you to my colleagues in the intelligence community for further information.

What I can say is that, as confirmed in the IAEA's December report, we know the chamber is no longer at Parchin. If the IAEA receives credible information indicating that Iran is using this or any chamber for any nuclear weapons related work in the future, the JCPOA provides strengthened tools for the IAEA to demand timely access to any such site.

Question 30. What does this matter have to say about the IAEA's ability to conduct effective verification of the Iran nuclear agreement?

Answer. We are confident that the JCPOA gives the IAEA the tools that it needs to effectively monitor Iran's nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran (JCPOA). In particular, the IAEA has the tools necessary to investigate any indications of possible undeclared material and activities, and, with the cooperation of other States, to uncover any future Iranian attempt to establish a covert nuclear program.

The IAEA concluded that the information available to it, including the results of the visit, does not support Iran's statements on the purpose of the Parchin facility. This information is consistent with what we have long said: that Iran was covering up its past nuclear weapons work at Parchin. This is not new information for us, but it was important to have the IAEA confirm it.

Significantly, the IAEA received access to the particular area of interest at the Parchin facility—access it had been trying to get for years. That access helped lead to the IAEA's assessment as to the past nature of the Parchin site, which did not support Iran's claims about the facility.

Question 31. Where is the explosives testing chamber today and when will the IAEA get access to it?

Answer. I cannot comment on what is known specifically about the location of the chamber and would direct you to my colleagues in the intelligence community for additional information.

What I can say is that, as confirmed in the IAEA Director General's December report, we know the chamber is not at Parchin. If the IAEA receives any credible information indicating that Iran is using such a chamber at this or any other site

for any nuclear weapons related work in the future, the JCPOA provides strengthened tools for the IAEA to demand timely access to any such site.

Question 32. Why did you give sanctions relief to Iran when the PMD issue was not resolved?

Answer. From the start, we have consistently said that we know that Iran had pursued an illicit nuclear program and that we know that it was engaged in activities prior to 2003 and subsequently on occasion.

The JCPOA is a forward-looking arrangement, but addressing questions about what Iran did in the past has always been an important part of this process for the international community. For this reason, we and our P5+1 partners insisted Iran work with the IAEA to address the issue of possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear program (PMD).

The IAEA and Iran together developed and agreed on a time-limited process for Iran to address the IAEA's outstanding questions, and this process laid out a path for closure of the PMD issue at the IAEA. The IAEA Director General's December report—which was an independent assessment based on nothing but the facts—echoes our longstanding assessment about Iran's pre-2003 weaponization work and its halt in 2003.

The timing of Implementation Day, and the associated lifting of U.S. nuclear-related sanctions, was dependent on Iran completing its key nuclear-related commitments, and the IAEA verifying that Iran had completed each and every one of those requirements as detailed in the JCPOA text.

The key issue here is to make certain that those past activities do not take place again as we go forward into the future. And that is why the implementation of the JCPOA is so critical. Our primary goal has been and continues to be ensuring that Iran's nuclear program is and will remain peaceful.

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