

# WHY FOOD SECURITY MATTERS

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MULTILATERAL  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, AND  
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC, ENERGY,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2018

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT, MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, AND  
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC, ENERGY, AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Todd Young, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Young [presiding], Merkley, and Coons.

## OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TODD YOUNG, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator YOUNG. Good afternoon. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral and International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy will come to order.

I want to thank the ranking member, Senator Merkley. I remain grateful for our bipartisan partnership on so many issues, Senator.

The title for today's hearing is "Why Food Security Matters." Today we have an impressive group of leaders, scholars, and experts joining us to discuss this important issue. We will divide today's hearing into three panels.

The first panel consists of the Honorable David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

Welcome, Director.

Our second panel will consist of Mr. Matthew Nims, the Acting Director of the Office of Food for Peace at the United States Agency for International Development.

And our third and final panel will consist of three witnesses: Dr. Chase Sova, the Director of Public Policy and Research at World Food Programme USA; Lieutenant General John Castellaw, who served with distinction in the United States Marine Corps; and Ms. Michelle Nunn, President and Chief Executive Officer of CARE USA.

Given this excellent group of leaders and experts, I am eager to hear from each of you. But before we do so, allow me to make a few comments to frame and catalyze our discussion this afternoon.

I will start with two important statistics. First, Executive Director Beasley, you note in your prepared statement that in 2016 the number of chronically hungry people in the world went up for the

first time in a decade, reaching 815 million people. You also note that 108 million people are acutely hungry.

And second, in December 2017 the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs launched its highest ever global appeal for \$22.5 billion to support 2018 humanitarian requirements.

Now, these numbers are staggering. They are also heartbreaking. When we confront such horrible humanitarian suffering, most of us recognize a moral imperative to help wherever we can. I certainly do. As Mr. Nims wrote in his prepared statement for today's hearing: "We provide food assistance because it eases human suffering and represents our core American values of compassion and generosity." You go on to say that "helping feed those around the world in their time of need is the right thing to do."

I agree. But Mr. Nims does not stop there. He goes on to say that helping to feed the hungry around the world makes America and her allies safer. Executive Director Beasley, you concur, saying feeding hungry people contributes to the economic and national security interests of the United States.

Lieutenant General Castellaw, you put it succinctly, saying that food crises grow terrorists.

I find these assertions intuitively compelling, and there are many anecdotes and case studies that strongly suggest a correlation and even a causation between hunger and instability or hunger and conflict.

But at this time of seemingly unlimited threats and challenges, anecdotes and suggestions are not enough to effectively help justify the allocation of finite resources for food security-related programs. We need to look at the evidence, and I believe a growing body of research, from the World Food Programme to the U.N. Development Program, the World Bank, the United Nations, and a number of individual scholars, conclusively demonstrates the connection between food insecurity and instability.

Dr. Sova writes in his prepared remarks for today's hearing that, "While we have long understood the relationship between hunger and instability to exist intuitively, research is now catching up." It is this relatively new research in particular that I look forward to exploring together today.

Despite the risk of spoiling the ending, let me say up front where I stand. In addition to a clear moral imperative to fight hunger, I believe there is strong evidentiary and scholarly justification for concluding that it is in America's clear national security interests to address food insecurity, and I am not alone. A 2015 intelligence assessment by our Office of the Director of National Intelligence asserted a clear connection between food insecurity and social disruptions, or large-scale political instability.

More recently, a joint study published this year by the World Bank and the United Nations entitled "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches for Preventing Violence" explored the consequences of food insecurity. And the report concluded: "Food insecurity can increase the risk of conflict, particularly when caused by rising food prices, by displacing populations, by exacerbating grievances, and by increasing competition for scarce food and water resources."

Now, these social disruptions and political instability foster, enable, and create security threats to Americans and to our national interests. And for those watching this hearing who may have a decidedly narrow and, I would argue, mistaken definition of American national security interests and who focus exclusively on so-called “hard” power, I encourage you to give our witnesses today a fair hearing. Listen to Executive Director Beasley. He is the former Republican Governor of South Carolina and he has visited 36 countries, by the latest count, as the head of the World Food Programme. Listen to Matt Nims. He spent his professional lifetime working on hunger-related issues. Listen to Dr. Sova’s groundbreaking scholarly research. Listen to retired Marine Corps General John Castellaw, who spent decades serving our country in uniform and saw the consequences of food insecurity firsthand. And finally, listen to Michelle Nunn, who leads CARE, an organization that has worked to improve food security since 1945.

I am very excited to hear from our witnesses, and I look forward to continuing our work together to fight global food insecurity because it is the right thing to do, and also because it is one of the best ways to proactively address threats to Americans and our national interests.

So with those thoughts in mind, I would now like to call on Ranking Member Merkley for his opening remarks.

Senator Merkley.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF MERKLEY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON**

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you very much, Senator Young. I do appreciate the bipartisan way that we are undertaking these issues. There is nothing about starvation in the world or human suffering that should ever be a partisan issue. I am very pleased that we have so much expertise being brought into this room.

I am thinking about how perhaps food aid is not one of the sexier issues in international affairs. We do not see a room full of members right now. We do not see a line out the door. But in terms of the impact on lives around the world, there may be no more significant discussion than how we approach the issue of the United States supporting food aid.

Never before have we experienced the number of simultaneous complex humanitarian emergencies around the world, 65 million people across the globe displaced, equivalent to the entire population of France. That includes more than 22 million refugees, 80 percent of whom live in just four countries: Lebanon, Ethiopia, Jordan, and Kenya. And half of the 815 million people that you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, in the world who are facing hunger every day live in conflict zones and disproportionately are concentrated in Africa, and conflict has a big role in the challenge of nutrition.

Last July, Chairman Young and I held a hearing in this committee to discuss the origins and policy prescriptions to combat famine in the four famine countries of Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, and Nigeria. Today’s hearing builds on that foundation, addressing the question of why food aid matters. Why does it matter? It is certainly a clear expression of the limitless compassion of the American people, and every food basket or voucher, be it a source

from the United States or from a market close to the affected countries, is truly from the American people.

We know that food-secure countries are less likely to suffer from national, regional, or international instability, as you so well summarized. And we have an additional complicating factor driving food insecurity, which is the impact of human-driven climate chaos. Record global temperatures and droughts are affecting the production in location after location, including hundreds of thousands of small-holder farms spread around the world.

Food aid offers a critical lifeline to those who are caught in the crosshairs of armed violence, including civil war, and the critical lesson we have learned is that the most effective and efficient response to a famine is to prevent one from occurring in the first place. So we have to focus both on addressing famines and working to prevent them. Both are important pieces.

Regrettably, during this period when complex humanitarian emergencies are on the rise, President Trump's Fiscal Year 2019 budget proposes a reduction by one-half in the Title 2 Food for Peace Program, and a significant reduction in the International Disaster Assistance Program.

So I think it is important for us to hold this hearing at this time to ask and answer the question that is being posed so that the Article 1 branch of the government can proceed to weigh in, and that is where your expertise addressing this body is so valued. Thank you for joining us.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ranking Member Merkley.

I want to once again welcome Executive Director David Beasley.

In order to keep the lawyers happy, and in light of your affiliation with the United Nations, I want to emphasize that you are appearing voluntarily today before the subcommittee as a courtesy, so thank you.

Your full written statement will, of course, be included in the record. I welcome you to summarize your written statement in about 5 minutes, sir.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID BEASLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, SOCIETY HILL, SC**

Mr. BEASLEY. Senator, thank you very much. Mr. Chairman and Senator Merkley, thank you very much. It is good to be here. For the record, I am here voluntarily and should not be understood to be a waiver, express or implied, of the privileges of the immunities of the United Nations and its officials under the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the U.N.

Now that we have that technically and legally out of the way, Senator, you are right, I have been here almost a year, and what I have learned in this year of having traveled to over 36 countries, and many of those countries multiple times, has been not just eye-opening, it has been quite shocking to see the realities of what we are facing compared to 30 or 40 years ago.

We are facing the worst humanitarian crisis since the creation of the United Nations, since World War II. But the crisis that we are now facing is different. When the World Food Programme was created, it was about natural disasters and earthquakes and very select type wars. But today it is a whole different ballgame. It is no



longer just tsunamis and earthquakes and hurricanes and climate-impacted disasters, but it is also protracted wars and conflicts, 19 protracted areas of conflict; and, as Senator Merkley said, 80 to 82 percent of our expenditures now are in war zones.

It is a different ballgame, and it is not just war zones. It is war zones with extremism—ISIS, al-Shabab, Boko Haram, al-Qaeda. It is a whole different issue, because migration today out of these war zones brings about extremism.

If you would allow me to sort of cut through, I would really like to get down to what I think is the most serious issue of what we are facing: funding, of course. Yes, we need more funds. That is obvious, because we are facing so many crises. Why is this in the national interests of the United States, the security interest of America? Why is it in the national security interests of the European community?

This was the question that I posed to the Europeans at the Munich Security Conference just a couple of weeks ago. I said if you think you had a problem with the migration of a few million people out of a nation the size of Syria, a nation of 20 million people, you just wait until the Greater Sahel of 500 million people start heading your way.

I say that because of the reality of what we see on the ground. It is not just crises like we had before. It is a whole different ballgame. And if we do not get ahead of the curve, it will cost 10 to 100 times more, we know now, because of the failure to do the things that we needed to do in the past to provide the sustainable development to bring about the resilience that is needed in communities.

It is costing the global economy just last year alone 12 percent of the GDP. Fourteen trillion was the impact of global conflict. And to think that only the World Food Programme needed about \$18 billion.

So let us discuss a little bit of the reality of what we are facing, like in Syria, failure to get ahead of the curve, so to speak, 6 million people that we are feeding on any given day inside Syria, another 5 to 6 million that we are feeding on any given day outside of Syria. And because of the support of countries like the United States, it leads the world last year alone, because there were a lot of people around the world concerned that the United States would back down off its commitment in leading and providing international aid. But what I can say very proudly to leaders all over the world, the United States, Republicans and Democrats coming together clearly said to the world that we will continue to lead and we will provide the support necessary. And because of that, it is making a difference.

