

HEARING ON ADVANCING EFFECTIVE  
CONSERVATION POLICY WORLDWIDE:  
SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, AND NEXT STEPS  
AND MARKUP ON H.R. 4819, DELTA ACT

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HEARING AND MARKUP  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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**TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2018**

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 o'clock a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Mr. ROYCE. This hearing will come to order. One of the great things about America is that we strive to be better. We work hard and we innovate to create better opportunities. We recognize the responsibility to leave future generations better off. It is this mindset that birthed the modern conservation movement, a movement that Teddy Roosevelt aptly deemed democratic in spirit, purpose, and method.

Indeed, even before the Founding Fathers, Americans had long believed that this country's abundant resources should not be available just to the well off, but to everyone. Of course, as Roosevelt and other leaders in the late 19th century realized, America's resources were not limitless. Smart development and conservation would be necessary to protect our natural resources. Yellowstone, the world's first national park, soon followed.

Today we know that these aren't just U.S. issues, they are global issues. By helping others conserve their natural heritage we ensure a brighter future for our own children. So many of those children are captivated by elephants and rhinos and cheetahs and many other majestic species, but it also is helping to improve the lives of millions, the lives of children in Africa who call places like the Okavango River basin their home.

As a member of this committee, I have long worked to use this platform to make a difference in this fight. I remember when we were drafting the Congo Basin Forest Partnership legislation back in 2002. That followed a trip then-Secretary Colin Powell had made to that awe-inspiring landscape. We launched the International Conservation Caucus in the House as a means to build support for the effort. Back then the interest was limited. Only a handful of my colleagues appreciated the link between good natural resource management, sound economic growth, and national security. Today the ICC is one of the largest bipartisan caucuses on Capitol Hill.

The ICC was critical to enacting the End Wildlife Trafficking Act in 2016 to help combat unprecedented levels of wildlife poaching and trafficking. Indeed, estimated at \$10 billion a year, wildlife trafficking is one of the largest black markets in the world, benefiting terrorist groups like the Lord's Resistance Army and Al-Shabaab. To help bolster our national security, the End Wildlife Trafficking Act rightfully put trafficking of threatened species on par with weapons and drug trafficking as threats, and it has helped to empower law enforcement and park rangers on the front lines.

Last fall, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service successfully completed Operation Jungle Book. Now that was in Southern California. It was the biggest wildlife trafficking bust in the state of California's history. As the U.S. has pushed forward others have followed. Beijing is to be commended. China is to be thanked for taking steps to follow through on its domestic ivory market ban announced in 2017. Few predicted such progress. Similar bans are pending in Hong Kong and in Singapore, and the U.K. recently announced its strictest ivory ban to date.

But many challenges remain. Later, we will be marking up legislation that will help Southern Africa's critical Okavango River basin. This magnificent but fragile inland delta supports more than 1 million people and it has the largest remaining population of wild elephants in the world. Alarming, unwise development and wildlife poaching are threatening to destroy the communities that rely on responsible management of this watershed. Like we did with the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, our goal is to strengthen coordination among the key players in the region.

Wildlife and water don't know borders. For conservation to be impactful we need governments, we need the NGOs, and we need the private sector all working together. Our world's well-being depends on this and it depends on many more such efforts. So with that I will turn to Mr. Eliot Engel, the ranking member of this committee.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this important hearing. And let me say that here in Congress we didn't hear a lot about wildlife trafficking and the way it intersects with our national security concerns before you, Mr. Chairman, put this issue on our radar screen. You have demonstrated extraordinary leadership on conservation and wildlife issues for many, many years. And let me just say the impact of your efforts will be felt well into the future both here in Congress and around the world.

To our witnesses, welcome to the Foreign Affairs Committee. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Bennett from the Wildlife Conservation Society, in my backyard, for being here today. WCS is based at the Bronx Zoo right next to the congressional district I represent. It used to be in my congressional district, but reapportionment took it out but not because I wanted it to be taken out. But I have really enjoyed working with many of your colleagues over the years. It is just extraordinary work that you do and your organization does. And particularly, I want to single out John Calvelli who used to be my staff director here for many years in Washington.

We focused a great deal on the challenge of wildlife trafficking in recent years, but poaching is still hovering at crisis levels. The number of Asian elephants has declined by roughly a third over the last 10 years. Rhino populations have been decimated with only about 30,000 left in the wild. The most trafficked mammal in the world, the pangolin, is seriously endangered, and the list goes on and on. And this is just wrong. I don't want the next generation to grow up only knowing about elephants from the history books. We cannot allow these wonderful animals to disappear forever.

But one of the main reasons we talk about this issue here in the Foreign Affairs Committee is that we have a national security interest in putting a stop to wildlife trafficking. Just like trafficking in drugs, weapons, and people, wildlife trafficking feeds corruption, undermines the rules of law, threatens economic prosperity, and drives instability. Thanks to Chairman Royce, the End Wildlife Trafficking Act became law in 2016, and today the administration is coming up with a strategy to ramp up cooperation with the 26 countries that are major sources, transit points, or consumers of wildlife trafficking, what we call focus countries.

We also need to pay more attention to the three countries designated as countries of concern in which government officials are complicit in the illegal wildlife trade. There are a range of things we can do to tackle the problem of wildlife trafficking. We can partner with other governments to train park rangers and equip them with cutting edge technologies to counter poachers, we can help identify and take down the international criminal networks responsible for so much of the illicit wildlife trade, and we can support efforts to reduce the demand for wildlife products. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on their important work in these and other areas.

One final point, when it comes to conservation the elephant in the room, so to speak, is climate change. All our efforts to protect habitats and species will mean nothing if we don't protect the environment upon which all these animals and all of us depend. Literally, every country in the world except the United States is now party to the Paris Climate Accord aimed at curbing climate change. We cannot speak credibly on the issue of wildlife trafficking if we continue to isolate ourselves from the rest of the world when it comes to climate change.

So again I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your work through the years on this important issue, and I yield back.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

This morning I am pleased to welcome our panel of distinguished guests to the committee. We have Ms. Gretchen Peters. She is the director of the Center on Illicit Networks and Transnational Organized Crime. We have Mr. David Stewart, executive vice president and general counsel for Vulcan. Vulcan is a philanthropic foundation that develops new technology to combat poaching and sustainably manage national parks. And we have Dr. Elizabeth Bennett, vice president for Species Conservation at the Wildlife Conservation Society. And we appreciate them making the trek to be with us here today, and, without objection, the witnesses' full prepared statement will be made part of the record. The members

are going to have 5 calendar days to submit any statements or questions or any extraneous materials for the record.

So if you would, Ms. Peters, we will start with you if you want to summarize your remarks for 5 minutes. And after the three of you are done we will go to questions.

**STATEMENT OF MS. GRETCHEN S. PETERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER ON ILLICIT NETWORKS AND TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME**

Ms. PETERS. Thank you, Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and distinguished committee members for inviting me here today. It is a great honor to have an opportunity to comment on U.S. policy toward the global illegal wildlife trade. I run CINTOC, a strategic intelligence organization that supports governments and foundations to find and disrupt hidden criminal networks. Not just wildlife networks, but all types of crimes.

If you remember just one thing that I say today, please remember this. There are just a handful of powerful crime syndicates that traffic the majority of illegal wildlife products moving from Africa to Asia and we know who they are. These networks can and should be the target of our national security and law enforcement apparatus not just because they are wiping out iconic species like the elephant, the rhino, and the pangolin, but for all the dangerous activities that they engage in from smuggling people, drugs, weapons, selling uranium to Iran, deforestation, and illegal mining. This is an organized crime threat and a national security threat and we must begin to treat it as such.

On the positive side, we don't need any new laws to target these networks, as Chairman Royce went through some of the recent legislation that has been passed that is terrific. Existing legislation on transnational organized crime is well equipped to take them down and I applaud Congress and both the Obama and Trump administration for sharpening our laws on wildlife crime in particular.

I have three points to make today. One, focus on the networks. What we do need is a properly resourced, multinational, multi-agency task force focused on these key networks operating between Africa and Asia. To a large extent, the U.S. Government continues to treat wildlife crime as a conservation problem, managing and resourcing programs to reduce wildlife crime separately from other anti-crime activities. This stovepiping stifles interagency collaboration, it causes inefficiencies that ultimately hinder the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts, and it also causes missed opportunities to target the transnational organized crime networks for the myriad crimes they commit.

We have witnessed this convergence around the globe. In parts of Africa, wildlife crime funds terrorists, insurgents, violent bandits, and rogue states like North Korea. From Mexico narcos smuggling fish bladders to Iranian back networks moving uranium and ivory, crime networks that traditionally smuggled only drugs, guns, and people have diversified into smuggling wildlife and timber because it represents high profit, low risk alternative.

Now I am not saying that wildlife crime converges with other serious crime at every step of the illegal wildlife supply chain and I am not suggesting that we need to send SEAL Team 6 into the

Okavango Delta to protect animals. That would be ridiculous. What I am saying is that we need our security apparatus focused on the powerful transnational crime syndicates that are moving illicit goods transnationally. These are also the crime syndicates that are financing poaching.

We have had some real law enforcement success stories here in the United States including Operation Crash and Operation Jungle Book. I also supported a DEA operation to extract four smugglers from Kenya on narcotics charges last year. Two of those smugglers were also part of the largest ivory trafficking ring on the Swahili coast. However, what I have observed also is that governments in Asia, Latin America, and Africa have neither the political will nor the investigative, prosecutorial, nor legislative capacity to take on the most powerful crime networks that are moving wildlife and other illicit goods.

The U.S. can and should take action against major crime syndicates, using U.S. extraterritorial legislation while also expanding technical and financial assistance to range and transit states to strengthen their own criminal justice responses to wildlife crime. I urge the U.S. Congress to resource a transnational effort to investigate, analyze, and interdict the most powerful crime networks operating between sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Let's not just focus on wildlife crime. Let's get them for all of their illegal activities.

Two, we need to build constituencies. The U.S. Government needs to engage trusted partners in the NGO and conservation community, some of whom are sitting on, literally, terabytes of data about wildlife trafficking networks that intersect with U.S. international and regional security interests. This engagement should be handled privately and quietly. Many organizations fighting wildlife crime and human trafficking in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are doing so at great personal risk to themselves.

We also need to be sharing analysis about these convergence patterns with foreign security officials in Asia in order to spur their cooperation. Authorities in China, Malaysia, Vietnam, and other consumer nations are not concerned about the wildlife trade, but they will likely take a greater interest if they realize its close connection to the illicit drug trade which does worry them. Three, we need to break the systems supporting wildlife crime. It is too easy for criminals to hide in the cracks in the global financial, transport, and communication system.

We at CINTOC have been focused this year on the social media industry. There is an astonishing amount of wildlife being traded on U.S. publicly listed social media firms including Facebook and WeChat. Having analyzed thousands of posts for illegal ivory on social media, CINTOC has concluded the social media industry is a primary enabler connecting illegal wildlife traders to customers in a marketplace that is global, anonymous, and at this point, completely free of regulation.

These firms are literally facilitating the elephants' extinction. The National Whistleblower Center has filed complaints to the Securities and Exchange Commission about this illegal activity, and if Congress wants action now it should urge the SEC to utilize its regulatory power against these U.S. publicly listed firms. I also urge Congress to enact legislation along the lines of what banks

face with regards to money laundering. Social media firms should have to report suspected criminal activity and collaborate with law enforcement to take it off their platforms.

So three key points today: Focus on the networks, we know who they are; two, resource a transnational law enforcement effort and diplomatic effort to target these big networks; and three, clean up the systems that facilitate wildlife crime that we can impact right here in the United States. Thank you for taking the time to hear what I have to say.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Peters follows:]



# CINTOC

**ADVANCING EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION POLICY WORLDWIDE:  
SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

22 MAY 2018

By: Gretchen Peters  
Executive Director  
CINTOC

[www.cintoc.org](http://www.cintoc.org)

**Thank you,** Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and distinguished committee members for inviting me here today. I am honored to have the opportunity to provide my thoughts on this vitally important subject. I also want to credit Chairman Royce and members of the International Conservation Caucus for the important work that organization does to improve conservation legislation and to drive congressional action around the world to protect our planet. I am truly impressed by your work in this realm.

**INTRODUCTION:** Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, distinguished committee members: It is urgent that the United States Government advance more effective conservation policy.

Our planet is in the midst of an extinction crisis, caused mainly by human activity. The three greatest threats to species are wildlife crime, habitat loss and climate change. My area of expertise is wildlife crime, so that is where I will focus today.

We need to act now to reverse the effects of wildlife crime on animal and fish populations before it is too late. Illegal overfishing is threatening our oceans to a dangerous degree, and we are in a race against time to save iconic animals including elephants, rhinos, tigers, and various fish and shark species.

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, distinguished committee members: The rapid rate at which wildlife extinction is occurring globally, and the extent to which wildlife crime converges with destabilizing violence, corruption and other serious crimes such as drug and human trafficking calls for a more rigorous response from U.S. law enforcement, our Defense Department and our Intelligence Community.

This is not a conservation issue. It is an organized crime threat and we must begin to treat it as such.

What concerns me is that, to a large extent, however, the U.S. government continues to treat wildlife crime as simply a conservation problem, managing and resourcing its counter-wildlife crime efforts separately from other anti-crime activities.

This stove piping stifles inter-agency collaboration, and causes inefficiencies that ultimately hinder the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts. This paradigm also causes missed opportunities to deter, disrupt, and destroy the transnational organized crime networks that traffic in multiple illegal commodities, including narcotics, weapons, endangered wildlife parts and other natural resources such as timber.

Around the globe, wildlife crime fuels corruption and undermines good governance, U.S. interests and licit economic development. In parts of Africa, it funds terrorists, insurgents and violent bandits. From Mexican narcos smuggling endangered fish bladders to Iranian-backed networks moving uranium and ivory, and Pakistani drug traffickers smuggling heroin and rhino horn, crime networks that traditionally moved drugs, guns and people have diversified into smuggling wildlife because it represents a high-profit, low risk alternative.

Now I am not saying that wildlife crime converges with other serious crime or with terrorism at every step of every illegal wildlife supply line. I am not suggesting that we need to send Seal Team Six into Kruger National Park or the Okavanga Delta to protect animals.

What I am saying is that the USG should focus its national security and law enforcement apparatus on wildlife crime only in circumstances when it intersects with other serious crime and security interests. Meanwhile, we should continue to treat it as a conservation issue where it does not. Our actions and interventions should be tailored to conditions at each point on the illicit WILDLIFE value chain, with the appropriate agency serving as USG lead.

Unfortunately, this is not happening in many instances today.

Now, the title of this session includes the terms successes, challenges and next steps, so I'd like to list some of those, in terms of our wildlife policy, and how it has been implemented.

**SUCCESSSES:** Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, distinguished committee members: Let's start with successes. The previous administration issued a comprehensive National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking, banned the domestic ivory trade, while Congress passed HR 2494, the End Wildlife Trafficking Act and various state legislatures moved to close loopholes on trading ivory and other wildlife goods here in the United States. HR 2494 was particularly important as it made make wildlife trafficking a predicate offense for money laundering, and that often helps us find a U.S. nexus for wildlife crime occurring in other parts of the world.

Both the Obama administration strategy and HR 2494 sought more enforcement of wildlife criminals and better interagency coordination. That, I don't think, has happened. But the policy is there.

I also applaud the Trump administration for issuing Executive Order 13773. This is the first time that wildlife crime has been listed among other serious crimes including the illegal smuggling of drugs, guns and people. It is important that wildlife crime is now considered as gravely important as these other serious threats, and that U.S. policy now recognizes the extent to which these issues converge.

I have witnessed this convergence first hand. In 2016 and 2017 I supported the Drug Enforcement Administration to extract two of Africa's most powerful heroin traffickers from Kenya, Baktash and Ibrahim Akasha. What the US government did not know, at least initially, is that the Akasha crime family was also deeply tied to the smuggling of ivory, and could be tied to more than 30 tons of ivory seizures.

In that same time period, with a generous grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife, I worked as a strategic advisor to the Park Service in Gabon, the Central African country that is locked in a desperate battle to save the world's last major population of forest elephants. When I got there, Park Rangers were fighting the problem at the poaching level, operating dangerous missions deep into the jungle. The problem was, the poachers were easily replaced when arrested. Fighting the problem at that level of the supply chain was like trying to hold water in your hand.

I helped turn their focus to following the money, and tracking the exporters, and the team I supported in Gabon did very very good work. Last November, the anti-poaching unit arrested the country's number one exporter of ivory, and the man who managed illegal money transfers from abroad to purchase the ivory.