But when we do not work together strategically, we have the consequences and the fallout of places like Syria. What we do know based on our surveys and studies in Syria, for example—and this is typical of any other country in conflict today—for every 1 percent increase there is in hunger, there is a 2 percent increase in migration. And when we feed a Syrian in Syria, it is 50 cents a day, and that is almost twice what it would normally cost, but it is a war zone. The cost of feeding a Syrian in Berlin is 50 Euros a day, and the Syrian does not want to be in Berlin. They will actually move

three or four times inside Syria before they will actually leave their country, because they want to stay home. People do not want to migrate.

But the complication now is that when there is migration, there is also infiltration by ISIS or al-Qaeda, Boko Haram or al-Shabab. So now that ISIS has been moved out of Syria, well, guess where they are going? They are going to one of the most fragile areas in the world, in the Sahel, the Greater Sahel region, and now they are partnering. We know. We see this on the ground every day. When you feed 80 to 82 million people on any given day, you hear a lot and see a lot.

We are the world's experts on what is taking place out there, and ISIS is cutting deals, partnerships with Boko Haram and al-Shabab and al-Qaeda and ISIS all throughout the Greater Sahel region, with the purpose of infiltration for destabilization, taking advantage of corrupt governments, mismanaged governments, droughts, climate change, very fragile communities, with the hopes that through this destabilization there will be mass migration into Europe so there can be further chaos.

But while I will say that, let me also add that I am now very, very concerned about what is happening in Latin America and South America. Two days ago I was on the ground at the border of Venezuela and Colombia. It was heartbreaking to see what is taking place. What we are experiencing with the possibilities of the Greater Sahel are very well possibilities that could happen in the Western Hemisphere. Eighty percent of the people are food insecure in Venezuela. Fifty thousand people per day are crossing the border, just in Cucuta, per day. Over 4 million people have already left Venezuela in the last few years, 1 million this past year; 660,000 stayed inside Colombia.

The migration today is interesting because about 50,000 in Cucuta, probably 100,000 across the border of 2,200 kilometers, 50,000 will come across and about 90 percent will go back. But they are running out of food. It is not a money issue anymore. There is no food. So there is going to be a tipping point where the 50,000, the 100,000 that cross per day—sadly, the stories of prostitution of little girls and little boys, and men and young boys are signing up with the extremist groups, illegal armed groups, and the extremists of the right wing are trying to take advantage of this to try to destabilize Colombia, a nation that is doing its best to be a tremendous host community.

But if those 100,000 per day no longer start going back, you will see the serious potential of destabilizing the entire South American continent, and the implications for the United States and its neighbors to the north could be tragic. This is why I am so proud to see Republicans and Democrats, who might have differences on what the immigration policies should be, but to see them coming together to realize if we can address the root cause of the problems, then people will not want to move, and when they do, it is for all the right reasons.

Now, Senator, there is a lot I could add. I know we will answer some questions about some of the things that we are doing that will make a difference. It is not just about humanitarian dollars, how do we use every humanitarian dollar for a development oppor-

tunity. What can we do to change the course of time? What can we do to change the direction so that more nations work together and we have less silos? And how can the U.N. be more effective, and how can the United States Government be more effective working in conjunction with Germany, the U.K., Canada and other nations around the world? Because when we partner together in a cohesive way and collaborate together, we can solve anything on the face of the planet.

So, yes, we are going in the wrong direction. But I do believe if we get our act together and get to the root cause of these problems, we will save our children in such a way that there will be a brighter future.

Senator, Mr. Chairman, thank you. It is good to be here, and I will answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Beasley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID BEASLEY

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy and Environmental Policy, thank you for convening this hearing on “Why Food Security Matters.”

This is a truly important topic and I commend the bipartisan efforts of this committee and its able staff to explore the issue of how feeding hungry people contributes to the economic and national security interests of the United States.

Today, I will provide a briefing relevant to this topic, on the World Food Program’s efforts to bring peace and stability to troubled regions through not just short-term life-saving assistance, but also through a focus on long-term economic-development aid.

This brief is being provided on a voluntary basis and should not be understood to be a waiver, express or implied, of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its officials under the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

I am about to hit my one-year anniversary as the Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Program, the world’s leading humanitarian agency fighting hunger. Since I took office in April 2017, I’ve visited 36 countries. My travel falls into two basic categories: first, visits to donor countries to meet with leaders who help get us the funds we need to battle hunger and handle emergencies; and second, trips to where the real rubber meets the road—our operations that help feed 80 million people in 80 countries worldwide.

What I see happening out in the field is what I want to talk to you about this afternoon.

I’ve been to the four countries closest to famine: Yemen, South Sudan, northeast Nigeria and Somalia—all filled with hungry people because of man-made conflict. I’ve seen the wounds on the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. I’ve talked to those fleeing fighting in Central African Republic, and people desperate to return to their small farms in Democratic Republic of the Congo. I’ve visited hard-to-reach, war-torn areas of Syria and talked to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

The link between conflict and hunger is tragically strong. More conflict leads to more hunger. And it works the other way, too—persistent hunger creates the kind of instability that leads to more conflict.

Our fellow brothers and sisters pay the largest price for this repeating cycle. But nations, regions and continents do too.

Hunger and conflict destabilize and destroy. The inability to feed your family can force good people to face impossible choices—horrible choices. With no other options to put food on the table, you may take on considerable risk and move somewhere else. Or even more horrible choices, such as trading sex for food. Arranging an early marriage for your daughter—even though she’s still a child. Or joining a violent radical group. These are just a few of the extreme actions people may be forced to take when they have no other way to get food.

Hunger and conflict combine forces to create fertile ground for extremist groups to do even more damage.

We must do more to break this cycle. We must work together on a pro-active, strategic plan that creates stability and security. A plan that gives people hope that they can live and work and play in the place they truly call home.

Last month, I spoke at the Munich Security Conference, the most prominent gathering of national defense and security experts in the world. Discussions I had at this conference reinforced my view that it's time to stop thinking that national security, or global stability, can be achieved without effective humanitarian assistance. Fundamentally, as long as there is severe hunger, the world cannot reach genuine stability and security.

While security actors and humanitarians have different roles, their work is complementary. As German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen said in Munich, "security and development, joined together, create lasting stability."

If we don't work together, the consequences are catastrophic. We'll have more hunger, we'll have more conflict, we'll see stronger extremist groups and forced migration will increase to numbers I believe we've never seen. And because of all this, I believe the United States and other leading powers will need to deploy their military forces at a greater rate and a much greater cost than they would have ever had to, if we'd just worked together more to achieve food security.

#### STATE OF FOOD SECURITY

In 2016, the last year for which figures are available, the number of chronically hungry people in the world went up for the first time in a decade—to 815 million, from 777 million the year before.

And 108 million people—up from 80 million the year before—are acutely hungry. These are people who need emergency assistance because they have no other way to get the food they need to stay alive.

Conflict is to blame for nearly all this rise in hunger. Ten out of the 13 largest hunger crises in the world are conflict-driven and today fighting and violence drives over 80 percent of all humanitarian needs.

In fact, some of the people I meet are more desperate for peace than they are for food. Just about every conflict-laden area I visit, the people we are feeding ask for help in creating peace.

These conflict areas are home, unfortunately, to 60 percent of the food insecure people around the world. And the consequences of conflict and hunger are most severe on children. Hunger, malnutrition and poor health often lead to stunting—a phrase used to describe severely impaired growth in these young bodies. Three out of every four stunted children in the world lives in a conflict area.

#### INSTABILITY

This vast link between food insecurity and conflict contributes to other serious issues within these nations.

As your colleague and my friend Senator Pat Roberts says: "Show me a nation that cannot feed itself, and I'll show you a nation in chaos."

Broadly, as our affiliate WFP-USA reports in "Winning the Peace: Hunger and Instability," research shows that food insecurity produces instability, and instability produces food insecurity.

It's not surprising that just about every country near the bottom of the World Bank's Political Stability Index has a high degree of food insecurity and near-constant conflict within its borders.

Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic . . . the list goes on. They are all plagued by violence and home to millions of hungry people.

The world spent \$27 billion on humanitarian assistance in 2016—but almost half of it went to just four conflict-laden countries: Syria, Iraq, Yemen and South Sudan. Forty-four other countries got the rest. In some cases, what they received covered as little as five percent of the total need.

Even small improvements in stability would make a difference for the humanitarian budget. For example, if the Somalia could improve just enough to be as stable as Kenya, WFP alone would save a total of \$80.3 million a year in food assistance costs.

There are countries in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Ghana and Botswana where humanitarian assistance is zero. And, not surprisingly, those countries have no conflict and much lower food insecurity.

If we are truly going to get to stability, we need peaceful resolution of conflicts. But at a very minimum, warring parties must commit to observe International Humanitarian Law, protect civilians and allow free-passage of humanitarian goods and services to reach those in need.

## THE THREAT FROM EXTREMISM

The conditions that lead to instability are like fertilizer for violent extremism. Extremist groups are always looking for new foot soldiers and hunger makes their recruiting efforts far too easy.

As the United Nations Development Programme said in a report last year, “where there is injustice, deprivation and desperation, violent extremist ideologies present themselves as a challenge to the status quo and a form of escape.”

Sometimes, it’s even simpler than that. These extremist groups sometimes present themselves as the only way to survive. One woman in Syria told our researchers, “The men had to join extremist groups to be able to feed us. It was the only option.”

Perhaps the most prominent example of how a hunger crisis played into the hands of extremists came in 2011 in Somalia, where drought, a food price spike and civil war converged in a famine that killed a quarter of a million people.

It has been documented by researchers that during this time, al-Shabaab was keeping humanitarians from getting to hungry people and it was even offering money to enlist in its movement. One U.N. official called the famine “a boon” for al-Shabaab’s recruitment efforts.

The African people are paying the price of this extremism. Secretary of State Tillerson noted last week that terrorist attacks in Africa have risen; there were less than 300 in 2009, but in the last 3 years there were more than 1,500 of them each year.

It would be wrong to suggest that all—or even most—hungry people are violent or immediately given to violent extremism. But we have seen how hunger, marginalization, and frustration are capable of driving people—especially youth—into insurgencies and extremist organizations.

The failure to meet the needs of these people serves to foster further frustration, increasing the pool of candidates who feel forced by need and desperation to join these movements, leading to increased food insecurity from violence and economic disruptions, completing the circle.

People should not have to choose between feeding their family or resorting to violent extremism—we have the tools through food assistance to eliminate that awful choice. Food assistance through WFP and other U.S. partners can save lives and create the space and time necessary to arrive at political solutions that avoid or end these conflicts.

It is also very important to note that the World Food Program is fully committed to humanitarian law and its principles. We do not take sides in conflicts; we feed the hungry and vulnerable wherever they are.

But we are “on” the side of security and stability . . . of conditions that make it possible for people to feel safe . . . safe enough to know they can live with their families in peace and with enough food.

## MIGRATION PRESSURE

Food insecurity and instability also clearly lead to more migration. Our own research shows that for each 1 percent increase in hunger, there is a 2 percent increase in migration.

The refugees and asylum seekers are moving because they feel they have no choice. None of them really want to move. Nearly every single Syrian we talked to in our report, “At the Root of Exodus” said they wanted to go back to Syria if and when it was secure and stable at home. And the research shows that people displaced by violence in Syria, for example, will not move out of the country until they have moved at least three times inside the country.

They want to stay home. Badly. Here’s what one said: “Lots of people would rather die in Syria than be a refugee somewhere else.”

It doesn’t surprise me: people want to stay with their families, with familiar surroundings, in the place they call home. Sometimes they will stay at great risk to their own personal safety.

But sometimes there’s a tipping point.

When humanitarian assistance was cut in mid-2015 in Syria, asylum applications to Europe spiked from 10,000 a month to 60,000 a month. The risk of moving became lower than the risk of staying.

We’re seeing this kind of risk calculation now being made in Africa. The danger of crossing the Mediterranean is great, but so is the danger from conflict, hunger and extreme poverty—the established triggers of migration.

Data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees shows that in 2016, 730,000 people from Africa came to Europe as refugees or asylum seekers. That’s more than double the 360,000 who came in 2010.

Some of the largest increases came from countries in the Sahel or sub-Saharan Africa—Eritrea, Somalia, Nigeria and Gambia. Asylum seekers and refugees also came from other countries in dire straits—the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, for example.

Much of the burden for migration does not actually fall on wealthier nations—86 percent of refugees worldwide are hosted by developing countries.

When the refugees do move to places like Europe, though, it dramatically increases the cost of providing humanitarian assistance. For example, it costs about 50 cents per day to provide food to someone who is internally displaced within Syria—still one of the most expensive places for humanitarian assistance.

But if that same person becomes a refugee in Germany, the German people spend 50 Euros per day on social support programs. It's not quite an apples-to-apples comparison because the German assistance includes more than just food, but the gap is so large that it is still a valid illustration of how much cheaper it would be if we can easily and effectively reach people where they want to be—their own homeland.

#### AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

Most of the countries in Africa, including those in the Sahel region, have abundant natural resources, plenty of arable land and young populations available to work.

As Secretary Tillerson noted last week, by the year 2030, Africa will represent about one-quarter of the world's workforce. And the World Bank estimates that six of the ten fastest growing economies in the world this year will be African.

But also present in Africa is government neglect and corruption, high amounts of food insecurity, near-constant conflict in some countries, climate-related challenges such as droughts, and in some cases, active violent ideological extremist groups.

In the five countries at the core of the Sahel—Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Mali and Mauritania, acute malnutrition has risen 30 percent in the past 5 years.

Because of these conditions, a toxic wind blows from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. And we've got to have a better, more targeted and effective strategy to deal with it. If we don't, the migration that could come would make the Syrian refugee crisis look like a picnic.

#### THE HUMANITARIAN-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

In some of these areas, food has become a weapon of war. Access to food is blocked, in part to subjugate other combatants. And in some cases, as I mentioned, it's become a recruitment tool for groups.

But I believe food can be a weapon of peace. And it shouldn't be just food.

What is needed is a properly funded, coordinated strategic plan—one that involves work from other U.N. agencies, NGOs and national governments alike. It should be implemented over the long-term and grounded in international humanitarian law and principles.

This work could ensure true stability in the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa.

True stability would mean having the conditions that help a family, a community, a region take care of itself. Of course, that starts with food. It has to, because nothing else can happen when everyone's hungry. But it also means schools and water and roads and governance and a dozen other things.

Simply feeding people and handling emergencies just isn't enough for long-term success. I do not mean to discount those tasks. Food assistance is definitely the starting point for any long-term program, and without food assistance now, we would have several countries in famine right now.

But the true task ahead requires more than saving lives, it requires changing them.

A WFP program in Niger is already showing how this works. Since 2014, we have been working with several partner organizations to help more than 250,000 in about 35 communes, or towns, with a multi-sector approach that builds resilience and stability.

Among other family assistance aspects, the programs include:

- Land regeneration and water harvesting
- Working with women's groups to plant tree nurseries and community gardens
- School meals through community gardens

Internal and external research show very positive results from this effort. Agriculture productivity in these communes has doubled and in some cases tripled. Because of increased land vegetation—up to as much as 80 percent in some areas—there is less invasion of animals onto agricultural lands. Those animal invasions

onto someone else's farmland contribute to inter-communal violence, so that reduction is an important part of social cohesion. And finally, young men are migrating less, instead staying home to work in the fields and provide stability for their community's future.

Thanks to this success, we are now developing a "transition strategy" for some households, helping them move to host-government and/or partner safety net programs because they will no longer need WFP's help.

We are encouraging donor governments to work more directly with us in these kind of programs, instead of doing them in isolation, so we can achieve these results on a larger scale.

For example, in 2016, we had 10 million people in 52 countries in Food Assistance for Assets programs. They were building roads, planting trees, and working on irrigation, water ponds and other agriculture-related projects. The projects not only gave them hope but enabled them to build up their own communities.

Another key component of this pro-development strategy starts younger—with school children.

In 2016, we directly fed 16 million children with school meals in 60 countries, and we gave support that enabled food for another 45 million children.

It's enormously cost-effective—on average, WFP spends \$50 to feed a child in school for an entire year. That means, on average, we spend 25 cents per meal—just 10 percent of the average cost of a school meal in the United States.

There's something truly important about this school feeding program that's more than just the food and how cheap we can get it to the lunch table.

For some parents, the food is the reason they send their child to school. It's assurance that they will indeed be fed.

And I think it does more than that. Those children sit down, and talk, and laugh together while eating. I think that time helps these children see each other as people. That meal binds them together. And when they're older, those bonds are harder to break.

Just this week, I received a note from Hatem Ben Salem, the Minister of Education in Tunisia that discussed how help from WFP is putting school meals at the heart of education reform in his country. These reforms are designed to keep children in school, a key part of that country's efforts to improve stability.

But what impressed me most was the Minister's "warm memory" of his own experience with school meals as a child.

"Lunchtime at school offered an opportunity for children from diverse backgrounds, rich and poor, to sit around a table and share a hot meal. The image of the two hands shaking, which portrayed the support and solidarity of the American people through USAID, is still in my memory as a symbol of equality of opportunity and social cohesion in my country," he wrote.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I'd like to submit the note from Hatem Ben Salem for the hearing record.

The minister's memory reminds me of my own childhood, in a little town called Lamar, South Carolina. It was a tense, controversial time back then, in the early 1970s, when schools were being desegregated across the South.

I stayed in the public schools, because my parents strongly believed in the power of public education. And like a lot of kids, I played sports. Most of my friends did too, and a lot of times they'd stop at our house for dinner as they walked home from practice.

I remember learning that that meal, courtesy of my mother's Southern cooking, was one of two that some of my teammates would have that day. The other would be the lunch provided to them for free in school.

Every so often, I run into one of those teammates when I'm back home. We see each other as old friends, regardless of our faith traditions or what our skin color is or who we voted for in the last election.

A meal cannot solve all of society's problems, but my experience, and the experience of Minister Ben Salem, suggests that it is fundamental and does have power to bridge barriers. So, my big dream is to make sure that every child who gets assistance from WFP gets in a school meals program. And every able-bodied beneficiary is in a food-for-assets program.

#### BREAKING DOWN BUREAUCRACY

One of the biggest challenges we have is the siloed nature of not just the U.N., but our donors as well. Those of us in the U.N. can take some blame for not doing a good enough job of breaking out of boxes. There's too much worrying about who will get the credit.

We are also trying to break down barriers between donor countries, so money that comes to WFP can encourage, not discourage, long-term strategic planning and execution. More than 90 percent of the money we get is earmarked, not just for specific countries, but specific activities within them. So, for example, in many cases we can't build roads to connect farmers to markets, even if we have the qualified teams who could do just that.

The United States has long been in a leader in delivering flexible funding—it is by far and away our most flexible donor. I commend the leadership of President Trump's Administration, including my friends Sonny Perdue, the Secretary of Agriculture, and Mark Green, USAID Administrator.

#### WE ARE YOUR OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

My hope for the near future is that those who work hard on security issues can draw more attention to the role fighting hunger can play in reducing security threats. This is happening on the international front, for example, as the Netherlands and Switzerland are pursuing Security Council attention on hunger.

Global military spending is now at \$2 trillion a year, but I believe that food and other essential humanitarian assistance can also be a very cost-effective way of creating stability. Or as Secretary of Defense Mattis has said, effective humanitarian assistance means he needs to buy fewer bullets.

The humanitarian and security sectors are of course different, with different roles. But we are united in the desire for peace and stability. And I believe that our work at WFP—along with bags of food stamped, “from the American People”—makes the work of others easier—and less dangerous.

Our work towards Zero Hunger is a way to be on offense, because it paves the way for those in the security sector to set different priorities, maybe even moving out of some countries or regions.

And if we can truly achieve Zero Hunger, we will be the best defense for the nations of the world. We'll create stability that reduces the risk of conflict.

We'll be doing it for people like Nyalam, and her 3-month-old girl named Rejoice, whom I met when I was in South Sudan last year. She said, “I would like God to touch the hearts of the people who are fighting so they can live in peace and allow us to live in peace. Because we really don't know what they are fighting for.”