What they also found was that the same illegal supply chains moving ivory also moved drugs – mainly hashish and an opioid called Tramadol – illegal timber and people. Those supply chains intersected with Boko Haram north of Gabon, and a host of other dangerous actors including Chinese Triads and transnational drug traffickers. By the time my contract with Gabon ended, they decided to change their anti-poaching unit into an elite serious crimes unit. They recognized that they could have more impact if they fought the problems at the point of convergence. I applaud the Gabonese for this important strategic decision.

If we, in the United States, are going to turn these legislative and policy-level successes into actions that have equally successful impact on the ground, we are also going to need to position ourselves to target convergence threats. So let's turn to the challenges portion of my remarks.

**CHALLENGES:** Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, distinguished committee members: I have witnessed first hand the results of U.S. wildlife policy, and I want to support your committee and the current administration to sharpen our approach.

**Number 1: Resourcing:** Let's focus on resourcing this threat correctly. We as a nation have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into fighting wildlife crime. The vast majority of this funding focuses on protecting animals and fighting poaching, which is just one small segment of the wildlife supply chain.

I urge you to consider that the U.S. can have a much greater impact by fighting wildlife trafficking – at the point in the supply chain where illegal goods are containerized and sent from one continent to another – and by disrupting the illicit financial flows that finance wildlife crime.

Our objective should be to disrupt the financing of wildlife crime. Most low-level workers do not have the wealth to finance their work. Therefore, if the financing can be cut, the dying will stop.

Furthermore, in sub-Saharan East Africa, as well as West and Central Africa, we see transnational criminal ecosystems that have a remarkable capacity to shift operations across borders whenever there is a real or perceived law enforcement threat. The best way to fight this is to target the financing of the criminal activities, a role best suited for the United States.

As part of that, we need to provide resources for our action arms, including the intelligence, law enforcement and administration communities. The US DOJ, Treasury, DEA, Homeland Security, and our intelligence community play a crucial role and should be funded to disrupt, deter, and degrade these major threat networks holistically looking at all their crimes to include wildlife.

We have received requests from Treasury for information and support in addressing wildlife crime in the context of other serious organized crime. Yet the team working the issue remains underfunded and lacks the analysts and lawyers to quickly enact sanctions or seizures.

In Africa and Asia, our law enforcement teams are growing, but they remain critically under-resourced. Funding is often distributed bilaterally, so that a team in Kenya can help the host nation fight Kenyan-based syndicates, but everything stops when the criminals shift across the border to Uganda or Tanzania. And the criminals do. I have watched it happen. Instead of a bilateral approach, we need to have a network-based approach.

As a start, I urge the U.S. Congress to resource a regional effort to investigate, analyze and interdict the most powerful transnational crime networks in sub-Saharan Africa. And that brings me to my second point.

**Number 2: Focus on the Networks:** Internationally, U.S. law enforcement and the intelligence community should focus on convergence points with other serious crime, where the U.S. can have the greatest impact using fewer resources. It will be more impactful to crush networks, rather than engaging in publicity stunts like crushing elephant ivory.

The majority of wildlife crime networks in wildlife crime hotspots are known to local and even international law enforcement, but there remains a need for properly resourced LE efforts, staffed by experienced professionals, to target them.

These powerful transnational crime syndicates are agnostic about whether they are trafficking drugs, wildlife, weapons or other illicit commodities, so long as they are earning money.

U.S. law enforcement should also be agnostic about the commodities, as long as it represents criminal activity. I'll put this more bluntly: The criminals don't care about what illegal goods are in the box. They have developed a

system to move that box through global transport channels. We need to break that system, not worry about what's in the box.

Moreover, even law enforcement and intelligence agencies that don't have a mandate to save animals should be worried about wildlife crime in parts of the world where it converges with other serious crime, where it is causing instability and spreading violence, or funding U.S. enemies and adversaries. Places like Africa, Mexico, and Asia.

Even law enforcement agencies that don't have a wildlife conservation mandate can obtain valuable intelligence by tracking wildlife crime.

Many trafficking networks smuggling wildlife engage in parallel behavior when moving drugs and other illicit goods, but employ higher degrees of operational security for these non-wildlife goods. In other words, it is easier to gather information about networks when they move wildlife goods. I myself have supported U.S. law enforcement to place undercover operatives into crime syndicates using wildlife as a starting point. There are many opportunities that missed because we focus on the commodity, not the crime.

U.S. LE agents abroad should work collaboratively to investigate crime syndicates for all their crimes, and then prosecute them for all their crimes.

Having spoken to officials in our intelligence community, our law enforcement community and having seen this problem myself, we need to make use of law enforcement data across the spectrum of criminal commodities and focus on tracking and interdicting the big networks. We have the technology and the know how to do this, yet we fail to act on it because we are focused on commodities, not crimes.

What's needed is top-level political advocacy for agencies to work together and share data, focusing on the common mission.

**Number 3: Build Constituencies Ready to Take Action:** The U.S. government needs to engage trusted partners in the NGO and conservation community, some of whom are sitting on literally terabytes of crime data about WL trafficking networks, that connect to U.S. international and regional security interests.

This engagement should be handled privately and quietly. Many organizations fighting WL crime in Asia, Africa and Latin America are doing so at great personal risk.

We ought to be sharing crime intelligence data about these convergence patterns with foreign security officials in Asia in order to spur action. Authorities in China and Vietnam and other major consumer nations are not concerned about the wildlife trade, but will likely take a greater interest if they realize its close connection to the illicit drug trade, which does worry them.

Moreover we need to recognize that governments in Asia, Latin America and Africa have neither the political will nor the investigative, prosecutorial or legislative capacity to take on the most powerful networks trafficking WL and other illicit goods.

The U.S. can and should take action against major TCOs using U.S. extraterritorial legislation, while also expanding technical and financial assistance to range and transit states to strengthen their criminal justice responses to WL crime, including tracing and recovering the proceeds of crime.

**Number 4: Break the Systems Supporting Wildlife Crime:** My organization CINTOC works to disrupt the systems that allows criminal activity to thrive. It's too easy for criminals to hide in the cracks of the global financial,

transport and communications systems.

One major systemic scourge is corruption, which I have come to see as perhaps the greatest silent threat to our global environment and to many species currently at peril of extinction. We must make anti-corruption strategies central to crime fighting programs across the globe. Again, this is not just unique to wildlife crime.

I want to also highlight a systemic issue related to wildlife crime that my team at CINTOC has been focused on recently, and that is the prevalence of illegal wildlife on social media. I know that Chairman Royce and other members of the committee are aware that the National Whistleblowers Center has filed complaints against a number of U.S. listed social media firms, including Facebook, where there is an astonishing amount of wildlife trading occurring.

Having analyzed thousands of posts for illegal ivory on Facebook, CINTOC has concluded that social media is a primary enabler connecting illegal wildlife traders to customers in a marketplace that is anonymous, global, and free of regulation. **They are literally facilitating the elephant's extinction.**

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg claims immunity through [Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act](#), but it is not the only law that governing his firm. When Facebook went public in 2012, it *voluntarily* entered into a strict regulatory regime that negates these immunities in the context of Facebook's obligations under securities law. The SEC is free to investigate, fine, or even enforce a trading suspension against Facebook. If Congress wants action now, it should urge SEC to utilize its regulatory power.

I urge Congress to enact legislation along the lines of what banks face with regards to money laundering. Social media firms should have to report suspected criminal activity and work with law enforcement.

At a time when firms like Facebook are under fire for aggressively harvesting data about their users, they hold a huge amount of data about criminal buyers and sellers that could be used to save the elephants. We hope Facebook doesn't just delete the wildlife data it holds, but rather mounts a collaborative effort with the conservation community and law enforcement to identify and interdict the wildlife traffickers operating on its platform. In this way, Facebook could put authorities in the position to stage a comprehensive law enforcement operation that would have strategic impact in the fight to save iconic species like the elephant, rhino and tiger from extinction.

**Next Steps:** In conclusion, I would like to list some next steps:

1. Congress has put the right laws in place. The White House has a solid strategy. Now we need a top-down push for agencies to collaborate and share data. I urge Congress to appropriate resources to agencies and organizations that have a mandate and understanding of how to fight transnational crime.
2. We know the criminal networks. I urge Congress to ask this administration to select priority targets in Africa and Asia that are trafficking drugs, wildlife and people, and to establish and resource experienced teams to interdict those targets.
3. Once the relevant crime data is put together, any interdiction strategy should be coupled with a diplomatic effort to get consumer nations in East Asia, namely China, Malaysia and Vietnam on board. These diplomatic missions would focus on explaining the convergence between wildlife crime and other serious crime.
4. Fix the systems enabling these crimes in the US, starting with SEC action against publicly listed social media firms, as well as firmer regulations from Congress over the social media industry.

I am optimistic we as a nation can turn around the conservation crisis facing the world today, but it is going to take big, bold action and steady resolve.

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and distinguished committee members: thank you for taking the time to hear what I have to say. I am ready to take questions.

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Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Ms. Peters. And we are involved with Facebook in terms of the points you have raised in order to try to get them engaged in the coalition to take decisive action on this. We go now to Mr. David Stewart, our next panelist here.

**STATEMENT OF MR. DAVE STEWART, EXECUTIVE VICE  
PRESIDENT AND GENERAL COUNSEL, VULCAN**

Mr. STEWART. Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today to discuss park management, wildlife trafficking, and poaching. I also want to thank you for your leadership in conceiving and passing the End Wildlife Trafficking Act during the last Congress and continuing to further this important work with the DELTA Act during this Congress. Vulcan is proud to support both impactful pieces of legislation.

I will start my testimony today with a positive comment about this terrible crime. Across administrations, across the aisle, and across our Government, poaching and wildlife trafficking are increasingly being recognized not only as an environmental tragedy but as an urgent threat to U.S. national security interests. This shift in thinking is essential to tackling this challenge. The focus must now be on how we bring government, business, and philanthropy together to harness our combined power and resources to take on wildlife trafficking, to dismantle these criminal networks that are driving it, and to preserve our natural heritage while protecting global security.

Today I would like to feature what Vulcan is doing to support these efforts and I will start with a brief video clip, hopefully.

[Video.]

As highlighted in the clip, the 2016 Great Elephant Census provided urgently needed and previously unavailable data on the size and distribution of savanna elephant populations across 18 range states in Africa, identifying where they and other species had been most impacted by poaching and where conservation efforts were working well. We unfortunately discovered a population decline of 30 percent in those 7 years which accelerated over that period.

Also featured in the clip is the Abu Concession, our 455,000-acre wildlife reserve in the Okavango Delta in Botswana. There we operate two safari camps and our own anti-poaching force, fund conservation related research including development and operation of drones for integration into anti-poaching operations, and work with local communities. My written testimony goes into detail about our park management approach, but in summary we focus on actively securing the park against poaching, operating businesses such as safari camps that provide tangible benefits to the local communities through employment, through commitment of revenues to build local infrastructure so that communities see wildlife as an asset that will ultimately reward them, wildlife crime as a threat to that asset and their well-being, and prevention of such crime as their responsibility. Our on-the-ground park operations along with broad engagement across Africa with the GEC demonstrated to us the overwhelming amount of data that need to be captured in order to effectively protect elephants and other wildlife. Therefore, we de-

veloped a product called DAS, which stands for Domain Awareness System.

DAS is a military style command and control communications system for conservation. It integrates many different data sources and enables park management in real time to visualize wildlife, rangers and potential illegal activity that threatens them, and to deploy the rangers and other resources to interdict the illegal activity before they can harm the wildlife. This enables park managers to make immediate decisions to officially deploy resources for interdiction and active wildlife management. DAS is currently deployed in 12 parks in eight countries in Africa, including three that have been identified as “focus countries” by the U.S. State Department. Among many other countries we plan to deploy DAS next, six of them are U.S. “focus countries.”

Moving beyond park operations, Vulcan is also providing resources to organizations like the PAMS Foundation and the National and Transnational Serious Crime Investigation Unit in Tanzania, the Wildlife Crime Prevention Project and Conservation South Luangwa in Zambia, and the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust in Malawi. In particular, NTSCIU has in recent years been instrumental in over 1,400 arrests and 360 prison sentences issued for wildlife crimes.

In the years to come, Vulcan will have invested upwards of \$60 million in terrestrial and maritime technologies to counter wildlife crime. We don’t expect to recoup this investment, but we also know we can’t scale it alone. We are pursuing public-private partnerships with relevant governments and international organizations to bring our tested technologies to scale.

Thank you for your tireless work on these issues, and thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stewart follows:]

**Mr. David Stewart**  
**Executive Vice President and General Counsel**  
**Strategic Advisor, Philanthropy**  
**Vulcan Inc.**

**May 22, 2018**

**Hearing on “Advancing Effective Conservation Policy Worldwide: Successes, Challenges, and Next Steps”**

**U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
**2172 Rayburn House Office Building, 10:00 AM**

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today to discuss park management, wildlife trafficking and poaching. I also want to thank you for your leadership in conceiving and passing the END Wildlife Trafficking Act during the last Congress and continuing to further this important work with the DELTA Act in this Congress. Vulcan is proud to support both impactful pieces of legislation.

I am Dave Stewart, Executive Vice President and General Counsel for Paul G. Allen’s Vulcan Inc. I will start my testimony today with a positive comment about this terrible crime: in recent years, across Administrations, across the aisle, and across our government, poaching and wildlife trafficking is being increasingly recognized not only as an environmental tragedy, but an urgent threat to U.S. national security interests. This shift in thinking is essential to tackling this challenge.

Now the focus must be on how we bring government, business, and philanthropy to work together and harness our combined power and resources to take on wildlife trafficking, dismantle these criminal networks, and preserve our natural heritage while protecting global security.

Today I want to feature three things Vulcan is doing to support these efforts:

1. Our park management in Africa;
2. Our investment in law enforcement organizations to tackle this security problem; and
3. Our investment to bring innovative technology to combat wildlife crime.

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Four decades after founding Microsoft, Paul Allen continues to explore the frontiers of technology, human knowledge, and innovative solutions to the world’s toughest problems.

Mr. Allen has committed over \$2 billion to philanthropic initiatives globally, which includes fighting Ebola; mapping the human brain; undertaking ground-breaking research in artificial intelligence; determining the number of savanna elephants, and now forest elephants, in Africa; and investing in the health and security of our oceans. But philanthropy is only one part of what we do at Vulcan.

Vulcan is a company that makes technology investments for social impact, aspires to have a leading public policy voice, and tells stories about issues to which the global community has not yet provided an adequate solution. Let me give you some examples.

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The protection of iconic species and their habitats is a top priority for Mr. Allen. One example of that is our work to better understand and protect elephant populations. The Great Elephant Census (GEC), which we completed in 2016, was the first-ever continent-wide aerial survey of African savanna elephants. The survey provided urgently needed data on the size and distribution of the savanna elephant population and highlighted both where they had been most impacted by poaching and where conservation efforts are demonstrating success.

Unfortunately, and unsurprisingly given the extent of the poaching problem, the GEC discovered a decline in African savanna elephants by 30 percent in the 7 years between 2007 and 2014.

A second example is Vulcan's on-the-ground management and control of the NG26 wildlife management concession in the Okavango Delta in Botswana under lease from the Botswana government. The Okavango Delta is a unique, nearly pristine endorheic delta that hosts over 1,300 species of plants, large populations of more than 122 mammal species, and approximately 450 species of birds. NG26 is a 455,000 acre reserve within the Delta on which we operate two safari camps; maintain our own anti-poaching team, whose operations have recently expanded to a neighboring concession; fund conservation-related research, including development and operation of drones in the field that are specifically designed to assist anti-poaching operations; and work with local communities.

This work is complemented by our operations in Zambia, where we own the Bushcamp Company, which operates a lodge and six bush camps within the South Luangwa National Park (SNLP). Our Zambian team and our Charity Begins At Home Foundation work closely with the SNLP management, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, private entities such as Conservation South Luangwa and the Wildlife Crime Prevention Project, and directly with the local community.

In our experience, local communities will participate in conservation efforts only if they see tangible benefits from preserving wild areas along with their natural resources. This can be accomplished by employing local residents in non-consumptive or sustainable tourism operations, and using proceeds from those commercial operations to improve local infrastructure, such as schools, health facilities, and boreholes for clean water provision. We have found that it is important for communities to see that wildlife conservation is an investment that will ultimately reward them. Wildlife crime can then be seen as a threat to the wellbeing of their communities, and prevention of such crime as their responsibility. Simply put, local residents need to perceive wildlife as being more valuable alive than dead. Wildlife will not be protected for sentimental or aesthetic reasons; it has to have demonstrable economic value and pay for its own existence.