I want Nyalam and her little girl to be able to live, go to school, work their fields and pursue their dreams. If we can help them do that, we'll truly be saving lives and changing lives. And it will help everyone, around the world.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Governor, for setting the table there with that compelling testimony.

You discuss the cost of providing humanitarian assistance when you have refugees leaving the Middle East, the Sahel, and traveling to Europe, and how those costs increase when you had this instability, these refugee flows.

Can you provide some additional details on this and discuss the policy implications of this cost on receiving countries, if you would?

Mr. BEASLEY. Well, multiple ways, but just as I was mentioning earlier, for example, in the Syrian war, the cost of feeding a Syrian in Syria is about 50 cents per day. Normally it is about 30 cents per day in non-conflict zones, but as you can imagine the increased cost and security of delivering food in war zones is quite extraordinary. And I must add my admiration for the men and women that work inside the World Food Programme and those we partner with. They put their lives out, as you well know, every single day, whether it is Syria or Yemen or South Sudan or northeast Nigeria or Somalia, where you have tremendous conflict and desperate situations.

But the 50 cents per day versus 50 Euros per day for a full humanitarian cost when you get into declared refugee status. So when you look at the implications of the cost factor and the impact it has on nations, and particularly when you consider that most nations that are impacted are not the wealthy nations, because most refugees end up in other poor nations; when you look at South



Sudan, you have over a million refugees in Uganda, in Ethiopia, in Rwanda; or in the Myanmar crisis, they are in Bangladesh, and the list goes on. This is the problem when you have, for example, the country of Colombia. The country of Colombia has made so much progress in the past 15 years on peace, but now you see every bit of that progress has the potential of being destabilized because of this extraordinary influx of folks.

Senator YOUNG. So you and I have discussed this before. Most of these individuals, they do not want to leave their homes, they do not want to leave their home countries. Correct?

Mr. BEASLEY. Correct.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. So they are driven out. Does it make some sense, in light of the increased cost and in light of the desires of these refugees alike, for the American taxpayer to be thinking about, gosh, how do we prevent this situation? How do we help these vulnerable people on the front end as opposed to the back end?

Mr. BEASLEY. Effective humanitarian assistance and development programs save not just money but save lives, and it is in the national security interests of the American people and the Europeans.

Senator, I see this every day. I can tell you story after story of talking to women whose husbands had to sign up with ISIS or al-Shabab or Boko Haram or al-Qaeda. Why? Because they had no food. You see, the extremists, the terrorist groups, will use food as a weapon of recruitment, a weapon of war. We see food as a weapon of peace or a weapon of reconciliation, of building bridges. So if you cannot feed your little girl in 2 weeks and the only show in town is a terrorist group, so many men have signed up because they have no other alternative, and the costs will be 10 to 100 times what it would be if we did it right and got ahead of the curve and provided sustainable development.

Senator YOUNG. So we need timely, we need effective, we need sufficient resources to be brought to bear to deal with this issue.

You alluded to the siloed nature of our donor system. I would like you perhaps to elaborate on that. I know the World Food Programme, per your testimony, is trying to break down these barriers between donor countries so that the money that comes in can encourage, not discourage, long-term strategic planning and execution. But maybe you can share with us, all those who are watching here, what barriers exist between donor countries and how we might play a constructive role—Senator Merkley, myself, and others on the committee—to encourage better coordination among donors.

Mr. BEASLEY. One of the advantages of having been a United States governor, like you, you see a problem—how do we solve it? Now, what programs do we have? Sometimes, as you well know, programs have been defined based in the '60s and the '70s, with little flexibility. And because the problems that we face today are different, tremendously different, we need more flexibility to be able to achieve the objectives.

So we see, for example, every particular food recipient, a beneficiary out in any given country, and it is a non-short-term emergency, like a hurricane or an earthquake or something like that,

because now there are protracted conflicts. But how can we use every humanitarian dollar as a development opportunity?

For example, last year, just last year alone, we had over 10 million people engaged in a food-for-asset or food-for-work type of program whereby they were building roads, over 7,000 miles of roads last year, bridges, irrigation ponds, 5,400 ponds and irrigation facilities, just like in Kenya alone, 330,000 acres of land rehabilitated. This was just last year. In the Tigre area a few years ago we rehabilitated with beneficiaries approximately 1 million acres. Now, if you go to that area, money well spent, it is no longer vulnerable to extremist groups. It is resilient. They have crops. They have livelihoods. And they are no longer dependent on international support. That is the type of aid; that is the type of strategic thinking.

But it is not just a U.S. issue. I believe we need to give greater flexibility within the programs of the United States Government, but also the United Nations has to be more flexible as well, and at the same time other major donor countries have got to be more flexible.

I do believe, and I have clearly stated this to leaders in other countries, that the major donors need to collaborate in a more holistic, comprehensive approach so that we do not have competing programs that sometimes these governments will take advantage of that diminishes the opportunities for success with limited dollars. But I do believe if we can have the food for asset type of approach, because if you do not have food security, you are not going to have anything else. I mean, the migration, the conflict, the chaos, it all starts with food security. And if people can eat, they will stay home, and young boys and girls will stay home with a brighter future. We see that every day in the World Food Programme.

Senator YOUNG. And to ensure that people can eat, I think your emphasis on flexibility is certainly merited, especially this statistic that you offered in your written testimony, that more than 90 percent of the money that the World Food Programme receives is earmarked not just for specific countries but for specific activities within them. I do not have anything to benchmark that against, but that strikes me as very high.

Mr. BEASLEY. Well, the more flexibility we have, that gives us the ability to pre-position and truly design the programs with the right modalities. These countries differ. In certain countries you want to be bringing commodities, and in certain countries you want to have a voucher type of system to stimulate the local market. So how do we do that so we can have farm to asset or farm to market alliances and create economic viabilities in countries, versus just coming in and bringing food aid in whatever capacity it may be?

We know when we can come in and try to align it with economic viability and opportunities for small-farm holders, it is a tremendous opportunity. For example, last year with the United States, out of the \$7 billion that we raised this past year, \$2.5 billion came from the United States. Just last year alone, we actually purchased \$350 million worth of food from small-holder farmers inside Africa, helping stimulate and grow the economy so that they could have sustainability and resilience.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. I am very struck by your vast knowledge from this past year of visiting so many parts of the world, the conflict zones, areas affected by drought, all kinds of things, and I understand there is an opening in the Secretary of State's office.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BEASLEY. Senator, if this hearing goes more than an hour—

[Laughter.]

Senator MERKLEY. I wanted to focus on a statistic you mentioned. If I heard it right, 50 cents a day to provide meals, so roughly the equivalent of 15 cents per meal. I do not think people realize how much bang for the buck occurs in—

Mr. BEASLEY. And that is in a war zone. It is actually 31 cents in a non-war zone.

Senator MERKLEY. Yes. And you also mentioned Myanmar. In Myanmar, we do not have drought. We did not even have a civil war. But we had actions of a government that decided to essentially assault one of its own minority groups in a massive way. I am not sure how we could have prevented that, but I do think that the international community needs to respond vociferously to discourage other dictators from deciding to take action against unpopular groups. I hope that our government and many governments in the U.N. will speak up ferociously about that.

You used a phrase that, while we may see food as an instrument of peace, for many it is a weapon of war. If I was taking a look at Somalia, there we have al-Shabab that used a food shortage in 2011 to boost its recruitment from the local population by providing salaries and cash payments while restricting the humanitarian aid that was coming in from outside. We see all sorts of other things, including al-Shabab putting taxes on the foreign aid workers who are delivering food.

As you see these developments where hostile groups are blocking food—and my colleague made a really concerted point of that in terms of humanitarian relief in Yemen—or you see other strategies that involve trying to block food from getting to people to starve out the opponent, et cetera, what sorts of things should we be thinking about as an international community to try to respond to those tactics?

Mr. BEASLEY. Senator, because it is different than 30 or 40 years ago—and let me say thank you to this committee because I do believe that because of the efforts of the men and women on this committee, that we had tremendous change in course of direction in Yemen. The Saudis, UAE, and others, the support and cooperation that is taking place in the last couple of months has been a dramatic improvement in terms of that part of the war.

Now, unfortunately, from the Houthi side, it has gotten worse. Our access has gotten more complicated, and, not to go into all the details, but we are really struggling getting the access we need to the people that are very vulnerable throughout a country whereby almost—we are feeding about 7 million people on any given day, and 18 million of the 27 million are very food insecure. It is a desperate situation.

But because of the United States and support of some allies like the U.K., we have made great progress with Saudi Arabia and UAE. Now we need to bring the pressure on the Houthis to give us access we need.

In places where you have Boko Haram or al-Shabab or ISIS and al-Qaeda, they use food in multiple ways. One, they block access so that food cannot get to the area. Then they will use food for recruitment. What is very critical—we are neutral, as you well know. We are a neutral entity in all regards. I would highly advise in this very complicated area that we need to make certain that we can safely move food, and there needs to be a security and safety component that goes along with these very fragile and vulnerable areas.

As I was mentioning earlier, whether you are talking about Somalia, where al-Shabab is primarily engaged now, and more fragile Ethiopia, particularly in the Somali region of Ethiopia, and then go all the way to the Greater Sahel area, people will talk about the Sahel. Well, the Greater Sahel, which is about 500 million people, from Nigeria and the Red Sea all the way to the Atlantic, you are talking about an extraordinarily complex and very fragile area that I am extremely concerned about in so many ways.

ISIS, who has moved primarily down into this region, are partnering and cutting deals with Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria in the Lake Chad Basin, taking advantage of the drought and the fragile conditions, and this is also being compounded—and this is really hard to believe. No matter what you may think of what is causing the weather to change, we all know it is changing. We all know the impact that is taking place in this Greater Sahel region.

For example, when I was meeting with the Minister of Agriculture from Nigeria last week, he told me that in the Niger-Mali area, that border area, each year 1.5 kilometers of what was grazing territory is lost to sand, per year. Now, what does that mean? It may not seem to be that big of a deal, except guess what? The herders are moving down 1.5 kilometers per year into the croplands, and the wars and the conflicts and the killings are absolutely amazing. Couple that with ISIS and Boko Haram taking advantage of this fragility, just like what we are seeing in Venezuela, it is an absolute perfect storm heading our way.

Of course, we know what the extremist groups want to do. They want to be able to infiltrate the migrants so they can destabilize the global economy in Europe and the U.S. So it is in the national security interests of the American people, and it will save lives and save money, if we get ahead of the curve and do the things we need to do to provide the resilience necessary, Senator.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. I thank you for all your testimony, Mr. Executive Director. I would only close by noting that you have indicated that there is a need for a proactive and strategic plan to help us create security and stability. Since we are, respectively, Chairman and Ranking Member of the Multilateral Institutions Subcommittee here, I think it appropriate that maybe offline we dialogue with you and your team about how we might constitute such

a strategic plan or catalyze the creation of one, because that seems to make a lot of sense.

So, thank you so much for your testimony, and that will conclude our first panel.

Mr. BEASLEY. Thank you, Senator.

Senator YOUNG. I would like to welcome you again to the subcommittee, Mr. Nims. You serve as the Acting Director of the Office of Food for Peace at USAID. This is your second time to testify before the subcommittee, and we are so appreciative of the time you give us. Your full written statement will be included in the record.

We are dealing with a somewhat compressed timeframe, which explains why we are moving quickly between panels. We are very interested to hear from all of our witnesses. So I welcome you to go ahead and summarize your written statement in about 5 minutes, sir.

**STATEMENT OF MATTHEW NIMS, ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF FOOD FOR PEACE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. NIMS. Thank you, Chairman Young and Ranking Member Merkley, and members and other people here today, for the invitation to speak with you about the link between global food security and America's economic prosperity. I am honored to be here and honored to be on the panel with such esteemed colleagues, as well as to be following my good friend, Governor David Beasley.

I am Matthew Nims, Acting Director of USAID's Office of Food for Peace, the largest provider of food assistance in the world. Last year, Food for Peace reached nearly 70 million people in 53 countries.

We provide food assistance because it eases human suffering, as you said, and represents America's compassion and generosity. Helping feed those around the world in their greatest time of need is the right thing to do but also makes America and her allies safer. Hunger and conflict are linked. Where hunger persists, instability grows. The opposite is also true: where conflict occurs, hunger often follows. Food for Peace is uniquely positioned to tackle hunger in both of these situations.

The U.S. National Security Strategy states, "We will partner with our allies to alleviate the worst poverty and suffering which fuels instability." History has proven this to be true. In 2010, hunger was a catalyst to the Arab Spring, and today in Venezuela, as the Governor just talked about, economic instability has made food and other basic supplies unaffordable and even unavailable, which in turn has led to growing civil unrest. Where there is conflict, hunger is often a symptom. Conflict prevents farmers from planting and harvesting crops, robbing them of their livelihoods and later robbing others of food to eat. Conflict prevents people from traveling to and from markets, making the food that is available inaccessible to some. Over time, conflict prevents people from living full, healthy lives because they are weakened from lack of food and fall victim to preventable illness.

I just returned from Uganda, where I saw the effects of more than 1.4 million refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Burundi who have all come to Uganda to seek

shelter. The sheer number of refugees is an enormous burden for a host country that already struggles with its own poverty and hunger. But Uganda is still thriving, with good agricultural production, infrastructure development, and good roads, things that can only really flourish when there is peace. It was a stark contrast to my visit to South Sudan last year, where I have seen the effects the war has had, truly draining the economy.

Conflict forces millions of people to make choices no one should have to face: stay where they are and starve or head into unknown danger to find food. We see this today in places like Yemen, South Sudan and Nigeria, and Somalia, where people are dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival. For 3 years, conflict in Yemen has hampered commercial trade in a country that imports 90 percent of its food. As a result, 17.8 million people, the largest number in the world, still face severe food insecurity.

The years of violence in South Sudan have transformed the world's youngest nation into the world's most food insecure. Famine was declared a year ago. A robust international humanitarian response rolled back the famine 4 months later, but conflict continues, and famine once again is a risk.

In northeast Nigeria, Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa have displaced millions. Violence, including deliberate attacks on and continued kidnapping of civilians and aid workers, prevents relief groups from reaching the most vulnerable communities.

While drought is a primary driver of hunger in Somalia, violence also prevents relief groups from reaching some populations; 2.7 million Somalis face significant hunger right now.

These are not the only countries facing crises. The humanitarian system is enormously strained. Tomorrow, March 15, marks the seventh anniversary, 7 years, of the conflict in Syria, which has left 10.5 million people unable to meet basic needs. Last August, violence in Burma forced more than half-a-million Rohingya refugees to flee to Bangladesh. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, nearly 7.7 million experience extreme hunger due to prolonged conflict and widespread poverty.

In 2018, 76 million people worldwide will need emergency food assistance. Over half of our humanitarian funding will likely go to six emergencies, nearly all conflict driven. The work we do in conflict areas is harder, more expensive, and more dangerous. Last year, 131 aid workers died primarily in conflict areas, and numerous more were harassed, attacked, and kidnapped.

Large, protracted, conflict-driven crises are our new normal, and USAID needs all the tools possible at its disposal to respond.

Nutritious food is essential where there is high malnutrition. So in places like Bangladesh, we use American-made therapeutic food. For Syrian refugees, who live in urban environments where markets function, electronic vouchers and cash transfers make the most sense and have the most impact. Such flexibility enables us to save the most lives possible and use taxpayer dollars wisely.

Through our resilience programs and in coordination with other parts of USAID, we also work proactively to tackle the underlying causes of hunger which, left unchecked, can lead to frustration and despair that can be exploited. These long-term programs are essential to saving lives and livelihoods, growing national and regional

economies, and diminishing the unsustainable financial burden of recurring humanitarian spending.

A food-secure world where people are not worried about their children going to bed hungry is in the U.S. interest. Stability helps ward off future conflict, and prosperity opens new markets for U.S. exports and trade.

Thank you for your attention to this and the continued support Congress has provided to USAID and specifically our humanitarian programs over the years.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nims follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MATTHEW NIMS

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to speak with you today about the importance of food assistance and the link between global food security and America's economic prosperity and national security. I am grateful you are drawing attention to this subject and especially for your history of support for humanitarian efforts to help the world's most vulnerable people.

I am Matthew Nims, Acting Director of USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP), the largest provider of food assistance in the world. We use a range of tools, including U.S. commodities, locally and regionally procured food, food vouchers, cash transfers and other complementary activities, to reach the world's most food insecure with life-saving assistance. Last year, our food assistance reached more than 70 million people in 53 countries.

We provide food assistance because it eases human suffering and represents our core American values of compassion and generosity. Helping feed those around the world in their time of need is the right thing to do but also makes America and her allies safer. Hunger and conflict are inextricably linked. Where hunger persists, instability grows. The opposite is also true: where conflict occurs, hunger follows.

The President's national security strategy states that America should target threats at their source, catalyze international response to man-made and natural disasters and provide to those in need. As the 2016 Global Food Security Act states, "It is in the national interest of the United States to promote global food security." A food-secure world where people are not worried about their children going to bed hungry is in the U.S. interest: stability helps ward off future conflict and prosperity opens new markets for U.S. exports and trade.

HUNGER CONTRIBUTES TO CONFLICT

In November 2015, the National Intelligence Council linked hunger to political instability and conflict. The report stated that "the risk of food insecurity in many countries will increase during the next 10 years and declining food security will almost certainly contribute to social disruptions and large-scale political instability or conflict." Ten years have not passed, but this prediction has likely already proven true.

Hunger often serves as a measurable warning signal for predicting conflict. According to the 2014 Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, "food and nutrition insecurity in weakly governed countries might also provide opportunities for insurgent groups to capitalize on poor conditions, exploit international food aid, and discredit governments for their inability to address basic needs." In every year since, food security has been mentioned at least once in the assessments. The Fund for Peace Fragile States Index also uses food and nutrition as an indicator of fragile states. In 2017, FFP operated in all of the top 10 countries listed in the fragility report and 21 of the top 25.

Events over the last decade demonstrate that acute hunger can trigger political instability. In 2008, food prices spiked and sparked riots and street demonstrations in more than 40 countries around the world, and may have contributed to toppling governments in Haiti and Madagascar. In 2010–2011, the first signs of the Arab Spring were riots in the streets of Tunisia over dramatic increases in food prices. Spikes in food prices in Algeria and Egypt triggered similar demonstrations. Hunger was by no means the sole cause of the Arab Spring, but it was an important catalyst.

Our own U.S. National Security Strategy states, "We will partner with our allies to alleviate the worst poverty and suffering, which fuels instability." Tackling the root causes of hunger and malnutrition—and thus potential drivers of conflict—is

essential to breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and laying the foundation for stable, inclusive growth. Equipping communities—especially women and children—with the tools to feed themselves mitigates extremely costly humanitarian assistance.

Through Feed the Future, USAID also supports long term food security programs that address the root causes of hunger in areas of chronic crisis to build resilience and food security of local communities. USAID's long-term development activities save lives and livelihoods, grow national and regional economies, and diminish the unsustainable financial burden of recurrent humanitarian spending in the same places. A 2013 U.K. study estimates that every \$1 invested in resilience will result in \$3 in reduced humanitarian assistance needs and avoided losses over 15 years. A more recent USAID study confirms this estimated return, proving true the adage 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.'

President Trump has said that economic security is national security; USAID's development activities are both. Our work not only helps to stabilize countries, it also creates new friends and allies, and new customers for American goods.

#### CONFLICT CONTRIBUTES TO HUNGER

Conflict causes enormous social and economic devastation, and hunger is one of its first symptoms. Conflict prevents farmers from planting and harvesting crops, robbing them of their livelihoods and later robbing others of food to eat. Conflict prevents people from traveling to and from markets, making the food that is available inaccessible to some. Over time, conflict prevents people from living full, healthy lives because they are weakened from lack of food and fall victim to preventable illness. We see this clearly today in places like Yemen, South Sudan and besieged areas of Syria.