Through our commercial and philanthropic operations at NG26 and in South Luangwa National Park, and our engagement with governments and park management across Africa as part of the Great Elephant Census, we understand the challenges faced in parks. We have learned the extent to which park rangers and managers face very real, practical, and technical challenges related to effectively monitoring and protecting elephants and other important species that are threatened by poaching and wildlife trafficking. A central challenge is the capacity to effectively capture and store data in a usable form that

can then be synthesized to provide one operational picture for better park management and counter-poaching efforts.

In order to tackle this issue head on, Vulcan created a product called DAS, which stands for Domain Awareness System. DAS is a military-style command, control, and communications (C3) platform designed with a lower cost structure and lower technological threshold. The targeted use is sustainable and effective operation in public and private wildlife parks and game reserves located in regions of the world where challenges to technology deployment range from a lack of basic connectivity to a lack of technical training among the staff.

DAS is a tool that aggregates data generated by the positions of radios, vehicles, aircraft (including drones), animal sensors, and any other data available to provide rangers and park managers with a real-time visualization dashboard depicting the wildlife being protected, the people and resources available to protect them, and potential illegal activity threatening them. It enables park managers to make immediate tactical decisions in real time to efficiently deploy resources for interdiction and active management.

DAS is currently deployed at 12 sites in eight countries, including three (Kenya, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) that are focus countries for the United States as outlined in the U.S. State Department's report to Congress as required by the END Wildlife Crime Trafficking Act. Among the many other countries where we plan to deploy DAS next, six of them are focus countries on this list.

In addition to deploying technology to combat wildlife crime, we also provide resources and support to organizations that follow the money and go after wildlife criminals in their countries. For example, Vulcan is supporting the Protected Area Management Support, or PAMS, Foundation and the National and Transnational Serious Crimes Investigation Unit (NTSCIU) in Tanzania. In recent years, according to news reports, NTSCIU has been instrumental in over 1,400 arrests, 430 firearms seized, over 40 vehicles confiscated, and 360 prison sentences issued for wildlife crimes, effectively deterring poaching. Overall, PAMS reports being instrumental in over 2,300 poachers and traffickers arrested, over 4,400 snares removed, and over 1,400 firearms confiscated. Other organizations we resource include Conservation South Luangwa and the Wildlife Crime Prevention Project, which partner with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife in Zambia, and the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust in Malawi.

Vulcan therefore has a clear track record of working with partners on the front lines of the poaching and wildlife crime problem. We want to increase these efforts and welcome the opportunity work closely with relevant U.S. agencies to scale DAS deployments worldwide in the years to come.

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In addition to policy and technology, we have also had success directly engaging with communities using some of our film content. Paul Allen's production company, Vulcan Productions, creates documentaries and television series that often explore issues related to wildlife conservation and trafficking. And while this content is most often viewed by Western audiences, we also make efforts to reach local communities. In 2016 and 2017, we brought our feature documentary *The Ivory Game* to communities in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi, and worked with local schools and nonprofit organizations to showcase the story of what's happening to the elephants that live in those countries. We have also worked closely with U.S. embassies in East Africa to use our films for screenings in communities where poaching and wildlife crime is a frequent reality.

We sometimes take it for granted that people living in countries afflicted by poaching have an accurate understanding of the problem. However, we have found that a significant proportion of these countries' citizens are unaware of the economic value of healthy elephant populations, for example, or the negative impact a continued decline in elephant populations would have on the broader economy, resulting from a loss of tourism revenue. With the right content and right distribution partners on the ground in these countries, we can do a lot to enhance that understanding.

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Vulcan's wildlife and natural resource protection work is also not limited to the terrestrial sphere. Last year, Mr. Allen announced a \$40 million commitment to develop Skylight, a satellite-based monitoring and surveillance tool that aims to provide actionable intelligence and dark target detection to discover and identify vessels that are fishing illegally on the world's oceans.

This committee knows that, similar to wildlife crimes on land, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) converges with other transnational crimes, is a trigger for conflict, and threatens a stable supply of food and employment for billions of people around the world. If not managed appropriately, the indiscriminate pillage of the world's oceans can have significant implications for global peace and stability.

Similar to DAS, we are designing Skylight to be a cost-effective tool for law enforcement and security organizations in the United States and around the world. Indeed, in many cases, our partners are under-resourced while grappling with an ever-growing list of priorities. Skylight helps improve their effectiveness and efficiency against the global challenge of IUU fishing.

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To conclude, I'd like to underscore some opportunities for public-private partnerships that lie ahead.

Over the last few years, and in the years to come, Vulcan will invest upwards of \$60 million in DAS, Skylight, and other technological platforms to bring tested technologies to the field. We believe it is our responsibility to make these investments so that DAS, Skylight, and other tools can be cost-effective, impactful, and easily absorbable for the organizations who will use them on a daily basis. We do not expect to recoup our own investment, but we do need to find partners that can cover basic operational costs in order to provide sustained impact over the long term.

In many of our partner countries, the ongoing financial reality makes it a challenge to allocate even a few thousand dollars a month to implement the technological capabilities necessary to combat these threats. We therefore must work with donor governments and global financial institutions to help us scale.

This is why we now are working aggressively pursuing public-private partnerships with relevant U.S. government agencies and international organizations to deploy our tested technologies at scale. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that our government partnerships are financially sustainable over the long term. But until then, we will need assistance and hope to work together with you, distinguished members of this Committee, to identify avenues to put proven technologies into the hands of more

partners to solve critical issues, and to continue to encourage effective public-private partnerships in this space.

In closing, I want to thank the members of this Committee for your tireless work on these issues. Vulcan will continue to deploy world-class technology, storytelling, and policy to support your efforts to end wildlife trafficking and improve park management. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I look forward to your questions.

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Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, David.  
Doctor?

**STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH L. BENNETT, PH.D., VICE PRESIDENT FOR SPECIES CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

Ms. BENNETT. Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and members of the committee, thank you for providing this opportunity to testify. Please accept my submitted testimony for the record as I will summarize that today.

WCS is deeply concerned by the alarming rate of species decline due to illegal hunting, trafficking, habitat loss, and human-wildlife conflict. I will summarize what is working, identify gaps, and recommend where the U.S. Government and Congress in particular can assist. WCS was founded in 1895 with the goal of saving wildlife and wild places. Today we work in more than 60 countries and across the world's oceans. Our work is grounded in high quality science and in strong long-term partnerships with governments, local communities and indigenous groups.

Poaching for the illegal wildlife trade is devastating many species around the world. A hundred years ago, up to 100,000 tigers roamed Asia. By 2011 that was down to just about 3,000. African forest elephants declined by 62 percent over 10 years due to killing for their ivory. Many other species are affected by high levels of poaching for the trade, for the medicine, food, and pet trades such as pangolins, songbirds, parrots, tortoises and turtles, sharks and rays. Many large charismatic species threatened by trafficking play key ecological roles. Their loss has many implications including loss of food security for marginalized rural people and reduced resilience to climate change.

The illegal trade is often driven by organized criminal groups with links to other forms of organized crime and that weakens rule of law and security for communities living alongside wildlife. In recent years, the world is taking this threat seriously. The U.N. General Assembly has passed three resolutions on wildlife trafficking. The U.S. Government expanded the executive order on transnational organized crime to include wildlife trafficking. And thanks to the leadership of Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel, wildlife crime serve as predicate offenses to Federal money laundering prosecutions.

Preventing poaching requires the establishment of protected areas and managing them effectively. WCS with partners developed the GPS-based software enforcement program, SMART, which is now deployed in over 600 sites in 55 countries. In addition to increasing patrol efficiency, this increases transparency and helps reduce corruption. With long-term programs and sufficient investment, poaching can be curtailed. In Huai Kha Khaeng National Park, Thailand, in the past 10 years tiger numbers have increased by 50 percent. With the critical support of USAID's CARPE program WCS in northern Congo's Nouabale-Ndoki National Park trains rangers and conducts SMART patrols. Forest elephant numbers there have remained stable since 2006 even while they have plummeted across much of Central Africa.

WCS works with governments and other law enforcement partners to dismantle wildlife trafficking networks. With the vital support of USAID, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and INL we have achieved measurable success. In Indonesia, WCS's Wildlife Crimes Unit gathers intelligence and assists law enforcement. Since its formation in 2003, more than 1,000 prosecutors have been trained, 70 percent of the tiger criminal networks in northern Sumatra have been dismantled, and more than 600 suspects have been arrested with a sentencing rate of over 90 percent. Support from INL is also helping us to act at transcontinental levels. We are working along key trade routes such as the one between Mozambique and Vietnam and China. Even though we are having success, we are not bringing this up to scale.

Urgently needed is continued U.S. Government funding. WCS is deeply concerned about the administration's proposed cuts to critical programs to combat wildlife trafficking in the fiscal year 2019 budget. We thank the 74 Members of Congress and 26 senators who urged appropriators to fully restore cuts at a time when so much more needs to be done. These include restoring level funding for the USAID biodiversity program, CARPE, and for that to commit to a fourth phase, the Combating Wildlife Trafficking initiative implemented by INL and USAID and the U.S. Contribution to the GEF.

Regarding the End Wildlife Trafficking Act, we urge this committee to ensure full consultations with NGOs operating in focus countries. And regarding the DELTA Act, we urge the committee to fully integrate protected area management and land use planning into the strategy. We appreciate that the U.S. Government has successfully raised the profile of wildlife trafficking as serious crime and provides tools and attaches overseas to tackle it. But it is vital that the U.S. continues to demonstrate its leadership on the global stage. We need focused, coordinated action and leadership if the world's wild species and vulnerable people living alongside them are to thrive to future generations. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bennett follows:]

**Testimony of  
Dr. Elizabeth L. Bennett, Ph.D.  
Vice President of Species Conservation  
Wildlife Conservation Society**

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Hearing on Advancing Effective Conservation Policy Worldwide: Successes,  
Challenges, and Next Steps  
May 22, 2018**

Contact: Kelly Keenan Aylward, WCS Washington Office Director [kaylward@wcs.org](mailto:kaylward@wcs.org)  
202.347.0672

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Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel and members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, thank you for providing this opportunity to testify on "Advancing Effective Conservation Policy Worldwide: Successes, Challenges, and Next Steps." WCS is deeply concerned by the alarming rate of species decline due to illegal hunting, trafficking, habitat loss and human-wildlife conflict. Our testimony will summarize what is working, identify gaps, and recommend where the US Government and Congress in particular can assist in addressing those gaps. We will focus especially on the issue of poaching for the illegal wildlife trade.

WCS was founded with the help of Theodore Roosevelt in 1895 with the mission of saving wildlife and wild places worldwide. Headquartered at our flagship Bronx Zoo and managing the largest network of urban wildlife parks in the United States, WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on earth. Today, WCS works in more than 60 countries and across the world's oceans, concentrating on many of the planet's most important, ecologically intact places with the greatest biodiversity and resilience. Our goal is to conserve wildlife species as well as many of the world's most ecologically intact wild places. Our conservation solutions draw on unrivalled expertise of our field biologists and other conservation practitioners, and our zoo- and aquarium-based veterinarians, curators and animal care staff. Our work is grounded in high quality science, and in strong, long-term partnerships that build the conservation capacity of government partners, and support the livelihoods of local communities and indigenous groups.

Poaching for the illegal wildlife trade is devastating for numerous species around the world. For example, 100 years ago up to a million tigers roamed Asia. By 2011, that was reduced to about 3,200. Within the last 15 years, we have lost three subspecies of rhinos, and are on the brink of losing two rhino species. African forest elephants declined by 62 percent between 2002 and 2011 due to illegal killing for their ivory. For savannah elephants, the Great Elephant Census (GEC) conducted from 2015-2016 estimated a 30 percent decline in over seven years at an average rate of 8 percent per year, primarily due to poaching. Countries with the highest poaching rates were Cameroon, Mozambique, Angola, and Tanzania. In Tanzania, the elephant population had declined by 60 percent in five years. In Mozambique, the population had declined by 53 percent in five years, with an alarming decline in Niassa Reserve to less than a few thousand, seriously jeopardizing the viability of this once-historic population. In Northern Cameroon, in February-March 2012 an estimated 360 elephants were massacred in Bouba-Njida National Park by heavily armed horsemen coming from the east. While protection progress has been made in recent years, bands of horsemen of Chad, Central African Republic and Sudanese origin still destabilize and create insecurity in this region, including incursions in early 2018 in Cameroon and Chad.

Multiple other species are affected by high levels of poaching: pangolins, song birds, parrots and macaws, tortoises and freshwater turtles, sharks and rays and many more. Internationally-driven trafficking that initially strongly impacted Asia (including tigers, rhinos, Asian elephants, pangolins,

helmeted hornbills, turtles and tortoises) has spread across Africa (including elephants, rhinos, pangolins, and is an increasing threat to lions) and is now an increasing threat across parts of Latin America (including jaguars, parrots and macaws, and freshwater turtles). Many large, charismatic species threatened by trafficking play critical ecological roles as top predators, seed dispersers and ecological engineers. Their loss has many implications, including loss of food security for marginalized rural people, reduced resilience to climate change, and loss of important cultural values in many societies. Moreover, the illegal trade is often driven by organized criminal groups with links to other forms of organized crime, facilitated by corruption along the trade chain. Such wildlife crime weakens rule of law and security for communities living alongside wildlife and wild places.

In recent years, the world is taking this threat more seriously and policies have changed accordingly. For example, the United Nations General Assembly has passed three resolutions on wildlife trafficking, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has adopted a series of strong resolutions and decisions, including to address corruption. In 2015, the African Union established an "African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa", citing the negative impact on local livelihoods, hindering of economic growth, and undermining of sustainable development, peace, security, rule of law and good governance as reasons why action is urgently needed. The United States government has expanded the Executive Order on Transnational Organized Crime to include wildlife trafficking. Thanks to the leadership of Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel, the U.S. government has also strengthened law enforcement capacity to allow wildlife crimes to serve as predicate offenses to federal money laundering prosecutions, thereby unlocking critical investigatory and prosecutorial tools.

To date, however, those strong legal mandates are not yet preventing all poaching and trafficking on the ground. Wildlife and wild places, and the communities living alongside them, urgently need targeted action and funding to address wildlife trafficking and associated issues along the trade chain: assistance to law enforcement authorities and protected area managers for preventing poaching at the source, identification and dismantling of trafficking networks, and reducing the market for illegal wildlife products.

#### ***What is Working to Combat Wildlife Trafficking?***

WCS focuses our counter wildlife trafficking work on a suite of species that are of high commercial value, protected under national law or international treaties, and where we bring specific expertise and add value to ongoing efforts. Our current efforts focus on African and Asian elephants; rhinoceroses; pangolins; big cats; tortoises and freshwater turtles; helmeted hornbills; cage birds such as parrots, macaws and songbirds; and sharks and rays. WCS works to combat wildlife trafficking of these species in about 30 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe, including 19 of the 26 Focus Countries outlined by the U.S. Task Force on Combating Wildlife Trafficking, as mandated by the END Wildlife Trafficking Act ([www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/11/275691.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/11/275691.htm)), and all three Countries of Concern. WCS continuously reassesses our geographic engagement and anti-trafficking investments based on the intelligence collected and analysed as we track the relevant criminal networks. Increased capacity of our government partners to combat trafficking in high profile species will also improve enforcement for lesser-known species that might also be at risk.

#### ***Protecting Species At The Source***

Protecting species at the source requires the establishment and effective management of protected areas. Over the course of our history, WCS has supported governments to help establish more than 285 marine and terrestrial protected areas. We also work long-term on the ground to ensure that they are protected effectively. WCS, with partners, developed the GPS-based software enforcement program SMART (<http://smartconservationtools.org/>) which is now deployed in more than 600 sites in more than 55 countries worldwide. In addition to increasing patrol efficiency, this increases transparency and helps reduce corruption.

With long-term capacity building and sufficient investment, poaching can be curtailed. For example, in Huai Kha Khaeng National Park, Thailand, between 2006 and 2015, patrol effort increased by 600 percent. Tiger numbers have increased by 50 percent, and animals are now recolonizing surrounding areas.