Around the world, hunger driven by conflict forces millions of people to face a choice no one should have to face: Stay where they are and starve, or run for their lives in search of food. They leave their families and friends behind and head into unknown danger to find food. More than 65 million people are estimated to be displaced within their own countries or are refugees in other countries—an unprecedented number. Whether they stay in their own country or seek hope by crossing a border, those displaced by conflict are often dependent on humanitarian assistance to survive.

#### SYRIA

Tomorrow, March 15th, marks the seventh anniversary of the conflict in Syria, which began with protests after President Bashar al-Assad failed to produce promised legislative reforms. This conflict has left 10.5 million people in Syria unable to meet basic needs—1.5 million more than 2017. Food prices have risen 800 percent since the conflict began. Displacement and lack of employment have pushed 85 percent of the country into poverty. Households are cutting back food consumption, spending savings and accumulating debt—actions that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations, especially children.

Neighboring countries—Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey—today host 5.5 million Syrian refugees who in many cases lack legal pathways to work and depend on emergency food assistance. This strains host communities as they continue to bear the enormous cost of providing for these refugees.

So far in FY 2018, USAID, through the Office of Food for Peace, has provided nearly \$198 million to support efforts reaching approximately 2.35 million beneficiaries inside Syria and another one million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries each month. Inside Syria, our partners provide flour to bakeries, monthly household food parcels, ready-to-eat rations for recently displaced populations, and food vouchers. For Syrian refugees, FFP provides electronic food vouchers for use in supermarkets and local markets.

#### YEMEN

Conflict in Yemen has been ongoing for 3 years. Fighting has hampered commercial trade, which is devastating in a country that traditionally has imported 90 percent of its food and most of its fuel and medicine. Food that does make it to market is increasingly expensive, with some items doubling in price as supplies dwindle. These price increases dramatically affect the amount of food people can buy, while inconsistent payment of civil servant salaries reduces the amount of money families have to spend on food and other essentials.

As a result, 17.8 million people in Yemen are experiencing hunger, by far the largest food security emergency in the world. Yemen continues to face the risk of outright famine because—in a worst case scenario—the conflict could halt imports, dis-



rupt trade and virtually stop our humanitarian assistance from reaching the populations who need it.

We have contributed \$130 million this fiscal year to support the U.N. World Food Program emergency food assistance operations in Yemen, helping WFP reach 7 million people each month. We also provided UNICEF with American-made therapeutic nutritional products to treat children experiencing severe acute malnutrition and to support coordination efforts among humanitarian actors in Yemen.

In addition to directly providing food, USAID is helping improve access to food. On January 15, four USAID-supported mobile cranes arrived at Al Hudaydah Port and were first used on February 9. The cranes, each able to lift up to 60 tons, will bolster port capacity and speed the unloading of cargo, increasing the flow of goods to vulnerable populations.

#### SOUTH SUDAN

Years of violence in South Sudan has transformed the world's youngest nation into one of the world's most food-insecure nations. Despite collaborative humanitarian efforts to stave off famine throughout the conflict, famine was declared in parts of the country in February 2017. While a robust international humanitarian response—including U.S. efforts—did help roll back the famine 4 months later, food security continues to deteriorate across the country. This man-made crisis is a direct consequence of prolonged political conflict that ignores the urgent needs of the South Sudanese people. The failure reach a lasting political settlement makes the return of famine a real risk in the coming months.

In January 2018, nearly half of South Sudan's population—5.3 million people—required life-saving food assistance. The United States is the single largest donor to the South Sudan crisis response and our food reaches an average of 1.4 million people inside South Sudan every month.

#### NIGERIA

Years of conflict perpetuated by Boko Haram and more recently ISIS-West Africa, have triggered a humanitarian crisis in northeast Nigeria and surrounding countries in the Lake Chad Basin region. As of February 2018, the insurgency had displaced more than 1.6 million people within Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states and forced over 214,000 Nigerians to flee into neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger, leaving millions more across the region in need of humanitarian assistance. A combination of diminishing household food supplies, rising food prices and declining purchasing power is leaving more families without enough to eat.

Violence—including deliberate attacks and continued kidnapping of civilians and aid workers—prevents relief groups from reaching vulnerable communities and blocks communities' access to medical facilities and markets. Bureaucratic impediments are delaying the delivery of food and medical supplies. Thousands of people may have already experienced famine in hard-to-reach areas of Nigeria's Borno State, and many communities affected by this conflict remain at an elevated risk of famine.

USAID's Office of Food for Peace remains one of the largest donors of humanitarian assistance for Nigeria, providing \$68 million in FY 2018 for people affected by the ongoing crisis. With Food for Peace support, the U.N. World Food Program has reached, on average, 1 million Nigerians each month since December 2016. Combined with our NGO partners, we help more than 2 million Nigerians with emergency food assistance.

#### SOMALIA

While drought is a primary driver of hunger in Somalia, political instability and conflict continue to prevent relief actors from reaching some vulnerable populations in rural areas. The situation is fragile and, in the absence of humanitarian assistance, 2.7 million Somalis face significant hunger.

USAID provides food-insecure Somali households and internally displaced people with emergency food and nutrition assistance. In FY 2018, we've provided more than \$59 million to partners for a variety of interventions including ready-to-use therapeutic foods to treat malnourished children.

#### BURMA

Attacks by armed actors on Burmese security posts in August 2017 and subsequent military operations in Rakhine state, home to the majority of Rohingya Muslims in the country, have caused a humanitarian crisis in Burma and neighboring Bangladesh. Lack of humanitarian access and ongoing population movement have

left an unknown number of people in need of immediate food assistance in Rakhine State.

The violence in Burma has forced approximately 671,000 Rohingya refugees to flee to southeastern Bangladesh, joining more than 212,000 Rohingya living in the country prior to August 2017, according to the U.N. Most of these refugees currently reside in temporary settlements near Cox's Bazar, where they are living in conditions well below humanitarian standards and suffer from hunger and high levels of malnutrition.

In response to the current crisis, USAID quickly mobilized assistance on both sides of the Burma/Bangladesh border. In 2017, USAID provided \$20.8 million to partners in Burma, including food, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene, health and protection assistance to vulnerable populations.

In FY 2018, FFP provided more than \$26 million to U.N. partners for refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. This assistance includes extensive emergency food, nutrition, capacity building, logistics and coordination support to ensure a rapid, effective scale-up of lifesaving services.

#### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Many parts of the DRC continue to experience worsening conflict and widespread poverty, contributing to a doubling of population displacement, along with chronic hunger and restricted livelihood activities. Crises in the Kasai region and Tanganyika, North and South Kivu, and Ituri Provinces are displacing families, disrupting agriculture and impeding access to markets, health care and schools. There are approximately 4.5 million Congolese internally displaced and more than 540,000 refugees from neighboring countries in the DRC. Nearly 7.7 million Congolese are experiencing extreme hunger.

USAID provides U.S. in-kind food assistance and locally and regionally procured food to internally displaced populations, returnees and vulnerable host communities through general food distributions, as well as cash transfers for food to refugees in difficult-to-access areas of the DRC. Furthermore, USAID collaborates with NGOs on longer-term food security activities that aim to improve agricultural production, maternal and child health and nutrition, civil participation and local governance, water and sanitation, natural resource management and biodiversity, and micro-enterprise productivity. These programs seek to strengthen household economic well-being and generate lasting gains in food and nutrition security.

#### CONFLICT STRAINS AND STRESSES HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

USAID is uniquely positioned to tackle hunger. When hunger is a driver of instability, our resilience activities connect with a broader set of food security and resilience investments in America's initiative to end global hunger, Feed the Future. We're tackling the underlying causes of hunger that, left unchecked, can lead to frustration and despair that can be exploited by terrorist groups and criminals. When hunger is a consequence of conflict, our emergency food assistance saves the lives of those displaced by violence.

I am proud of the U.S. government's actions, and we will continue to work alongside other donors, NGOs, U.N. agencies, and others to avert famine. But we are never focusing on just one country or region at a time and the scale and nature of the humanitarian crises in the world right now strains the humanitarian system enormously.

In 2018, the Famine Early Warning System Network estimates that 76 million people worldwide will need emergency food assistance. While that number decreased slightly from last year, the severity of needs has increased, largely due to conflict, leaving millions facing life-threatening hunger. Global chronic malnutrition is increasingly concentrated in conflict-affected countries and projections indicate that more than two-thirds of the world's poor could be living in fragile states by 2030.

Protracted, complex crises are taking up increasing amounts of scarce humanitarian resources and presenting unique challenges. USAID estimates that in FY 2018 over half of our humanitarian funding will be allocated toward just six major emergencies, nearly all conflict driven. Working in conflict means that the work we do is harder, more expensive, and more dangerous.

Humanitarian actors work tirelessly and at great personal risk to deliver life-saving assistance to those who need it most. But in conflict areas, they have been harassed, attacked, or killed, and relief supplies looted. According to the Aid Worker Security Database, 131 aid workers died in 2017, primarily in conflict areas. Syria and South Sudan—both protracted conflicts—were the deadliest locations (with 48 and 28 aid worker deaths, respectively). Parties on all sides of conflict must stop impeding relief efforts by ceasing hostilities and allowing for unhindered access.

## FOOD ASSISTANCE IS A BAND-AID, NOT A CURE TO CONFLICT-DRIVEN HUNGER

USAID is committed to assisting as many people as possible, maximizing the impact of our resources and working to leverage assistance from others. But humanitarian work involves making tough decisions. We're continually seeking ways to make our dollars stretch further, to reach the most people with the assistance they urgently need.

In order to respond to a world dominated by large, protracted, conflict-driven crises—our new normal—USAID needs all the tools possible at its disposal. In Yemen, where nearly all food is imported, the best way to respond is with U.S. in-kind food. For Syrian refugees, who are spread across the region and live in urban environments where markets function, electronic vouchers and cash make the most sense.