We know that weak governance, easy road access to wildlife habitat, and dense human settlement all contribute to wildlife population losses, as has been shown for African elephants and many other species. Elephants need large areas well protected by trained anti-poaching staff. With the critical support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Central Africa Program for the Environment (CARPE), WCS has been implementing field conservation programs in Northern Republic of Congo's Nouabale Ndoki National Park to train rangers and conduct SMART patrols. Patrols are conducted on foot, by motorbike, boat, vehicle and plane, which has resulted in increases in arrests and sentencing of transnational criminals implicated in ivory trafficking. Elephant numbers in the Park have remained stable since 2006, even while they have plummeted across much of Central Africa. Across Africa's Congo Basin in areas where WCS has supported ranger patrols, forest elephants are seven times more abundant than in non-patrolled areas.

For savannah elephants, there are also signs of hope. As in Congo, across savannah Africa, where site management levels are robust and the necessary resources, management systems, and training are available, elephant numbers have stabilized or increased. We know this from African Parks Network's work in Zakouma, Chad, and Northern Rangelands Trust community conservancies in northern Kenya. WCS has been working closely with the Tanzanian government to reverse the downward trends in elephant numbers through support to anti-poaching operations including aerial surveillance, especially in the Ruaha-Katavi landscape. While poaching pressure continues, it appears to be at a reduced rate, and repeated aerial surveys are urgently needed to accurately assess the current situation. In Mozambique, robust mobilization of anti-poaching, anti-trafficking, and anti-corruption programs at Niassa landscape, and at national and transboundary scales are required to save the elephant population there. WCS and the Cameroon government are improving transboundary law enforcement cooperations, military-conservation partnerships (including with AFRICOM), intel-led enforcement, and aerial surveillance. Real time law enforcement responses are critical to securing these small but important elephant populations and stabilizing these sensitive areas for security of both wildlife and people.

In addition to long-term presence in key areas, conservationists also need to be adaptable. Increasingly effective enforcement against elephant poaching in Kenya has driven poachers instead towards Mozambique and Uganda (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/69/E-SC69-51-01-A.pdf>). Recent studies of trafficking networks in Uganda have highlighted that trafficking networks within the country are extensive, dynamic, and highly localized, and these create the conditions and connections necessary to support transnational networks that have been the recent focus of much international concern. Hence, efforts and resources need to be deployed broadly and across multiple countries where wildlife populations are known to be targets, and trafficking routes have been established to exploit them.

#### *Preventing Trafficking*

Moving out along the trade chain, WCS works with governments and other law enforcement partners to dismantle wildlife trafficking networks that drive the illegal hunting. We do this by increasing the risk of wildlife trafficking by identifying, targeting and removing the most important criminals in trafficking networks, through established judicial systems.

Trade choke points can change rapidly along with trade routes. Hence, WCS focuses on gathering and managing information on the activities of wildlife trafficking networks and the criminals that run them, from local to national to international, creating and sharing intelligence products with government enforcement agencies, and improving communications at the national

and international scale to implement proactive enforcement activities. Our intelligence-led enforcement approach increasingly focuses on long-term support and mentoring, building on short-term training workshops, and we help our government partners convert actionable intelligence into action. This approach has already led to enhanced enforcement operations resulting in the successful arrest, prosecution, and conviction of targeted wildlife criminals in several countries, including Indonesia, India, and the Republic of the Congo.

With the vital support of the U.S. Government agencies such as USAID, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, we have achieved measurable success in reducing poaching and shutting down criminal networks engaged in wildlife trafficking. For example, in Indonesia, WCS's Wildlife Crimes Unit (WCU) performs intelligence work and assists law enforcement, and raises public awareness through the media. The WCU works with, and provides training for, various key agencies including the police, the Supreme Court of Indonesia, the Attorney General's Office, Customs and Excise, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and the Financial Transactions and Analysis Centre. WCU investigators gather information on wildlife poaching and trafficking using IBM i2 software, and provide the information to enforcement agencies to conduct sting operations. Since the unit was formed in 2003, more than 1,000 prosecutors have been trained; 70 percent of the tiger criminal networks in the Leuser landscape (Sumatra) and Java and 30 percent of the manta and shark networks in Eastern Indonesia have been dismantled; and more than 600 suspects have been arrested, with a sentencing rate of over 90 percent and a repeat offender rate of less than 10 percent. Furthermore, we are already seeing signs that our ultimate goal is being achieved -- wildlife populations are stabilizing or increasing in many of the landscapes where we work.

Support from the U.S. Government is also helping us to realize success at the regional, transcontinental and international levels to address trafficking. We are working along key trade routes, such as the one between Mozambique and Vietnam and China, to bring together law enforcement officials to agree on principles for mutual legal assistance treaties and set the stage for collaboration on intelligence-led enforcement. We are also seeing closer cooperation between the Chinese government and business communities and Southeast Asian countries such as Lao and Indonesia where there are deep relationships and established trade routes. WCS works with the Ugandan Government and Chinese businesses operating in Uganda to develop guidance that can inform not only operations in Uganda but across Africa. Increasingly, we are connecting counter wildlife trafficking expertise in Asia with relevant personnel in Latin America, where a growing crisis for jaguars, freshwater turtles and cage birds is gaining regional and international visibility.

Tackling wildlife trafficking requires strong legal frameworks to change at the local, national and international levels. WCS works to help ensure that governments strengthen wildlife crime laws and improve their enforcement, as well as to make it more difficult for consumers to purchase illegally and/or unsustainably sourced wildlife products. We are working to ensure that criminal justice systems and relevant government agencies have robust laws and penalties for combating wildlife crime that act as a deterrent, and legal procedures and followed through prosecution and sentencing of criminals convicted of wildlife crimes.

In the case of ivory, a facilitator of the illegal trade was that, although international commercial trade has been prohibited by CITES since 1990, many countries, including the U.S., still had legal domestic ivory markets. Those facilitated the laundering of illegal ivory into the market. WCS launched a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness in the United States that up to 96 elephants a day were being poached across Africa. Responding to a call from African countries for a global closure of domestic ivory markets, and determined that the US Government should set a global example, the 96 Elephants Campaign ([www.96elephants.org](http://www.96elephants.org)) pushed for a U.S. ban on all commercial ivory sales, to demonstrate to other consumer countries that it is possible to close ivory markets. The U.S. and China now have bans on commercial domestic ivory sales, and

the UK has announced that it will also do so. This growing momentum is codified in IUCN and CITES Resolutions calling on all governments to shut down their domestic ivory markets.

#### *Controlling Markets*

In the long term, it is vital to eliminate demand for illegal wildlife products, and to prevent consumers from being able to purchase ivory and other illegal wildlife. WCS believes that efforts to reduce demand must be science-based, culturally specific, and focused not only on the desire of people to own a product, but on how to change their buying behavior. WCS and several other organizations have run an array of different programs in China, Vietnam and other parts of Asia to discourage purchases of illegal wildlife products. This takes place through both legal reform (i.e., removing the option to purchase wildlife products), or through analysis of wildlife demand and awareness raising campaigns to effect long-term behavioral change among key populations and within key markets. In Peru, WCS launched the award winning "If You Buy, You Are an Accomplice" campaign to change the attitudes of unsuspecting buyers, recognized by the National Association of Advertisers (ANDA) Award (<http://sicompraserescomplice.pe/>; [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8-DPqXsO\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8-DPqXsO_o)).

#### *Other Sectors*

Corruption at all levels facilitates wildlife crime, and undermines the rule of law, good governance, and sustainable development. The United States must pay attention to the scourge of corruption, and take appropriate action through diplomatic and other channels to address this problem. We support increased scrutiny of national obligations under both the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), including the Implementation Review Mechanism, and the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). We are pleased that the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has taken the lead on developing anti-corruption guidelines under the auspices of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), and we encourage the U.S. to focus on anti-corruption efforts in future international assistance programs.

We must work together to engage other stakeholders in wildlife trafficking, including postal systems and courier companies, social media and e-commerce companies, and entities involved with online financial transactions and the regulation of money laundering. WCS welcomes discussion on how existing measures governing online payment systems in the United States, including payment systems integrated with online sales platforms, can incorporate measures to combat payments associated with illegal wildlife trade. We also welcome the expertise of financial crime units and anti-money laundering practitioners to that effect.

We understand the Committee will be considering the DELTA Act today, which would call on USAID to develop a conservation strategy for the Okavango Delta, one of the largest freshwater inland wetlands on the planet (<http://www.okacom.org/okavango-river-basin>) with Botswana that contains the largest remaining elephant populations in Africa, and Angola with some of the highest reported poaching rates. The U.S. Government has a role to play not only for elephant conservation, but also for identifying biodiversity priorities to protect the world's most ecologically intact places with the greatest biodiversity and resilience, as well as those strategic priorities that promote sustainable development ([www.usaid.gov/biodiversity/policy](http://www.usaid.gov/biodiversity/policy)). These priorities are supported by the NGO conservation sector, particularly WCS. It is so important that the United States continue to demonstrate its leadership on the global stage as the threats to the world's conservation heritage bleed into national security threats growing beyond existing capabilities.

#### ***What More can the U.S. Government do Support Combating Wildlife Trafficking?***

Even though we are having some successes where sufficient resources and effective management are exist, we are still not bringing this up to the necessary scale to save many important populations of multiple species, or to allow reduced populations to recover. Enforcement efforts need to be better funded and, crucially, better managed in many places, with attention to transparency and anti-corruption programs. Moreover, local enforcement teams must work in cooperation with local communities as true partners in the protection effort. Securing

wildlife populations against the types of poaching prevalent in many areas also improves security and good governance for local people.

Urgently needed is targeted action and funding to address wildlife crime at points all along the trade chain. The U.S. Congress has directed funding to anti-poaching and anti-trafficking since fiscal year 2014, doubling the amount to \$90 million by fiscal years 2017 and 2018. However, the current Administration's FY19 Budget proposes deep cuts to critical federal programs that combat wildlife trafficking. In the Administration's Budget proposal, the USAID Biodiversity Program is cut 72 percent from \$269 million to \$75 million and the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) is cut from \$40 million to \$7 million with no commitment to continue supporting longstanding protected areas and combating wildlife trafficking programs in the region at the end of its current phase of work. The Combating Wildlife Trafficking initiative implemented by State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and USAID is cut more than 50 percent from \$90 million to \$38 million. The Global Environment Facility is cut more than 50 percent from \$140 million to \$68 million in the midst of the 7th Replenishment negotiations. WCS is very concerned about the potential harmful impacts of these proposed cuts, and we are pleased to see that 74 Members of Congress and 26 Senators urged Appropriators to fully restore these ill-advised funding cuts at a time when so much more needs to be done on the ground for wildlife being used to fuel corruption and instability. In addition, cutting these funds will undermine long-standing US investments, where in many countries we are seeing real progress in curbing poaching and wildlife trafficking. The U.S. Government should urgently commit to a 4th Phase of CARPE that will continue to strengthen capacity of protected areas to counter-poaching and combat wildlife trafficking delivered through mechanisms that conservation not-for-profits can manage accordingly. All of these federal funding accounts that support international conservation and combating wildlife trafficking must be restored or the gains secured from previous investments will be undone in short order.

The END Wildlife Trafficking Act mandates that the Task Force to Combat Wildlife Trafficking establish Combating Wildlife Trafficking Strategic Plans for the 26 Focus Countries by August 2018. The Strategic Assessments conducted by U.S. Missions and Embassies were mandated by the END Wildlife Trafficking Act to be completed by Feb. 2018 have still not been made publically available, and were conducted using varying processes across missions to collect baseline data from non-governmental organizations implementing programs in those 26 Focus Countries. In developing the Focus Country Strategic Plans, WCS has only been consulted in eight of the 19 countries where we are actively working, despite the END Wildlife Trafficking Act calling for full stakeholder engagement in the development of such strategies. Those eight countries are Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Republic of Congo, DRC and Madagascar. While the process of identifying the Focus Countries was based in best available scientific data on populations declines, seizures and criminal prosecutions, countries where little data are available have been under-recognized. These tend to be countries in Latin America. Recent jaguar beheadings have demonstrated an emerging threat to big cats related to trafficking to Asian markets as substitutes for tiger parts.

We appreciate that the U.S. Government has successfully raised the profile of wildlife trafficking as a serious crime and provides tools and law enforcement attaches overseas to tackle this serious crime. Operation Crash, Operation Thunderbird, ARREST and other law enforcement efforts ([www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/03/268182.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/03/268182.htm)) have built enforcement capacity, yielded prosecutions and seizures of criminal assets. But much more needs to be done to build on these efforts. Financial crimes and the platforms through which wildlife trafficking occurs need to be shut down. E-commerce, postal systems, courier companies, and the transportation sector need to dialogue on how existing measures governing online payment systems in the United States, including payment systems integrated with online sales platforms, can incorporate measures to combat payments associated with illegal wildlife trade. The expertise of financial crime units and anti-money laundering practitioners are gravely needed.

We cannot let our guard down and think that the work in the United States is done. Just last week, the House of Representatives was considering a proposal to remove foreign listed species from the Endangered Species Act, the legal underpinning for the U.S. Ivory Ban, and a bipartisan beacon of conservation leadership to the world. WCS thanks Chairman Royce for leading the voices of opposition and eliminating that amendment to the Farm Bill, thereby maintaining the existing legal standards for removing threatened and endangered species from the wild only where it can be demonstrated that such actions will enhance the survival of the species.

It is vital that the United States continues to demonstrate its leadership on the global stage as the threats to the world's conservation heritage grow into national security threats beyond the capability of one actor, one non-governmental organization, or one government to solve. We need focused, coordinated action and leadership, which the United States is in the ideal position to provide, if the world's wild species, wild places, and vulnerable people living alongside them, are to thrive into future generations.

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Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. So as you indicated, Dr. Bennett, you had a situation where the tiger numbers have increased by 50 percent in the park land there in Thailand as a result of these patrols. And the real question is, what is the most effective steps we can take under the End Wildlife Trafficking Act?

We had some comments from Ms. Peters about Operation Crash and Operation Jungle Book. And I would ask you, Ms. Peters, what have we learned from these operations and how can law enforcement better utilize the authority that we have given them here now that we have the working group? As you say, the SEC should use its regulatory authority to push as well on Facebook, give us your thoughts there. How can we better coordinate this interagency process? How can we get these convictions?

Ms. PETERS. Chairman Royce, I think there have been some real successes as I said in these U.S.-based operations and both Operation Crash and Operation Jungle Book, which involves cooperation between U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Homeland Security and Customs, are examples of that. I think where there is room for more interagency collaboration is in the international sphere. Those were both operations here in the United States.

The real critical threat to wildlife outside of the social media issue, the real critical threat to wildlife is in other parts of the world, the enormous amounts of ivory, pangolin scales, rhino horn that have been trafficked from Africa, to Asia in particular, and other products, environmentally sensitive products, rare hardwoods, tropical fish, et cetera. There has been a real increase that I have observed in Africa in cooperation between the Drug Enforcement Administration and Fish and Wildlife law enforcement.

The Drug Enforcement Administration is also collaborating now for the first time in its history with conservation groups. I was just on the phone with an agent in sub-Saharan Africa, I won't say which country, yesterday, who was trying to get information from me about wildlife trafficking networks in that country. They are starting to recognize, or I should say that organization very much recognizes that the networks that are trafficking wildlife are also moving dangerous drugs and that they can get better wins from collaborating with them. And so this is an area where I think we can get more cooperation.

I also want to take a moment to thank you, Chairman Royce, for your support during the operation. We supported in Kenya, the ICCF was absolutely instrumental in helping us get those four men extracted from Kenya. Not just your members here in Congress pushing the administration to ask Kenya to have them extradited, but also Dr. Amina Abdalla, the head of the ICCF in Kenya, brought together a whole group of Kenyan congress members and pushed the Kenyan Government as well. So that type of legislative or congressional support is another area where I think we can have real improvement.

And I think there could be real engagement in consumer nations to help the Chinese and the Vietnamese, and the Malaysians in particular, understand the links between, or the convergence between narcotics, weapons trafficking, human trafficking, and the wildlife trade. The same networks that have the capacity to move a container of heroin through the global transport system have the

capacity to move a container with ivory or pangolin scales, and it is following the same routes.

We have mapped the supply chains that are moving heroin from Afghanistan into Africa. In some cases the seizures have the same bags from Pakistan with Pakistani Rice on them. It is the same, the paths aren't exactly the same. The drugs are coming out of Afghanistan into the Swahili coast, then it gets repackaged. It goes back to Asia. The boats go back to Asia. There is intersections with human trafficking particularly with regard to the rhino horn trade in Mozambique and South Africa going into Vietnam. So there is enormous amount of data to be exploited.

Mr. ROYCE. That is why we have the task force. We just want those tools that you have laid out. We want them to apply them effectively in doing their job.

I have to ask you, Mr. Stewart, how do we best get the buy-in from the people that call these areas home? How do we ensure that they feel the benefits of conservation in the Okavango River basin where, you know, obviously we are going to need their involvement?

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Chairman, I think there are at least three components to that—creation of incentive structures, education, and storytelling. In our experience, local communities will reliably and consistently participate in conservation efforts only if they see tangible benefits from preserving the wild animals and the natural resources therein. We can do that through employment. Tourism provides a great opportunity for that and that is something we have done.

So provide jobs for people who live in the local communities, use revenues from those businesses to build up infrastructure like basics—bore holes for water, building schools, providing food for students at school, and again that gives some buy-in. So that these wild animals are not just the things that endanger their kids, knock down their fences, and eat their crops, but they are actually an asset they see they have an interest in and see the benefit from that. That, I think, helps build the political will for them to want to take wildlife crime seriously and support those efforts as well as provide intelligence to the efforts. On education, it is unfortunate that many people that live right along the border of parks are completely disengaged from what goes within and from seeing the animals that live therein and the benefits that come from that. So, it is important to engage community members at a young age, programs and initiative that involve school children, conservation clubs at school that are funded by conservation or teach about conservation.

And finally storytelling. Our Vulcan Productions unit has done a number of documentaries and television series that explore conservation and wildlife issues related to wildlife trafficking, but it is important to show those not only here in the West but in the elephant range states and places where these other wildlife live. So we brought our documentary, *The Ivory Game*, to communities in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi are working with local schools and nonprofit organizations to showcase the story of what is happening to the animals that live in those countries, and working closely with the U.S. Embassies to use these films for commu-

nity screenings where poaching and wildlife crimes are frequent reality.

Mr. ROYCE. Thanks, Mr. Stewart.

We go now to Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think obviously we should do everything possible through technology, law enforcement, and other means to prevent poachers from slaughtering threatened species, but as long as there is demand for ivory, rhino horn, and other wildlife products there are obviously going to be people willing to take the risk to supply that demand and we obviously won't be able to stop all of them.

So it seems to me that we also need to focus on reducing demand, so let me ask you, Dr. Bennett, since you really have, I am aware of the Wildlife Conservation Society and the good work you do. Tell us what we can do to better convince consumers mainly in Asian countries to stop buying these products. And I know we have seen advertisements from time to time with celebrities and horrific pictures of dead elephants. Have those advertisements and pictures made a difference and what other approaches might be effective that we are not doing that we should do?

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Engel, for that. It is an extremely good question because, at the end of the day, while there is still the demand, as you say, there will still be the poaching. One thing that can be done is just straight change the law which China has done for ivory. There was a National Geographic survey done a few years ago now which asked members of the public in China what would cause them to stop buying ivory, and the single greatest answer was if it is made illegal and that has now been done. It has been made illegal, which is great, and now there is the task of enforcing it and taking it off the market.

That doesn't actually necessarily reduce people wanting to buy it and buying it through the black market and one of the real concerns is that people from China and Vietnam will actually go to other countries with weaker laws and weaker law enforcement on their borders, so go and take a holiday in Laos or Cambodia and bring back some wildlife products. It is a very hard one to answer.

We know a lot about the science of stopping poaching and a lot about how to stop trafficking. There is no one clear answer to how to change people's behavior. And a lot of people have tried different things, but it is not very clear what changes people's behavior. So, for example, within China for shark fin there have been a lot of campaigns including using celebrities about buying shark's fin, which have probably had quite an effect in building up a groundswell, but the single thing that took shark's fin off the market was President Xi Jinping saying this is a sign of sort of corruption and affluence and luxury, and stopped government officers buying shark's fin.

So it is really hard to know. And legal bans themselves don't necessarily change demand. In fact, for some things such as pangolin, people buy it because it is illegal and that gives an additional status because it shows that you are above the law. So it is a very complex question. We don't actually know the answer.

There is a project going on at the Oxford Martin School in the U.K. for 3 years at the moment to examine exactly that question,

what do we know and what works and therefore how can we change our programs in future.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much.

Ms. Peters, let me ask you this. You note that Facebook has become a major platform for selling illegal wildlife products. Tell me how you think they are acting. Do you think Facebook is taking this problem seriously? Have you seen any improvements in their practices? Does the same problem exist on other Web sites or other social media platforms?

Ms. PETERS. Yes, the problem exists on a number of social media platforms. Facebook in particular has been made aware of this problem multiple times over the past few years. The Wildlife Justice Committee held a 2-day seminar in The Hague in 2015 and I don't believe Facebook even sent anybody. So a 2-day seminar was held about the problem, a number of reports have been published by WWF, by IFAW, and other organizations detailing the problem, and Facebook and a number of other tech firms have joined a coalition promising to remove wildlife from their platforms by 2020. Our investigators were online looking at the issue just last week and it was business as normal.

I think that the days for talking to the leaders of social media firms are over. They have been told multiple times by multiple organizations including U.S. Fish and Wildlife law enforcement that this problem exists and they have done nothing about it.

Mr. ENGEL. You know, Ms. Peters, we had Mr. Zuckerberg here about 3 or 4 weeks ago. I am so sorry that we didn't ask him this question.

Ms. PETERS. A number of members did ask him about it and he said he was aware it was a problem and they were working on it. I think they would work a lot faster if the threat of a multimillion dollar fine from the SEC was hanging over their heads.

Mr. ENGEL. And if I may, thank you.

Let me ask Mr. Stewart, since I have asked the other two questions, the administration in its fiscal year 2019 budget unfortunately proposed significant reductions for wildlife trafficking and other key international conservation programs. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the impact that those proposed funding levels have on our ability to effectively address these issues. Obviously with less money you can do less, but where do you see it impacting?

Mr. STEWART. Well, clearly more resources are good for the effort. Certainly I think Fish and Wildlife having attaches in various Embassies throughout Africa have been a great force. We have been more focused though, I think, in terms of what to do given the situation in trying to encourage public-private partnerships to make sure that government funds that are available are spent as effectively and efficiently as they can be.

And I think a great example of that is the bill sponsored by a number of members of the committee, the DELTA Act. It is important that the bill calls for government to work with business and to work with philanthropy in developing technology and applying efforts across those areas. This is at least what we are trying to be involved in to make up for any reduced funding on the government part, and I think that provides a great path.

And it is important as we embark on that as the DELTA Act calls for it to if we are going to go in and try to work with Angola to listen to Angola. And I think the upcoming codel that this committee is undertaking is an important opportunity to build relationships with the legislators and officials in Angola. In our discussions with Angola, I have heard an interest in diversifying the economy and when we look at the promising Cuando Cubango in southern Angola there is a great opportunity to see that development and conservation can go hand in hand along with agriculture, fishing, and other traditional—

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. STEWART. So that is what we are focused on.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. My time is up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [presiding]. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes herself. First, I wanted to commend Chairman Royce and the other co-chairs of the International Conservation Caucus for their leadership and efforts to ensure that the United States implements stronger and more effective conservation policies. I am not only a proud member of the Caucus, but I am also pleased to sign on to the DELTA Act that we have been discussing as an original co-sponsor and I do sincerely hope that we pass this measure after our hearing today and quickly bring it to the floor for a vote.

The DELTA Act as you pointed out is vital to creating a transnational strategy that leverages the experience and the expertise of stakeholders in the private and public sectors to combat wildlife trafficking and to spur economic growth in the Okavango River basin. It also authorizes key U.S. assistance programs to prioritize and promote development through conservation and building partner nations' anti-poaching capacity. We have a tremendous opportunity before us to take action now while we still have the ability to protect Africa's most expansive inland water system and it is still in all of our interests to do so before it is too late. We also have an opportunity to address conservation policy worldwide and that is why this hearing comes at a critical time as we are now at a crossroads. The high demand for ivory in Africa and other wildlife products in Asia has seen poaching and trafficking rise to new levels, new levels that threaten the very existence of some of the planet's most precious species. But this in turn has raised awareness and has led many nations to begin to take meaningful action to help reverse this trend. And key to this has been the United States leadership through initiatives such as Chairman Royce's End Wildlife Trafficking Act and through other conservation and trafficking programs as well as law enforcement efforts.

Many of our colleagues on this committee have focused in recent years on the role of transnational criminal organizations and terror groups in illegal wildlife trafficking. The high demand for some of these products has made this illicit activity a lucrative one for these groups and the lax security measures, whether the result of inefficient resources, corruption, or other deficiencies makes this practice a serious threat to U.S. national security interests. By countering these illegal wildlife trafficking activities of these illicit

groups we have the added benefit of cutting off a critical supply of revenue while also protecting endangered species.

But to be successful as you have pointed out it has to start with getting host country buy-in and it is not a one-size-fits-all. You have cited some examples where it has worked in some countries, but in many cases state actors are complicit in these crimes with corruption oftentimes being a major obstacle to accomplishing our objectives. We have seen this so many times in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.

So my question is how do we get host country buy-in from governments, from local law enforcement agencies, from local communities to join in efforts to curb this illicit practice when corruption is so pervasive and it is so lucrative?

Ms. PETERS. Ma'am, you have touched on what I think is one of the core drivers of the conservation issue around the world, corruption. I think in many countries, many parts of Africa, corruption is the elephant's biggest threat. It can be very challenging to find able and willing partners in these parts of the world.

I had the opportunity to work with the Government of Gabon as their advisor on transnational organized crime for 2 years and that was an environment that was very, very corrupt. We literally for a while couldn't find a single judge in the country that wasn't on the take in order to bring the cases in. The commander, Uvare Ekoga (phonetic), who I worked with used to say that corruption was a far bigger threat to him than the transnational criminal networks that we were trying to target.

But we were able to find slowly but surely trusted partners. And with the support of President Bongo we were able to put them in place. But it really did take that top-down support from the President, from the presidency of Gabon, and from his secret service and some of his police. If we hadn't have had that we would have been lost.

Alternatively, the project I worked on in Kenya it took more than 2 years to get the Akashas extradited and once they came out and some of them started cooperating, it became clear that everybody in the system, the prosecutors, the judges, right up to some of the leaders of that country were taking payoffs to stop their extradition from happening. And I can cite other examples in other countries.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Those are excellent examples.

Ms. PETERS. It is a terrible problem. We do really need to make anti-corruption the focus and it is one the reasons that I argue the U.S. needs to use its extraterritorial legislation and not count on the notion that some of these smaller African nations with very, very compromised judicial systems are going to be able to take down these networks. We are going to have to do it for them.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. And I apologize, Mr. Stewart and Dr. Bennett. I went on too long and I am out of time.

Ms. Titus of Nevada?

Ms. TITUS. Thank you. I want to thank Chairman Royce and the ranking member Engel too for making this a priority for this committee. I think it is very important. I am a co-sponsor of the DELTA Act and I look forward to its passing. I also thank the witnesses for the things that they have done in this area and I think the United States has made some progress.

But I sense a trend that is concerning to me and some of the things that you have mentioned I would like to point out others. I think we are taking two steps forward and one step back. If you look at what is happening lately, you have proposed cuts to the budget that is going to make it difficult to continue in this policy area. You have several regulatory actions that have taken place with the Fish and Wildlife Service. You have the memorandum on trophy hunting, now we are going to consider trophies on a case-by-case basis as opposed to having an overall policy. And the second one that is just coming out more recently is that the extreme hunting rules that allow us now to hunt baby bears and wolf cubs in their lairs. I don't think that is a step in the right direction.

And then third, you have Interior Secretary, Mr. Zinke, creating an International Wildlife Conservation Council. That is kind of like calling the agency that allows more pollution the Blue Sky Initiative. If you look at who is on the commission it is somebody from the Safari Club, the Sportsmen's Foundation, the director of hunting policy at the NRA, and several other groups that promote trophy hunting. Now if we are going to lead by example, I don't think these are very good examples and I wonder if you all would comment on what you see as problems that might be created by this new trend under the Trump administration.

Doctor?

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you very much indeed. We share your concerns on all of those same issues. In relation to the trophy hunting issue just picking up on that one, it is a particularly important one because trophy hunting can be an extremely good conservation tool if used appropriately. And it keeps a lot of land, particularly in Africa but other parts of the world, under wild habitat by giving an economic value for it if it is well managed.

So, for example, we work on an operation on trophy hunting of markhor sheep in Pakistan and support the local communities there and it is helping them to conserve the markhor sheep. But as an industry it is notoriously corrupt, and the U.S. by having very strict regulations and a good policy previously has not contributed to the problem. But by loosening the regulations then that really is a concern because it is corrupt all along the scale from getting licenses to hunt the wrong species, the wrong age, the wrong sex.

And while the exporting countries where the hunting is being done we don't always have a lot of control over, but we have control over the importing countries for those trophies so yes, we share that same concern. Thank you.

Ms. TITUS. Ms. Peters?

Ms. PETERS. I also want to second what Dr. Bennett said about hunting in certain cases being a tool for conservation. I also want to second what she said about the importance of it being well regulated, that we have done a number of investigations into poorly managed hunting programs or poaching that is taking place under the guise of hunting particularly in places like South Africa with regards to rhino.

So I agree. I don't think it is a good idea to be loosening regulations in the United States around hunting. We have fairly well

managed hunting programs domestically and we should have the same level of legislation about it internationally.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Stewart, do you want to add anything?

Mr. STEWART. You know, I certainly think the efforts against international wildlife trafficking has a number of great allies in Congress both on the Democratic and Republican side, so I trust that those legislators will work to try to maintain and restore adequate funding for the international efforts and programs that the U.S. has been conducting that have been proven to be effective.

Ms. TITUS. Well, I think there is a lot to be said for legislation, for regulation, but also for leading by example. And a picture of a President's son standing over a dead elephant or a giraffe doesn't seem to me to be leading by example at a time when even China is moving in the opposite direction. So I think it should be an all-encompassing policy not just focused on the criminal aspects of it. So thank you very much. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Smith of New Jersey?

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to our distinguished panel for your leadership and for your insights you have provided the committee today. Let me just ask a few questions.

Tragically, an estimated 30,000 African elephants are killed every year. Eastern and central Africa continue to face high levels of poaching. In the last decade these regions have lost 50 percent of their elephant populations. And while populations in eastern Africa have stabilized, central African elephant populations continue to decline and remain deeply unstable for species survival. I wonder if you could explain to us why these discrepancies. If you could also add what happens in places like the DR Congo where there is extreme political instability, how does that exacerbate the situation?

Let me also ask with regards to, and we have done this in the past, as have you, in trying to push for a greater integration of our antiterrorism efforts because obviously much money is derived from this illegality, are we coordinating better on that front to ensure that the LRA, groups like Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and others are not deriving profits in order to fund their nefarious enterprises?

And then finally on the issue of reducing demand in Asia, obviously the ivory bans in China, Hong Kong, and Singapore were very strong steps demonstrating political will, but I am wondering if you can tell us—and, Dr. Bennett, you mentioned making it illegal how important that was in China, but is there also the perverse outcome where now that it is illegal it drives up the price which again brings ill-begotten gains to those who are poaching and selling ivory and other products abroad?

Ms. PETERS. I want to just start by saying that I think that at any time one is fighting a serious crime issue like this there have to be efforts both on the demand side and on the supply side. My work tends to be on the supply side focusing on disrupting criminal networks.

But one of the reasons, one of the many reasons that I am passionate about the conservation issue is that there is that there is

some very, I would say, proactive work going on by a number of big organizations like WildAid, a lot of celebrities are involved. There are some creative efforts to figure out what can be done to spur demand reduction, and as the other panelists have said we have seen some very positive signs from the government in China to tighten up its laws and to ban these products.

But is it going to take work on both sides if we are going to save these species. My objective when I got involved in this, I never believed that we would be able to stop all wildlife crime but I thought that maybe we could knock some of the biggest networks off course enough to give these species the chance to come back. And I think now and then we have managed to get a punch in like when we got the Akashas extradited, but it is often hard to feel optimistic with the number of animals that are being lost.

Now you mentioned the conditions. I just want to make one quick comment about that which is to say that there are some organizations that even in very, very difficult circumstances are able to save animal populations. There was a terrific story yesterday in the New York Times about Africa parks efforts in Chad in Zakouma National Park where they have brought back elephant populations.