Our emergency food assistance does not operate in a vacuum, separate from others in the U.S. Government. We rely on our sister office, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, to provide support beyond food in times of crisis; we work with the Department of State to provide non-food support for refugees; and we work alongside the Department of Defense when humanitarian assistance requires additional support to reach those who need it. These coordinated efforts mean that we're more effective than we would be if we tried to do our work alone. In a world as complex as ours, with our national security under greater threat than ever, we must bring to bear the entirety of our statecraft toolbox.

The United States also cannot and should not do it alone—we need all of our U.N., NGO, affected government, and donor partners working together to tackle these challenges. Last month, Administrator Green joined with his counterpart in the U.K. and Grand Challenges Canada to announce a humanitarian grand challenge, calling for innovators around the world to submit ideas to save and improve the lives of those affected by humanitarian crises caused by conflict. We will invest a combined \$15 million over 5 years to enable governments and the private sector to work together to more nimbly respond to complex emergencies.

In addition to emergency responses, the United States relies on bilateral and multilateral channels to engage with foreign governments, international organizations and other partners to address the root causes of conflict-driven hunger. Only then can we move away from the dire human cost and financial burden of humanitarian responses to these conflicts, and toward prosperity and stability.

We are also helping to implement the President's goal of lessening the burden on the United States to respond by urging other donors, including non-traditional donors, to increase their share of funding for humanitarian assistance. The United States will also continue to challenge international and non-governmental relief organizations to become more efficient and effective in order to make U.S. taxpayer dollars go farther by maximizing the benefit to recipients of assistance.

Thank you for your attention to these issues and for the support Congress has provided to USAID and specifically our humanitarian programs over the years. Please know that your support transforms and saves lives every day.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Mr. Nims.

I am eager to turn to resilience and stability that comes with providing food assistance generally, which is something you spoke to. But you also mentioned the conflict and associated humanitarian crisis in Yemen, so I want to briefly touch on that.

There has been some messaging from Riyadh to suggest that the opening of the Port of Hodeida might be temporary, and I just want to be clear that I will escalate my efforts here in the U.S. Senate, and I expect that a number of my colleagues will join me in those efforts, if Riyadh were to re-impose its starvation blockade and close Hodeida. As I wrote in my letter to the President on December 14, "Suggesting that we must choose between defeating Iran's efforts in Yemen and permitting unimpeded humanitarian access is a false choice, as self-defeating and short-sighted as it is immoral." I have not changed my views.

I do want to get your opinion, Mr. Nims, about the importance of the Port of Hodeida to humanitarian efforts in Yemen, and perhaps you could speak to the hypothetical of the closure of the Port of Hodeida moving forward and what would the humanitarian consequences of that decision be.

Mr. NIMS. Thank you for the question, Senator. As you probably know, Yemen is 90 percent dependent upon imports to feed its people. The Port of Hodeida is the crucial link to ensure that this happens, both for the commercial sector and also primarily for the humanitarian operations that are based there. The World Food Programme maintains a large operation in the Port of Hodeida, and its continued operation is crucial for humanitarian operations to continue.

As of now, the port is open. However, because of some of the uncertainty surrounding the port, many shipping companies around the world are reticent to send ships into the port, and I think until we can as a humanitarian international community give a little bit higher degree of certainty, this will continue to deflect the amount and level of commerce that we see in the port.

Senator YOUNG. Just to add a measure of certainty perhaps in the margins of this situation, it would be helpful to get the Administration's position regarding the need to keep the Red Sea ports open to humanitarian and commercial supplies, especially food, fuel, and medicine. Kindly volunteer that to me, sir.

Mr. NIMS. The Administration is unequivocally behind keeping the Red Sea ports open for humanitarian and commercial traffic on the Red Sea ports.

Senator YOUNG. Excellent.

So back to the resilience program of USAID and the importance of ensuring we have a wise use of taxpayer money. In your testimony you cite a 2013 U.K. study that estimated that for every dollar invested in resilience, it is going to result in three dollars of reduced humanitarian assistance needs and avoided losses in just a 15-year window. I would say that is money well spent. You also noted that a more recent USAID study confirms this estimated return.

Can you provide more details on how you believe resilience investments save money?

Mr. NIMS. Most definitely, sir. We have learned through our programs that taking the time to build the community's as well as the host government's ability to respond to crisis, saves money in the long run because of the high cost of emergency response in these situations.

What we saw very prominently in the El Nino crisis was places in Ethiopia and Kenya, where we had longer-term development and resilience programs in place, that the very large impact that a drought situation was minimized because our longer-term programs have provided the foundation for communities to utilize their coping strategies to more easily respond. It takes a lot of effort and time to put these programs in place, but when they are done effectively and they link together both the emergency response aspects combined with solid development programming, we are seeing a lessening of the costs.

Senator YOUNG. Are you discovering best practices, and are those being widely shared among the humanitarian community?

Mr. NIMS. There are many lessons that we learned from the four countries at risk of famine last year, and I think one of them is the early warning aspect. Our Famine Early Warning System (FEWS NET), which the USAID funds, has been instrumental in

letting us know when we see the increase of crises coming and how to best position ourselves.

Number two, similar to what the Executive Director of the World Food Programme was saying, the dynamic has shifted where we are not, as a humanitarian community, simply responding to climactic shocks or to tsunamis or earthquakes. What we are seeing now is that these are prolonged crises that are taking a lot of time and effort. Quite honestly, I think that the humanitarian community is still struggling to be able to more effectively change our approaches in these situations. Our excellent partners, like CARE, like the World Food Programme, are leading the way in some of these longer-term solutions, and I think we have to double-down on our efforts to be able to do this effectively.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, sir.

Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Can you detail how the program, our program Feed the Future, fits into that vision?

Mr. NIMS. Thank you, Senator, for that question. Feed the Future is, I think, that excellent link from the community-led, field-based type operations that Food for Peace has been doing for the last 50 years to that next level of assistance that is needed. So, for example, our programs and our partners, primarily CARE, World Vision, CRS, have excellent experience working these most vulnerable communities in these countries on protecting food security at that community level.

What Feed the Future is bringing in is being able to then work with host governments, work with markets in those communities agriculturally to be able to link many times those subsistence farmers to a higher level of degree of market engagement, to then give that next step that is necessary.

Food for Peace has and will continue to work with these communities, but having that next step to link them to, to the higher level of development, is crucial, and Feed the Future is giving us that.

Senator MERKLEY. Let me translate what I think you are saying. When you say link them to that next level, are you talking about farm cooperatives and value added to the fundamental agricultural products?

Mr. NIMS. Most definitely, sir.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. In some places we provide in-kind food. Others, we provide vouchers. In some places we are even providing cash payments over electronic messages to cell phones. Can you talk about what works in what locations, and how has that cell phone strategy helped to keep, in some cases, hostile parties from intercepting food aid?

Mr. NIMS. Right now, Food for Peace is very fortunate to have a number of tools available as we look at all the crises. Our team is very much geared towards looking at what is happening on the ground and being able to utilize the correct tool to have the most impact to protect food security.

So you are exactly right. In some places where there is an absence of food, in-kind U.S. food is a great tool to be using there, and our partners on the ground, along with our own famine early

warning system, as well as our teams on the ground, are able to gauge if that is what needs to be done there.

At the same time, we have the ability to use a voucher-type program. If you look at our programs in Syria right now, bringing large amounts of U.S. in-kind food into, let us say, Lebanon and Jordan to feed refugees would be incredibly inefficient. Capitalizing on the market system that already exists there, being able to use a complex voucher program that allows these refugees to go to local stores, even Safeways or large supermarkets to receive their ration, is a much more efficient way to do that.

Our job in Food for Peace is to ensure that what is happening on the ground is understood both by our partners as well as our teams to ensure the correct mechanism is utilized in those situations.

Senator MERKLEY. You mentioned that one of those tools is a pre-loaded debit card, and why that fits into the Syria context?

Mr. NIMS. In Syria, for example, we do have actual cash cards that every month are loaded with an amount of a ration size to the World Food Programme that allows them to go to these stores. This is a direct transfer through banking systems that allows us to monitor this more directly, and it diminishes other actors' ability to actually access these funds. So it is a safe system, and it is in many ways safer than other actions because we are able to go electronically through the mobile system that gives them a tool that already exists there to be able to utilize that for their own food security.

Senator MERKLEY. Bangladesh has accepted 700,000 refugees from Burma. I had the chance to take a congressional delegation there to see it firsthand. There is no room in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is about half the size of Oregon, and Oregon has 4 million people living in it. Bangladesh has about 160 million people. I mean, every piece of land is occupied. The hillsides are being covered with slip bamboo structures covered with plastic. High winds will undoubtedly do a lot of damage to those structures. The surrounding trees are being cut down to burn to cook. So the hillsides are being quickly denuded, raising concerns about the coming rainy season, as well as the risk of measles, cholera, and other diseases.

As one looks at this, it is a massive food distribution as well as a health care dilemma. It is a dilemma on so many levels. How are you all engaged?

Mr. NIMS. We remain incredibly concerned about the situation in Bangladesh, with now almost close to 800,000 Rohingya refugees. Over 200,000, as you said, in the camp right now are actually in places where, with moderate rains, are going to be subjected to flooding. We need to act quickly to be able to, in a sense, control the overcrowding that we see in these camps.

I think that we also need to understand that the U.S. alone cannot fund this. We need other partners around the world to step up, and I think with the new humanitarian plan that will be coming out soon, that this provides a great opportunity for many of the world to ensure that they also are part of this.

I think another aspect which is very difficult there is, as this crisis develops, we do not want to be part of any type of forcing of returnees back into Burma because we want to ensure that conditions are right for that to happen. Hence, if we are looking at a

large group of people here, we are going to have to better look at the environmental impact of the situation and how we can better serve them.

Senator MERKLEY. So, I appreciate all of that. Are you helping to crank up a significant international momentum or more aid from the United States to assist in that situation?

Mr. NIMS. Yes, our teams are involved in that right now, in negotiating with—

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. I certainly encourage that, and as we have transition in our foreign policy leadership, I think it is an opportunity for the United States to consider how we might amplify our strategy. This is also a security issue. You have 700,000 people, including many young men who have seen their spouses raped, their daughters raped, they have been shot at, they are ripe for recruitment by international terrorist operations. So there is a security dimension as well as a humanitarian dimension, and I just want to see the U.S. in the forefront of a global effort to take on this challenge, including the relationship with Burma and how we exercise that.