There is also a very interesting project in Mozambique in Gorongosa where the wildlife had virtually been wiped out by decades of civil war. At great expense and effort they have reintroduced a lot of species and that wild area is being restored. So these areas aren't necessarily lost forever. We can bring these populations back again. The rhino was almost poached to extinction in the 1980s and its populations were to some degree restored. They are under very, very serious threat again now, but their biggest enemies are crime and corruption. That is what we need to focus on fighting if we are going to save these species.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. STEWART. I agree with Ms. Peters, and a couple points. On the supply side, I think we have to just make it as expensive and as harrowing as we possibly can to source ivory, to source rhino horn, to source these animals that drive it. Whether it is meeting the poachers on the ground or disrupting their international networks, we need to hit it at all points of the chain. I also agree with Ms. Peters, time and again it has been shown whether it is Grumeti in the Serengeti, whether it is in Gorongosa in Mozambique or elsewhere that if you protect a habitat with a large carrying capacity it will regenerate and the animals will come back. You just have to protect them.

You asked about coordination. I think there is a lot more that we can do on the defense and intelligence side in terms of engaging them. Our experience is that the U.S. intelligence community can and wants to do more. They have been tracking transnational criminals and illicit financing deals for decades and we have got to try to figure out how to build the systems that have been used in other contexts to enable classified and unclassified data to be used together to draw connections, to drive useful data so that the classified information can be protected.

But the lessons drawn from that in combination with other information can give us the way to disrupt these networks. There is more to do on that but the participants seem willing.

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you very much indeed for the question. To answer the question on why discrepancies that some of it is tied in with corruption, why does Botswana have the largest elephant population remaining, because if you look at Transparency International's map of countries it is the least corrupt country in sub-Saharan Africa. So that is one link to it. Another link is the fact that you have a severe difference between savanna and forest. Rainforests are, I mean I can't even see from here to you in a rainforest so looking out for poachers is incredibly difficult. You can do it by airplane in savanna, you can't in forest. So it is much more difficult to track and catch poachers in forest.

And the other issue is the forest elephants have actually got a harder ivory than savanna elephants, and so for certain types of carving it is preferred and that means it has a higher price. So for all those reasons the rainforest countries tend to be the more difficult ones to deal with on the elephant poaching crisis.

In terms of the ivory price, in the year prior to the ban actually coming into effect in China, the ivory price went well down in anticipation of the closure of the market. What is happening to it now the market is closed, I don't know, but certainly in the year before, in 2017, the ivory price went down very significantly in China.

The one confounding issue that is going on in China, which is a little difficult to know quite how to deal with, is the large amounts of sales of mammoth ivory. And if you go around the markets in southern China now you see mammoth ivory for sale and that is not illegal. There is more and more of it becoming available due to climate change as the tundra in Siberia melts and so there is more and more accessible mammoth ivory.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Connolly of Virginia?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

And Dr. Bennett, if you can pull that microphone just a little closer to you, thank you. I appreciate it. Dr. Bennett, do you think the Trump administration is helpful in its policies with respect to what we are talking about here today?

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you very much indeed. The core things that are a real concern that we have talked about here today, I mean it is partly as was pointed out earlier with some of the loosening of some the regulations but the most important thing is the cutting of the budgets. And we are not going to solve this problem and the U.S. is not going to continue to be a leader in helping solve the problem while budgets are being cut because it is vital to have the resources to do this work around the world. Thank you.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, I mean it makes one wonder about the commitment at all. Let me see. Last year, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke suspended all of the Interior Department's advisory committees including the Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking and the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council. Is that correct?

Ms. BENNETT. Yes. That is correct for that——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is that a helpful step?

Ms. BENNETT. No, it is not a terribly helpful step. And the forming of the International Wildlife Conservation Council as was pointed out with the composition of its members is also not a very helpful step because it is not going to be a very objective panel.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So the U.S. Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking which was codified by the End Wildlife Trafficking Act has been inactive since Trump took office; is that correct?

Ms. BENNETT. Can you repeat the question?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Sorry?

Ms. BENNETT. Sorry. Can you repeat the question?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes, I can. I said, since Trump took office the U.S. Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking which was codified in the End Wildlife Trafficking Act by this Congress has been inactive. Is that helpful?

Ms. BENNETT. I am afraid I am not familiar with that. The transnational organized executive order on integrated wildlife trafficking has been helpful and that has been done under this administration.

Mr. CONNOLLY. The Trump administration in his budget slashed funding for international conservation programs including cutting USAID's biodiversity program by more than two-thirds and eliminating the USFW's international species program. Are those helpful actions?

Ms. BENNETT. No, those are not helpful actions. And in my written testimony we have actually put through all the cuts that are in there and that is a very major cause for concern. Thank you.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I just think that is important to get on the record. Earlier this year——

Mr. CHABOT. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Real briefly, yes.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Very quickly, none of those cuts in the Trump budget actually went into effect so they didn't really do anything, I think; isn't that correct?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Reclaiming my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay.

Mr. CONNOLLY. The point here is what the intent of the administration is. And while Congress has shown restraint with respect to Trump budget cuts, we are getting at what is the nature of the commitment of this administration. And my point is that Congress notwithstanding, we are retreating on the very things we are having a hearing about here today led by the President and his administration. And let me give another example. Earlier this year, Dr. Bennett, the Trump administration reversed, because it loves reversing, Obama-era ban on big game trophies including elephant tusks and lion hides under the supposed rationale that such trophies actually support wildlife conservation.

Is there any evidence that actually trophy hunting contributes to wildlife conservation, Dr. Bennett?

Ms. BENNETT. Yes, it can contribute to wildlife conservation if it is well managed. It needs to be very well managed and very well controlled because it is so notoriously corrupt. One reason it con-

tributes is because of the amount of land that is on the game reserves allowed for trophy hunting.

Mr. CONNOLLY. But let me ask you, did the Wildlife Conservation Fund support the original Obama ban on wildlife trophy hunting?

Ms. BENNETT. The ban that I am familiar with was the one that was specific to two countries which were particularly corrupt and were not managing their trophies well. And yes, we supported that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So do you, presumably then if you supported it, you did not support the reversal of that ban.

Ms. BENNETT. No. There needs to be controls. There really needs to be controls.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right.

Ms. Peters, any comment on that in terms of big game trophy?

Ms. PETERS. Not on the trophy issue, no. But on the issue of cutting resources, I just want to say as somebody who has been out on the front lines of where law enforcement is fighting this problem, those law enforcement officials, U.S. in particular, in Africa and Asia are incredibly under-resourced, still. We have had requests, for example, from the U.S. Treasury that would like to put some wildlife traffickers on the OFAC list but they have never been given any budget to investigate it, so they can only do it if it falls under some other organized issue.

I have worked with agents from Homeland Security, Fish and Wildlife law enforcement, and the Drug Enforcement Administration while there will be one or two agents covering 12 or 13 different countries in Africa, each of them wracked by organized crime and corruption. We are still, these folks are so under-resourced out there and we really need to support them better and support private organizations that are out there trying to help them.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So I take what you are saying, bottom line, it is bad enough as it is—sweeping cuts in the program will only make it worse.

Ms. BENNETT. Exactly. That is what I am saying.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROYCE [presiding]. Thank you. We go now to Mr. Joe Wilson of South Carolina. Thank you, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. WILSON. And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now yield for such time as he may consume to Congressman Steve Chabot of Ohio.

Mr. CHABOT. I thank the gentleman for yielding and I won't take up much of his time. But I just wanted to follow up on what my friend and colleague from the Commonwealth of Virginia just said about Trump administration's alleged cuts to various programs that protect or save endangered animals or any animals around the—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would my friend yield?

Mr. CHABOT. It is not my time so let me talk.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, I thought it was your time.

Mr. CHABOT. Only shortly, but it is Mr. Wilson's time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Oh.

Mr. CHABOT. He yielded to me.

In any event, the cuts that were talked about in the Trump administration budget never happened. And then to say Congress notwithstanding, well, our budgets and what we pass here along

ultimately with the President, whether it is an omnibus bill or whatever it is, that is what ultimately matters to these programs. And I think Congress over the years has been pretty responsible in a bipartisan manner to make sure that we are protecting as much as possible the endangered animals that we are talking about whether they are in Africa or here in this country for that matter.

So I just wouldn't leave the impression out there that because the President in trying to deal with a \$20 trillion budget and having limited ability to do that oftentimes cuts things all across the board and then when it gets to Congress working with the administration we generally, together, do the responsible thing which is not to cut back on these important programs. And I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. WILSON. And thank you, and indeed we appreciate the active involvement by persons from Ohio and the Old Dominion of Virginia.

Thank you for being here today. And for each of you, U.S. support for anti-wildlife trafficking efforts abroad focus on sourcing countries where the animals live including in Africa, trafficking transit hubs and countries with high demand. U.S. agencies involved in such programs include the Departments of State, Interior, Justice, and Defense, as well as the FWS and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

U.S. efforts support international conservation biodiversity goals including law enforcement capacity building, support for rule of law, and prosecutorial activities. Sustainable conservation cannot occur without supporting local communities through promoting economic growth, strengthening health systems, creating jobs, providing education resources, and support for good governments. U.S. engagement includes working with national legislatures and departments of justice across the continent to ensure that the legal framework has clear and streamlined conservation and trafficking laws.

In fiscal year 2017, the U.S. provided just over \$90 million to conservation and trafficking programs. The U.S. also provides limited funding to multinational organizations that implement wildlife trafficking and conservation programs such as the U.S. development program and the World Bank's Global Environment Facility.

The question for each of you beginning with Ms. Peters, promoting conservation and wildlife protection requires a whole of government approach with the State Department, USAID, Department of Interior, and Department of Justice needing to coordinate efforts abroad to combat illegal poaching and trafficking. Have you seen the coordination play out? What can U.S. do to improve our response?

Ms. PETERS. Thank you for that question. I would like to second a comment that Mr. Stewart made earlier which is to say that the way that I believe that we can improve our coordination is to engage our intelligence community, national security apparatus, and law enforcement community in targeting some of the key networks trafficking wildlife, because they are not just trafficking wildlife. Even agencies that don't have a mandate or an interest in con-

servations should be interested in these networks for the myriad other crimes that they are engaged in.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much.

And Mr. Stewart?

Mr. STEWART. Yes, I agree. I think the one area where there is the greatest potential for improvement is by again creating systems that ensure that we can use classified as well as unclassified data to draw the connections to identify the links of how to disrupt the international, criminal international syndicates that are involved in not only wildlife trafficking but illegal fishing, human trafficking, illegal logging, et cetera. These are bad guys and we should use all the resources we can to go after them.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you.

And Dr. Bennett?

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you very much indeed. Yes, the whole of government approach clearly is the only way we are going to tackle this one. And by doing so, clearly by tackling wildlife crime in a sense it is almost a soft way in to improve governance and stability across some of these troubled parts of the world. But in addition to the intelligence side of things, one of the other sectors which would be really great to be fully involved is the financial sector to track money laundering and follow the money. And the example of Al Capone comes to mind. We might not be able to get them on wildlife crimes, but we can get them because they are money laundering. Thank you.

Mr. WILSON. And thank you very much, all of you, for your thoughtful response. And thank you, Chairman Royce, and Eliot, Ranking Member Engel, for the hearing today.

Mr. ROYCE. And if the gentleman would yield, we will work with Treasury on that weak link in the chain that you have raised, that you both raised.

We go now to Robin Kelly of Illinois.

Ms. KELLY. I would like to yield 1 minute of my time to Gerry Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank my friend from Illinois. I want to respond to my friend from Ohio. Nice try, but budgets reflect values. And the values reflected in the Trump actions in both the budget and with respect to advisory bodies and policies and regulations with respect to this subject, I believe, create a hostile environment and show very little sympathy for the cause we are examining today in this hearing. And yes, Congress did not act on those budget recommendations. That doesn't mean they didn't happen. That doesn't mean those values weren't represented by the people who wrote that budget and signed by that President. And that is the point made here and it shouldn't be covered up. And it wasn't an alleged budget recommendation, it was a budget. It was published. It was presented to Congress. It is a matter of public record and I think it is a shameful public record and it ought to be exposed. That is my point and I yield back to my good friend from Illinois.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today. As a proud co-sponsor of the DELTA Act, I am glad that we are having this hearing to highlight international illegal trade in wildlife. This issue is not only an environmental issue

that threatens to wipe out populations of endangered species, but it is also a national security issue.

Recently, high demand in Asia has been a driving force in the wildlife product trafficking in Africa. This has led to terrorist organizations like Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab engaging in the wildlife trafficking to finance their operations. Some countries in Asia such as China, Hong Kong, and Singapore have implemented nearly complete bans on the trade of the elephant ivory including putting in place significant restrictions on the import of ivory and taking steps to stop their domestic ivory trade. The trade, however, has continued with illegal trade in endangered wildlife products including elephant ivory, rhino horns, and turtle shells worth an estimated \$7 billion to \$10 billion annually.

Dr. Bennett and Mr. Stewart, with the prevalence of poaching on the African continent and its connection with terrorism on the continent, African nations are a key player in the reduction of illegal wildlife trafficking. What are the best cost-effective practices that can be immediately implemented to combat the trafficking?

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you very much. One of the first things is expanding what we know works on the ground across different areas, because we have examples across Africa where actually wildlife is being protected well but it needs to be taken up to scale. So we need to take SMART patrols and the resources and knowledge that we have got and take it up to scale across more countries across Africa would be a key first step.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you.

Ms. BENNETT. And the links with and to persuade governments it is the links with security are really important. So, for example, in northern Cameroon, a few years ago there was a slaughter of about 300 elephants in Bouba Nijida National Park. Those were not Cameroonians. They were people coming in on horseback very heavily armed from countries to the north. And so Cameroon was really forced to act on that because it was a security issue and a national sovereignty issue. And so these are all linked up—

Ms. KELLY. Thank you.

Ms. BENNETT [continuing]. In terms of immediate things we need to scale up.

Ms. KELLY. Mr. Stewart, anything to add?

Mr. STEWART. Yes, a couple quick things. I think the increase recently in the budget of INL at the State Department to address wildlife trafficking has been very helpful. They are great at addressing drugs and other issues that we have been more heavily engaged with over the years and they are bringing that expertise to fight wildlife trafficking. I think support for training that the Justice Department and the local Embassies have been doing is very helpful. I think Fish and Wildlife and the attaches in Africa have helped provide connective tissue to ensure that enforcement agencies in different countries coordinate better.

And, finally, I think the DELTA Act is a great example of the right path to trod here. Going in there, listening to countries like Angola, building relationships with legislators and the executives there, and then explicitly in the DELTA Act providing for a path to marshal assistance from government, business, and philanthropy, for example, to help Angola on a large scale look at land

use planning over vast tracts, I think that is critical now to be helpful and will pay off longer term. And I think that will help show Angola and other countries, who at least have expressed to us an interest in diversifying their economy, how to do it. That conservation and development are not inconsistent and will help foster what is needed on a regional basis.

I think President Masisi in Botswana will bring renewed energy from the Botswana side to address these transboundary issues, and as Chairman Royce has pointed out there is a really unique opportunity in Angola right now.

Ms. KELLY. I am going to squeeze in while he is not looking.

How should, Ms. Peters, countries be framing the issue around socioeconomic and political conditions, because if you don't have opportunity then you tend to do things that you shouldn't do, so how can we look at other things that they can be doing besides this illegal trafficking?

Ms. PETERS. Well, there are some successful alternative livelihood programs in certain areas that have reduced poaching. There are also numerous examples of places where the conservation programs have shared the value of the national park or the reserve with the local communities giving them a stake in the success and giving them a stake in the conservation and those tend to make the communities work harder to protect the animals. But the other panelists have both made this point better than I do. This isn't the area that I work in, but it is extremely important.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. ROYCE. Yes, one thing I would add in that, Robin, is that what we have here in Angola now is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity because we have peace, we have a new government there, we have the opportunity to engage Angola and Namibia and Botswana to preserve these resources.

So we go now to Mr. Ted Yoho of Florida.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you all sitting here and very informative and I appreciate the work you have done on the endangered species and wildlife trafficking. It is a scourge of humanity these people going after and killing thousands and tens of thousands of elephants and rhinoceros, and we will do anything we can to support that. And I commend Chairman Royce for the work he has done over the years.

And it funds so many bad behaviors that work against civilized societies, but then you have got to, I think one of you brought up you have the human encroachment, you have development, you have the illegal trades whether it is drugs, human trafficking or wildlife trading. And then I was reading from the International Union of Conservation of Nature, made quite clear on the reason of the recent decline on the addax, playing the blame firmly on poaching by soldiers and these soldiers were employed to protect Chinese-owned oil installations in Niger.

And we see this over and over again. You will have a country that comes in, they don't have the same values we do and they will do whatever they can for enriching their own country. They went on to say that the IUCN said the addax habitat in the surrounding region became a hot bed of drug smuggling, weapons trafficking, political insurgency, and illegal wildlife trade following the collapse

of Libya, as we all know. Thomas Rabeil of the Saharan Conservation Fund added that the companies with commercial interests in the region, notably China national petroleum corporations, should cooperate with wildlife authorities to contribute to the addax conservation. And I think that is something as these companies and countries go in to develop resources there has to be some kind of connectivity that if you are going to do this you need to work to protect and preserve these.

What are your thoughts on that? Dr. Bennett?

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you very much indeed. I couldn't agree more it is a problem, but it is a problem that we are increasingly aware of and doing our best to address. And one way of doing it is, for example, on INL funding is getting the links across the continent. So, for example, we now have someone working with WCS and the government in Uganda to work with the Chinese business community in Uganda to make them aware of the poaching issue and to become supportive partners. And if that works, it is a new program but if it works that can be a really nice example of engaging the Chinese community working in Africa.

Mr. YOHO. Do they have, any other countries have or those countries over to there, do they have any policies in place that conservation must be a policy of development of those resources? Does anybody know?

Ms. BENNETT. I am not aware that countries have that as a policy.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Stewart?

Mr. STEWART. Africa, you mean African nations having that as a policy?

Mr. YOHO. Yes.

Mr. STEWART. I think Botswana over the years has been particularly rigorous in scrutinizing investments by the Chinese, but I am not sure how formal that is.

Mr. YOHO. Okay.

Ms. Peters, do you have any idea?

Ms. PETERS. I am not aware of any country having a—

Mr. YOHO. Sounds like that is something for us to do here then, doesn't it, that we can direct some of that. We have a new foreign aid bill going out that is tied into USAID that we can help direct some of that. And I just want to add that also the IUCN also said additional efforts to monitor and secure addax in the wild as well as broad range of other conservation actions include rebuilding wild populations with captive-bred, i.e., hunting preserves.

And if you look at, and this is where we run into a little bit of a problem here in the United States, if you look out in Texas there is 11,000 oryx in captivity. There is over 800 dama gazelles and over 5,000 addax out in Texas, and they are on hunting preserves. And we have a problem because if people hunt them they can't keep the trophy. And I know that goes against what Chairman Royce is advocating, and I think there ought to be a way that we can come to an agreement that if they are captive raised, you can tell by DNA where they come from and we can select that way, that is a way of preserving these breeds that are being decimated and extinct around the world because of illegal activity.

And it is ironic that one of the things that is going to preserve them is the thing that does kill them. It is the hunting preserves that have good conservation measures in there. But it says in here that the ranchers, that they can't keep these if they are not allowed to hunt them and if a person can't take the trophy back they aren't going to hunt them, therefore those are going to go out of business and it is going to put more pressure on the wild.

So just throwing out there for consideration and I appreciate your time and expertise.

Mr. ROYCE. Dr. Bennett, do you want to comment maybe on some of the complexities or tradeoffs of this and maybe what could be done in terms of conservation management with this respect? You had mentioned earlier that one of the concerns you had with this situation in two countries specifically where there was corruption that there wasn't a way forward in terms of proper management but that it might be possible if we eliminated that corruption to have an effective program that would actually help sustain these populations.

Ms. BENNETT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is exactly right, if it is well managed. And I mean as, and I will take Tanzania as an example and Tanzania has 40,000 square kilometers under national parks totally protected. It has 140,000 square kilometers under game reserves which is maintained as wild lands by the fact that it has some economic money largely coming from lion hunting in that particular case. And so if you lose that 140,000 square kilometers you have lost more than half of the wild lands for wildlife within Tanzania.

But the industry is notoriously corrupt there but if we can get it so that it is well managed, and that is going to take a huge amount of investment and it is going to take a lot of work by a lot of people and it is also going to take a lot of open mindedness because a lot of people are not comfortable with it as a conservation tool, but if so that could keep a lot of lands under wildlife that otherwise would turn into sort of soy plantations or something like that and we would lose a lot of species.

Mr. ROYCE. Right.

Ms. BENNETT. But it does need to be very well regulated and managed and we need to be able to get a hold of the corruption.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Dr. Bennett.

We go to Tom Marino of Pennsylvania.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you all for being here. I have been known to be an animal lover to the point of when I live out in the country of stopping my truck and getting a turtle out of the middle of the road to get it over to where it is headed and slamming the brakes on for a chipmunk.

As a state and Federal prosecutor we have put people in prison domestically for hunting out of season, for shooting protected animals and birds such as eagles, and for importing hides and protected animals internationally as well. I like the idea because we put some people away based on the fact at the Federal level that we followed the money. And as a prosecutor, as a U.S. attorney I did that consistently in drug cases. Follow the money. You may not be able to get the person with the drugs but you can follow the money and put them away from that perspective.

I am constantly watching the programs on the History Channel and Discovery about what we are doing to worldwide animals and how we are losing them. I have been known to get in a couple of fights with people who I see beating an animal or a dog or a cat or something to that nature. That is how obsessed I am with this, because who is going to protect animals if we don't? And often these individuals are called animals that do this, but that is an insult to the animal kingdom, calling somebody an animal that would hurt an animal other than legitimate hunting.

But what do we do with individuals in other countries who it just, they don't think twice about killing these animals? What do we do about people who do this on a basis to survive or feed their families and what do we do with those individuals that are running a business as far as putting them away for a very long time when we find them?

Any response to any of that?

I will start with Ms. Peters.

Ms. PETERS. Sir, it is an excellent question. I would like to make a point that we have done analyses of ivory and rhino horn supply chains in a number of sub-Saharan African countries including South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda to some extent, and Gabon. And each of those places, of course there are some people who will hunt for sustenance, but it is a very, very small impact on the environment compared to the poaching, what is going on because of poaching.

Most poachers, the guy that actually pulls the trigger on the .458 or the 12 caliber doesn't even have the money to buy the bullet. Those are bullets that sell for \$20 to \$30 a pop. He doesn't have the money to fill the tank that went in the vehicle that drove him into the forest. All of that has to be financed. We have been working with the agencies that we have been supporting to follow the money around wildlife trafficking and get it up to the point where the poaching gets financed and to try to cut that funding. It is incredibly important.

We have also worked with the human trafficking NGO, Liberty Asia, out of Hong Kong, to develop a system that provides typologies about wildlife trafficking networks and human trafficking networks to banks around the world. So my colleague Kathleen, here, is briefing a number of correspondent banks tomorrow about a major wildlife trafficking network in Tanzania. We have briefed banks around the world and they are starting to shut down the activity as they see it, in part because they recognize that these traffickers are also moving drugs and guns and things that they need to worry about from a legal perspective.

Mr. MARINO. All right, thank you.

Mr. Stewart and Dr. Bennett, unfortunately between the two of you, you have 30 seconds.

Mr. STEWART. I agree with Ms. Peters in terms of going at this at the international level, but I think it is also important to note—corruption is a big problem. But in some instances local prosecutors, local judges don't have the resources to do the basics of how you secure a crime scene, how you prosecute a case, so efforts to train them in that is important.

There has also been a lot of success for specialized discipline enforcement units. I think particularly the National and Transnational Serious Crimes Investigation Unit in Tanzania, they work with specialized prosecutors, work with specialized judges and have had particular success in getting through prosecutions, reaching to the farther out edges of syndicates, even in an environment as Dr. Bennett indicated has corruption challenges. So I think that is a model that can be useful in any of these challenging circumstances.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you. My time is expired. Thank you.

Mr. ROYCE. All right, let me thank, Ms. Peters, let me thank you, Mr. Stewart, Dr. Bennett, all of you for your good work on this issue and your testimony here today. And we are going to be in touch with all three of you as we try to address some of the issues that you raised here today. So for now in terms of this hearing, the hearing stands adjourned.

[Hearing adjourned.]

Chairman ROYCE. We now meet pursuant to notice to markup H.R. 2819, the DELTA Act.

Without objection, the Royce Amendment 119 in the nature of a substitute, which was provided to all of you last week, will be our base text, and is considered read, and open for amendment at any point on H.R. 4819, the DELTA Act.

[The information referred to follows:]

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 4819

To promote inclusive economic growth through conservation and biodiversity programs that facilitate transboundary cooperation, improve natural resource management, and build local capacity to protect and preserve threatened wildlife species in the greater Okavango River Basin of southern Africa.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 18, 2018

Mr. FORTENBERRY (for himself, Mr. ROYCE of California, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Ms. BASS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

---

## A BILL

To promote inclusive economic growth through conservation and biodiversity programs that facilitate transboundary cooperation, improve natural resource management, and build local capacity to protect and preserve threatened wildlife species in the greater Okavango River Basin of southern Africa.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Defending Economic  
3 Livelihoods and Threatened Animals Act” or the  
4 “DELTA Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) The greater Okavango River Basin, which  
8 ranges from the highland plateau of northern Angola  
9 to northeastern Namibia and northern Botswana, is  
10 the largest freshwater wetland in southern Africa.

11 (2) The greater Okavango River Basin is the  
12 main source of water and livelihoods for over a mil-  
13 lion people, and the effective management and pro-  
14 tection of this critical watershed will help advance  
15 important conservation and economic growth objec-  
16 tives for such countries, local communities, and the  
17 broader region.

18 (3) The greater Okavango River Basin is home  
19 to the largest remaining elephant population in the  
20 world, as well as other threatened wildlife species.

21 (4) Poaching and trafficking of threatened wild-  
22 life species in the greater Okavango River Basin has  
23 increased in recent years, and has the potential to  
24 undermine regional stability by disrupting local gov-  
25 ernance and management of resources, and sup-

1 planting key economic opportunities for community  
2 members.

3 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

4 It is the sense of Congress that it is in the strategic  
5 interest of the United States to engage with the Govern-  
6 ments of Angola, Botswana, and Namibia, along with do-  
7 nors, regional organizations, nongovernmental organiza-  
8 tions, local communities, and the private sector, to ad-  
9 vance conservation efforts and promote economic growth  
10 and stability in the greater Okavango River Basin.

11 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

12 It is the policy of the United States to promote inclu-  
13 sive economic growth through conservation and biodiver-  
14 sity programs that facilitate transboundary cooperation,  
15 improve natural resource management, and build local ca-  
16 pacity to protect and preserve threatened wildlife species  
17 in the greater Okavango River Basin.

18 **SEC. 5. STRATEGY.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and the  
20 Administrator of the United States Agency for Inter-  
21 national Development, in coordination with other relevant  
22 Federal agencies, shall seek to work with the Governments  
23 of Angola, Botswana, and Namibia, and in partnership  
24 with donors, regional organizations, nongovernmental or-

1 ganizations, local communities, and the private sector, to  
2 develop a strategy to—

3           (1) create and advance a cooperative framework  
4           to promote sustainable natural resource and wildlife  
5           management practices in the greater Okavango  
6           River Basin;

7           (2) protect traditional migration routes of ele-  
8           phants and other threatened wildlife species;

9           (3) combat wildlife poaching and trafficking;

10          (4) address human health and development  
11          needs of local communities; and

12          (5) catalyze economic growth in such countries  
13          and across the broader region.

14          (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy established pursuant  
15          to subsection (a) shall include a description of efforts to—

16               (1) promote cooperative and sustainable natural  
17               resource and wildlife management policies and prac-  
18               tices within and among the countries of Angola, Bot-  
19               swana, and Namibia, with a particular focus on the  
20               greater Okavango River Basin;

21               (2) protect and restore wildlife habitats and  
22               traditional migratory patterns of elephants and  
23               other threatened species;

24               (3) combat wildlife poaching and trafficking in  
25               Angola, Botswana, and Namibia, including within

1 regional and national parks and reserves, by building  
2 the capacity of the governments of such countries,  
3 local law enforcement, community leaders, and park  
4 rangers to detect, disrupt, and prosecute poachers  
5 and traffickers;

6 (4) promote conservation as a foundation for  
7 inclusive economic growth and development within a  
8 comprehensive assistance strategy that places An-  
9 gola, Botswana, and Namibia on a trajectory toward  
10 graduation from the need for foreign assistance;

11 (5) identify opportunities and mechanisms to le-  
12 verage public-private partnerships to contribute to  
13 support the implementation of this strategy; and

14 (6) establish monitoring and evaluation mecha-  
15 nisms, to include measurable goals, objectives, and  
16 benchmarks of success, that are included in grants,  
17 contracts, cooperative agreements to ensure the ef-  
18 fective use of United States foreign assistance.

19 **SEC. 6. UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR RESPONSIBLE NAT-**  
20 **URAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ELE-**  
21 **PHANT CONSERVATION.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and the  
23 Administrator of the United States Agency for Inter-  
24 national Development, in coordination with other relevant

1 Federal agencies, are authorized to prioritize and advance  
2 ongoing efforts to—

3 (1) promote inclusive economic growth through  
4 responsible natural resource management and wild-  
5 life protection activities in the greater Okavango  
6 River Basin;

7 (2) provide technical assistance to governments  
8 and local communities in Angola, Botswana, and  
9 Namibia to create a policy-enabling environment for  
10 such natural resource management and wildlife pro-  
11 tection activities; and

12 (3) build the capacity of local law enforcement,  
13 park rangers, and community leaders to combat  
14 wildlife poaching and trafficking.

15 (b) COORDINATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR.—The  
16 Secretary, the Administrator, and other relevant Federal  
17 agencies are authorized to work with the private sector  
18 and nongovernmental organizations to leverage public and  
19 private capital to promote sustainable resource manage-  
20 ment, combat wildlife poaching and trafficking, and sup-  
21 port inclusive economic growth and local livelihoods in the  
22 greater Okavango River Basin.

23 (c) MONITORING AND EVALUATION.—The Secretary  
24 and the Administrator shall establish monitoring and eval-  
25 uation mechanisms, to include measurable goals, objec-

1 tives, and benchmarks, to ensure the effective use of  
2 United States foreign assistance to achieve the objectives  
3 of this Act.

4 **SEC. 7. REPORT.**

5 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the  
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State  
7 and the Administrator of the United States Agency for  
8 International Development, in coordination with other rel-  
9 evant Federal agencies, shall submit to the appropriate  
10 congressional committees a report on the implementation  
11 of this Act.

12 (b) **MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—The report re-  
13 quired under subsection (a) shall include a description of  
14 the strategy required by section 5, including—

15 (1) the monitoring and evaluation plans and in-  
16 dicators used to measure performance under the  
17 strategy;

18 (2) any legislative impediments to meeting the  
19 objectives of such strategy;

20 (3) the extent to which Angola, Botswana, and  
21 Namibia have demonstrated a commitment and will-  
22 ingness to cooperate to advance efforts described in  
23 section 5(b); and

24 (4) progress made to date in meeting the objec-  
25 tives of such strategy.

1 (c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “appro-  
2 priate congressional committees” means—

3 (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the  
4 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-  
5 resentatives; and

6 (2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and  
7 the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
TO H.R. 4819  
OFFERED BY MR. ROYCE OF CALIFORNIA**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Defending Economic  
3 Livelihoods and Threatened Animals Act” or the  
4 “DELTA Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) The greater Okavango River Basin, which  
8 ranges from the highland plateau of Angola to  
9 northeastern Namibia and northern Botswana, and  
10 also provides critical natural resources that sustain  
11 wildlife in Zambia and Zimbabwe, is the largest  
12 freshwater watershed in southern Africa.

13 (2) The greater Okavango River Basin is the  
14 main source of water and livelihoods for over  
15 1,000,000 people, and the effective management and  
16 protection of this critical watershed will help ad-  
17 vance important conservation and economic growth

1 objectives for Angola, Botswana, Namibia, local  
2 communities, and the broader region.

3 (3) The greater Okavango River Basin is home  
4 to the largest remaining elephant population in the  
5 world, as well as other threatened wildlife species.

6 (4) Poaching and trafficking of threatened wild-  
7 life species in the greater Okavango River Basin has  
8 increased in recent years, and has the potential to  
9 undermine regional stability by disrupting local gov-  
10 ernance and management of resources, and sup-  
11 planting key economic opportunities for community  
12 members.

13 (5) Governments in the region have taken im-  
14 portant steps to coordinate through existing con-  
15 servation frameworks to combat trafficking, ensure  
16 responsible resource management, support local live-  
17 lihoods, and protect threatened wildlife species.

18 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

19 It is the sense of Congress that it is in the interest  
20 of the United States to engage, as appropriate, with the  
21 Governments of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, and neigh-  
22 boring countries, and in partnership with donors, regional  
23 organizations, nongovernmental organizations, local com-  
24 munities, and the private sector, to advance conservation  
25 efforts and promote economic growth and stability in the

1 greater Okavango River Basin and neighboring water-  
2 sheds and conservation areas.

3 **SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

4 It is the policy of the United States to promote inclu-  
5 sive economic growth through conservation and biodiver-  
6 sity programs that facilitate transboundary cooperation,  
7 improve water and natural resource management, and  
8 build local capacity to protect and preserve threatened  
9 wildlife species in the greater Okavango River Basin and  
10 neighboring watersheds and conservation areas.

11 **SEC. 5. STRATEGY.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary and the Adminis-  
13 trator, in coordination with the heads of other relevant  
14 Federal agencies, shall seek, as appropriate, to work with  
15 the Governments of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, and  
16 neighboring countries, and in partnership with donors, re-  
17 gional organizations, nongovernmental organizations, local  
18 communities, and the private sector, to develop a strategy  
19 to—

20 (1) create and advance a cooperative framework  
21 to promote sustainable natural resource, water, and  
22 wildlife management practices in the greater  
23 Okavango River Basin;

24 (2) protect traditional migration routes of ele-  
25 phants and other threatened wildlife species;

- 1 (3) combat wildlife poaching and trafficking;
  - 2 (4) address human health and development  
3 needs of local communities; and
  - 4 (5) catalyze economic growth in such countries  
5 and across the broader region.
- 6 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy established pursuant  
7 to subsection (a) shall—
- 8 (1) promote cooperative and sustainable water,  
9 natural resource, and wildlife management policies  
10 and practices within and among the countries of An-  
11 gola, Botswana, and Namibia, with a particular  
12 focus on the greater Okavango River Basin and the  
13 critical headwaters located in Angola;
  - 14 (2) protect and restore wildlife habitats and  
15 traditional migratory patterns of elephants and  
16 other threatened species;
  - 17 (3) combat wildlife poaching and trafficking in  
18 Angola, Botswana, Namibia, and those areas of  
19 Zambia and Zimbabwe that border Angola, Bot-  
20 swana, or Namibia, including within regional and  
21 national parks and reserves, by building the capacity  
22 of the governments of such countries, local law en-  
23 forcement, community leaders, and park rangers to  
24 detect, disrupt, and prosecute poachers and traf-  
25 fickers;

1           (4) promote conservation as a foundation for  
2 inclusive economic growth and development within a  
3 comprehensive assistance strategy that places An-  
4 gola, Botswana, and Namibia on a trajectory toward  
5 graduation from the need for United States foreign  
6 assistance;

7           (5) identify opportunities and mechanisms to le-  
8 verage regional organizations, nongovernmental or-  
9 ganizations, and public-private partnerships to con-  
10 tribute to support the implementation of the strat-  
11 egy;

12           (6) establish monitoring and evaluation mecha-  
13 nisms, including measurable goals, objectives, and  
14 benchmarks of success, that are included in grants,  
15 contracts, and cooperative agreements to ensure the  
16 effective use of United States foreign assistance; and

17           (7) coordinate with and build the capacity of re-  
18 gional conservation frameworks in order to advance  
19 regional conservation objectives.

20 **SEC. 6. UNITED STATES SUPPORT.**

21           (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary and the Adminis-  
22 trator, in coordination with the heads of other relevant  
23 Federal agencies, are authorized to prioritize and advance  
24 ongoing efforts to—

1           (1) promote inclusive economic growth and de-  
2           velopment through responsible water and natural re-  
3           source management and wildlife protection activities  
4           in the greater Okavango River Basin;

5           (2) provide technical assistance to governments  
6           and local communities in Angola, Botswana, and  
7           Namibia to create a policy-enabling environment for  
8           such responsible water and natural resource man-  
9           agement and wildlife protection activities; and

10          (3) build the capacity of local law enforcement,  
11          park rangers, and community leaders to combat  
12          wildlife poaching and trafficking.

13          (b) COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION WITH RE-  
14          GIONAL CONSERVATION FRAMEWORKS.—The Secretary  
15          and the Administrator, in coordination with the heads of  
16          other relevant Federal agencies, shall coordinate assist-  
17          ance provided by Department of State, the United States  
18          Agency for International Development, and such other rel-  
19          evant Federal agencies with existing regional conservation  
20          frameworks in order to ensure regional integration of con-  
21          servation, wildlife trafficking, and water management ini-  
22          tiatives, to prevent duplication of efforts, and to advance  
23          regional conservation objectives.

24          (c) COORDINATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR.—The  
25          Secretary and the Administrator, in coordination with the

1 heads of other relevant Federal agencies, are authorized  
2 to work with the private sector and nongovernmental orga-  
3 nizations to leverage public and private capital to promote  
4 sustainable resource management, combat wildlife poach-  
5 ing and trafficking, and support inclusive economic growth  
6 and local livelihoods in the greater Okavango River Basin.

7 (d) MONITORING AND EVALUATION.—The Secretary  
8 and the Administrator shall establish monitoring and eval-  
9 uation mechanisms, to include measurable goals, objec-  
10 tives, and benchmarks, to ensure the effective use of  
11 United States foreign assistance to achieve the objectives  
12 of this section.

13 **SEC. 7. REPORT.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the  
15 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the  
16 Administrator, in coordination with the heads of other rel-  
17 evant Federal agencies, shall submit to the appropriate  
18 congressional committees a report on the implementation  
19 of this Act.

20 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report re-  
21 quired under subsection (a) shall include a description of  
22 the strategy required by section 5, including—

23 (1) the monitoring and evaluation plans and in-  
24 dicators used to measure performance under the  
25 strategy;

1           (2) any legislative impediments to meeting the  
2 objectives of such strategy;

3           (3) the extent to which Angola, Botswana, and  
4 Namibia have demonstrated a commitment and will-  
5 ingness to cooperate to advance efforts described in  
6 section 5(b);

7           (4) progress made to date in meeting the objec-  
8 tives of such strategy;

9           (5) efforts to coordinate, deconflict, and stream-  
10 line conservation programs in order to maximize re-  
11 source effectiveness;

12           (6) the extent to which Angola, Botswana, and  
13 Namibia and other government in the region are in-  
14 vesting resources to advance conservation initiatives;  
15 and

16           (7) the extent to which other funding sources,  
17 including through private sector investment and  
18 other investment by Angola, Botswana, and Na-  
19 mibia, have been identified to advance conservation  
20 initiatives.

21 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

22 In this Act:

23           (1) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Adminis-  
24 trator” means the Administrator of the United  
25 States Agency for International Development.

1           (2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-  
2           TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-  
3           mittees” means—

4           (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and  
5           the Committee on Appropriations of the House  
6           of Representatives; and

7           (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations  
8           and the Committee on Appropriations of the  
9           Senate.

10          (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
11          the Secretary of State.



Chairman ROYCE. All members may have 5 calendar days to submit statements or extraneous material for the record.

And I am now going to recognize myself to speak on this bill.

As we have heard today, greater transparency cooperation is essential to advancing conservation and smart development in the Okavango River Basin. To that end, today we will consider H.R. 4819, the Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals or DELTA Act.

Let me give you the three points in terms of what this legislation will do. It will strengthen and streamline coordination among the Governments of the United States, Angola, Botswana, and Namibia, as well as non-governmental organizations in the private sector to protect the basin there.

Second, it is going to prioritize wildlife trafficking and anti-poaching programs in the greater region to help save elephants and other endangered species.

And lastly, it will promote sound economic growth for local communities through responsible natural resource management.

So I want to thank the International Conservation Caucus co-chair, Representative Jeff Fortenberry, and this committee’s ranking member, Mr. Engel, for partnering with me on this measure.

And I now recognize the ranking member, Mr. Engel, for his remarks.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this markup of H.R. 4819, the DELTA Act. I would like to also begin by thanking Mr. Fortenberry of Nebraska, a former member of this committee, for his initiative in putting forward this legislation.

And as I mentioned before, I would like to commend you, Mr. Chairman, for your extraordinary leadership on international conservation issues and particularly the fight against wildlife trafficking for many, many years. Thank you for what you have done.

The Okavango River Basin in Angola, Botswana, and Namibia supports an amazing array of wildlife, including the largest remaining concentration of elephants in Africa. It is also home to more than 1 million people. This important legislation requires the development of a strategy to encourage the sustainable management of natural resources in the river basin, including the protection of wildlife. This strategy will require input from a wide range of stakeholders, including national governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

The goal here is to support economic development for the residents of the region, while preserving unique ecosystems and protecting wildlife.

I would also like to highlight that the DELTA Act has the support of key wildlife associations, including the Wildlife Conservation Society based on my hometown of Bronx, New York and we did hear Dr. Bennett, who is from the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of this important legislation and I urge all of our colleagues to support it.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Do any other members seek recognition to speak on this measure? Mr. Smith.

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

Over the decades it has become apparent that conservation efforts must be transboundary and engage entire regions to advance sustainable solutions. Endangered and threatened species, natural landscapes, and poaching networks do not know national boundaries. This requires governments and conservation partners to share real-time information, move freely across transnational boundaries, and coordinate park protection responsibilities.

These complex arrangements must be outlined in intergovernmental agreements to equitably share resource protection and benefits. As with our national parks, regional cooperation can better facilitate economic development through developing infrastructure and a tourism economy.

Therefore, I strongly commend Jeff Fortenberry for offering H.R. 4819, the DELTA Act, and you, Mr. Chairman, for bringing it and the ranking member before the committee today, which would encourage this kind of transboundary coordination between Angola, Botswana, and Namibia, and the greater Okavango River Basin.

I yield back the balance.

Chairman ROYCE. Any other members seeking time? If not—yes, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Joe Wilson of South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON. And thank you, Mr. Chairman. And you definitely want to recognize me because I want to begin by thanking you and

Ranking Member Eliot Engel's work with Congressman Jeff Fortenberry for providing the Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals Act, also known as the DELTA Act, before the committee.

The Okavango is the fourth largest river system in southern Africa and has no outlet to the sea. Instead, the water empties into a land that flourishes with wildlife. The same river supports over 1 million people, potentially creating a long-term tug of war for the resources of the delta.

Water resource management has become an increasing concern in the region, such as in Cape Town, South Africa where the infamous Zero Day or the day when the taps run dry, was projected to strike earlier this month but has been delayed until next year. This Act promotes technical assistance through sound water management that is both safe for the environment and wildlife but also aligns with a developing human population.

In the long run, this modest level of coordination helps ensure that countries interconnected by the Okavango River Basin will continue to remain stable in democracies. The DELTA Act encourages transborder cooperation among Botswana, Angola, Namibia, and others in order to develop law enforcement and park ranger capabilities, which will deter criminals and terrorist organizations from poaching and smuggling.

Being a national park ranger is not a safe occupation. On May the 11th, a 25-year-old park ranger in the Democratic Republic of Congo named Rachel Masika Baraka was killed while protecting tourists from abduction. She was the eighth park ranger killed this year. Though this park is much further north of Botswana, continued cooperation can help ensure that the Okavango remains peaceful.

This bill acknowledges the opportunity and value provided by coordinating the private sector donors and non-governmental organizations with governmental institutions in advancing conservation efforts through public-private partnerships.

I am pleased to support and co-sponsor H.R. 4819, the DELTA Act and I urge its passage.

And I yield back my time.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Any other members seeking time? Hearing no—or anyone seeking amendment?

Hearing no amendments, the chair now moves that the committee agree to H.R. 4819, as amended.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The measure is agreed to.

Without objection, 4819 is ordered favorably reported in the form of a single amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Staff is directed to make any technical and conforming changes and the chair is authorized to seek House consideration under suspension of the rules.

So let me end by thanking all the members for their participation today. This markup is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:48 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

# A P P E N D I X

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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

**Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman**

May 22, 2018

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 22, 2018

**TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

**SUBJECT:** Advancing Effective Conservation Policy Worldwide: Successes, Challenges, and Next Steps

**WITNESSES:** Ms. Gretchen S. Peters  
Executive Director  
Center on Illicit Networks and Transnational Organized Crime

Mr. Dave Stewart  
Executive Vice President and General Counsel  
Vulcan, Inc.

Elizabeth L. Bennett, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Species Conservation  
Wildlife Conservation Society

**MARKUP OF:** H.R. 4819, DELTA Act.

**By Direction of the Chairman**

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



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Tuesday Date 05/22/2018 Room 2172

Starting Time 10:00 AM Ending Time 11:40 AM

Recesses 0 ( to ) ( to )

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Edward R. Royce  
Representative Heana Ros-Lehtinen

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session

Electronically Recorded (taped)

Executive (closed) Session

Stenographic Record

Televised

TITLE OF HEARING:

*Advancing Effective Conservation Policy Worldwide: Successes, Challenges, and Next Steps*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*See attached.*

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*N/A*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes  No

*(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)*

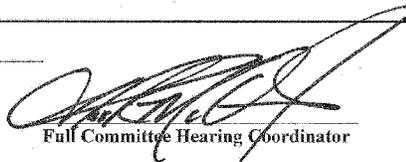
STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

*N/A*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or

TIME ADJOURNED 11:40 AM



Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

*FULL COMMITTEE HEARING*

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
X	Joe Wilson, SC
	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
	Darrell Issa, CA
X	Tom Marino, PA
X	Mo Brooks, AL
X	Paul Cook, CA
	Scott Perry, PA
	Ron DeSantis, FL
	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted Yoho, FL
	Adam Kinzinger, IL
X	Lee Zeldin, NY
X	Dan Donovan, NY
	James F. Sensenbrenner, Jr., WI
	Ann Wagner, MO
	Brian J. Mast, FL
X	Brian K. Fitzpatrick, PA
	Francis Rooney, FL
X	Thomas A. Garrett, Jr., VA
	John Curtis, UT

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
	Brad Sherman, CA
	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicillinc, RI
	Ami Bera, CA
X	Lois Frankel, FL
	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
	Joaquin Castro, TX
X	Robin Kelly, IL
	Brendan Boyle, PA
X	Dina Titus, NV
	Norma Torres, CA
X	Brad Schneider, IL
	Tom Suozzi, NY
	Adriano Espaillat, NY
X	Ted Lieu, CA

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP

Day Tuesday Date 05/22/2018 Room 2172

Starting Time 11:41 AM Ending Time 11:48 AM

Recesses 0 ( to ) ( to )

Presiding Member(s)

*Chairman Edward R. Royce*

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session

Electronically Recorded (taped)

Executive (closed) Session

Stenographic Record

Televised

BILLS FOR MARKUP: (Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)

*See attached.*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*See attached.*

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*N/A*

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

*N/A*

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP: (Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)

*See markup summary.*

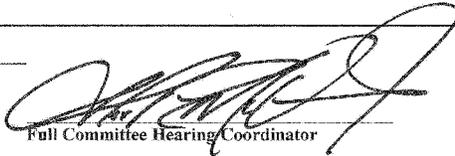
RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP): (Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)

Subject	Yeas	Nays	Present	Not Voting
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TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or

TIME ADJOURNED 11:48 AM



Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

*FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP*

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
X	Joe Wilson, SC
	Michael T. McCaul, TX
	Ted Poe, TX
	Darrell Issa, CA
X	Tom Marino, PA
	Mo Brooks, AL
	Paul Cook, CA
X	Scott Perry, PA
	Ron DeSantis, FL
	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted Yoho, FL
	Adam Kinzinger, IL
	Lee Zeldin, NY
	Dan Donovan, NY
	James F. Sensenbrenner, Jr., WI
	Ann Wagner, MO
	Brian J. Mast, FL
	Brian K. Fitzpatrick, PA
	Francis Rooney, FL
	Thomas A. Garrett, Jr., VA
	John Curtis, UT

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Brad Sherman, CA
	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Karen Bass, CA
	William Keating, MA
	David Cicillinc, RI
	Ami Bera, CA
	Lois Frankel, FL
	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
	Joaquin Castro, TX
X	Robin Kelly, IL
	Brendan Boyle, PA
	Dina Titus, NV
	Norma Torres, CA
X	Brad Schneider, IL
	Tom Suozzi, NY
	Adriano Espaillat, NY
	Ted Lieu, CA

5/22/18 Foreign Affairs Committee Markup Summary

The Chair called up H.R. 4819 (Fortenberry), DELTA Act.

By unanimous consent, Royce 119, an amendment in the nature of a substitute, was considered base text.

H.R. 4819, as amended, was agreed to by voice vote.

By unanimous consent, H.R. 4819 was ordered favorably reported to the House, as amended, and the Chairman was authorized to seek House consideration under suspension of the rules.

The Committee adjourned.