Mr. NIMS. Senator, can I just say how much our teams appreciate when you all come out to see the efforts that this humanitarian community and bringing this to light, and from them, just a note of thanks for that.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Senator Merkley.

We have been joined by Senator Coons, another leader in the area of foreign assistance and someone who does not hesitate to put his boots on the ground.

We are going to finish all the panels out. So we have one more panel after Senator Coons' questions, and we will be concluding no later than 4:00 p.m., since we have a 3:45 p.m. vote.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Young and Senator Merkley. It is great to be with you. I am grateful that you are dedicating this time and attention to something that matters so much to hungry people around the world.

To my good friend, Governor Beasley, thank you for what you are doing to lead the World Food Programme and to be physically present in so many of the places around the world that need our help, and with our allies who we hope will be stepping forward and contributing more to this.

It is great to see you again, Mr. Nims. I think I last saw you in Uganda in the Bidi Bidi camp, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. NIMS. Yes, sir.

Senator COONS. To my dear friend, Michelle Nunn, thank you for what you and CARE do.

And to General Castellaw and Dr. Sova, thank you for your service. I hope you do convey to the folks who work in Food for Peace and in World Food Programme and CARE and in other organizations how grateful we are for this work. It is dangerous, it is difficult, it overwhelmingly happens in some of the most remote, most demanding environments on earth. When I was in South Sudan, literally in the previous 48 hours there had been several aid workers kidnapped or killed. So this is literally the Lord's work, or work

that carries forward the values of the world that care for others. I will put it that way. I see it both ways, but folks can see it whatever way they choose.

I am grateful to have had the chance on a bipartisan basis to work with colleagues on legislation that helps make possible your important work. I am a co-sponsor of the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act, which I am hoping we will move forward to reauthorize, and in particular it reauthorizes Feed the Future and would give us 5 more years of Feed the Future, and I am grateful to Senator Isakson for his real leadership on that.

Today or tomorrow, Senator Corker and I will be introducing the Food for Peace Modernization Act, which I think is important at a time when, as you have testified, millions, tens of millions are food insecure, at risk of starvation. It would reduce requirements for monetization and for U.S. commodities, although retaining a key role for U.S. commodities.

Could you just briefly discuss the potential savings we could expect to see if we passed those kinds of reforms into law, and how that would help us reach more people with life-saving food aid?

Mr. NIMS. Thank you for that question, Senator. While I am conversant on and know the bill that you all have been working on, I do want to say that the continued interest on the Hill on food insecurity is welcomed. We look forward to being able to comment on that bill. At this time, the Administration does not have a position on it.

Senator COONS. Got it.

Mr. NIMS. That being said, any efforts to make more flexible and more efficient the utilization of humanitarian resources is welcome.

Senator COONS. Let me ask you a different question. The budget proposes eliminating Food for Peace—it seems a little more directly targeted—which would then focus on international disaster assistance to provide emergency food assistance. My concern is that eliminating Food for Peace would shift our focus to emergency assistance and put less focus on development and nutritional support that can help countries and communities graduate from aid and develop their own ag-based economies. The animating genius of Feed the Future, as you were just testifying, is about moving from disaster to resiliency to sustainability.

How can we assure we are addressing hunger at all stages? And comment if you feel so inclined and it is appropriate on the elimination of Food for Peace.

Mr. NIMS. So, just to be clear and to give a perspective, what the Administration's bill does is correct, that the current request on funding does eliminate the Title 2 aspect of our funding. However, in the IDA section, it would actually enable Food for Peace to continue to exist and actually to link back to the GFSS. The Emergency Food Security Program actually is authorized in that bill as well, which codifies the fact that we can use international disaster assistance funds to buy food even in the United States, as well as locally, and do our voucher programs.

The Administration's request is through the IDA to support those life-saving food programs. It is viewed as a much more efficient way to do this.



Senator COONS. It is viewed based on broad experience as a much more efficient way to do this?

Mr. NIMS. Luckily, my job right now in USAID Food for Peace is to be able to take the resources allocated to be able to do the best that I can to stretch them the furthest. What we have seen is that there are places around the world where we need U.S. in-kind as well as the flexibility, and with those resources we work hard with our partners to be able to do that job.

Senator COONS. Great.

I recognize we have a third panel and we have an impending vote. I have many more questions, as you know, since I have harassed you with them overseas as well as here.

Thank you for your service and for the very real and important work that you and everyone with you does.

Mr. NIMS. Thank you for your interest in and continued support of our programs.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you again, Mr. Nims, for your appearance here today, for your service, and we will look forward to our continued work together.

This concludes the second panel. We will give the witnesses for the third panel a few minutes to seat themselves.

[Recess.]

Senator YOUNG. Once again, I would like to welcome the following three witnesses to our final panel: Dr. Chase Sova, Director of Public Policy and Research at the World Food Programme USA; Lieutenant General John Castellaw, who served with distinction in the U.S. Marine Corps; and Ms. Michelle Nunn, President and Chief Executive Officer of CARE USA.

Now, your full written statements will be included in the record. If you could possibly compress your statements as you present them here today to 3 minutes, that would be wonderful, affording more time for myself and my colleagues to ask questions. It would be much appreciated.

So let us go in the order that I announced.

Dr. Sova.

**STATEMENT OF CHASE SOVA, PH.D., DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY AND RESEARCH, WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME USA, WASHINGTON, DC**

Dr. SOVA. Thank you, Chairman Young and Ranking Member Merkley. It is an absolute pleasure to be here, especially alongside this panel. I will do my best to channel David Beasley here, representing the World Food Programme USA here.

My task this afternoon is to share with you the findings from a report produced by the World Food Programme USA, "Winning the Peace: Hunger and Instability."

Let me say this at the outset. On some issues, it takes academia to catch up with what we know to be intuitively true, and I think that that is accurate here with a link between global hunger and instability.

I think that it is abundantly obvious that war produces hunger and poverty, but what we explore in "Winning the Peace" is the opposite direction of causation, that food insecurity can be a driver in itself of instability.

This report essentially tells the story of 53 peer-reviewed academic journal articles, and across those studies researchers tested 11 unique drivers of food insecurity, from land competition to food price spikes to rainfall variability, and successfully linked them to about nine types of instability, and this ranged from things like protests all the way up to interstate conflict.

And if I were to succinctly sum up the findings of this report, it would be that food insecurity creates desperation that manifests in many ways, sometimes violent, but almost always destabilizing.

Sometimes we see this in the form of conflicts between herding communities and farmers over increasing land and water competition. Other times this comes in the form of food price riots, and other times we see food-related instability occurring because of extreme events.

But what is, I think, important here is that “Winning the Peace” also shows that those drivers of food-related instability and those drivers of food insecurity must also be met with individual motivations, and those motivations are a few things.

First is grievance. Modern conflicts are almost never driven by a single cause, and food insecurity can be a contributor. Sometimes it is that grievance. Other times it provides an opportunity for underlying disagreements to surface or resurface. Sometimes food insecurity is the straw that breaks the camel’s back in these crises.

The second really is the economic motivation, and the Executive Director spoke about this. It is obvious that in some cases, if there is clear economic advantage to resorting to unrest or violence, people will be willing to do that if they are compensated. So we see that, obviously, with rebel groups offering to pay people to participate in these activities, often taking advantage of people’s desperation.

The third here is governance, and this is when the state is unable or unwilling to prevent food insecurity or they are unable to enforce rule of law.

So those are the three main individual motivators, and we can talk more about that. But the findings of “Winning the Peace” make it clear that there is a direct empirical link between food insecurity and global instability. Food security is foundational to peace and security, and one of the single best investments that we can make in global stability is to help people who cannot feed themselves or their families. We need to be waging a war on hunger, not its symptoms.

So two things real quickly here that we can do.

Ensure robust funding for food assistance accounts. We spend \$2 trillion every year on military spending, and we were not able to meet the \$9 billion needs of the World Food Programme last year. So, we can do better than that. When all you have is a hammer, all you tend to see is nails, and we have other things beyond hammers in our portfolio.

And second, real briefly, I would call on Congress to reauthorize the Global Food Security Act, and we can discuss that in detail here soon.

But I will leave it there and look forward to your questions regarding the report. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Sovo follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. CHASE SOVA

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, And International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy, thank you for convening this hearing today on “Why Food Security Matters.” Today, I will share key findings from a report produced by World Food Program USA, *Winning the Peace: Hunger and Instability*. Released in December 2017, this report—drawing on 53 peer-reviewed journal articles, the highest standard for sharing scientific work—provides among the most comprehensive reviews of the link between food insecurity and global instability ever produced. While we have long understood the relationship between hunger and instability to exist intuitively, research is now catching up. The evidence base presented in *Winning the Peace* clearly shows that food insecurity creates desperation that manifests in many ways—sometimes violent—but almost always destabilizing. What is universally true about modern day conflicts is that they do not respect borders. Addressing food insecurity in all its forms and places, is an investment in global stability and the security of the United States.

## A FRAGILE WORLD

The timing of this hearing—and the *Winning the Peace* report—is critical. As we enter 2018, more than 65 million people have been displaced because of violence, conflict and persecution, more than any other time since World War II. Meanwhile, the number of hungry people is again on the rise, increasing for the first time in over a decade to 815 million people. Over 60 percent of undernourished people in the world—some 489 million—live in countries affected by conflict. Almost 122 million, or 75 percent, of stunted children under age five live in these same places. The world has seen a rise in state fragility in recent years. Ten out of the World Food Programme’s (WFP) 13 largest and most complex emergencies is driven by conflict, and over 80 percent of all humanitarian spending today is directed toward man-made conflict. By 2030, between half and two-thirds of the world’s poor are expected to live in states classified as fragile. Fragile states are defined by “the absence or breakdown of a social contract between people and their government. Fragile states suffer from deficits of institutional capacity and political legitimacy that increase the risk of instability and violent conflict and sap the state of its resilience to disruptive shocks.” While a decade ago, the clear majority of fragile states were low-income countries, today almost half are middle-income countries. Roughly 85 percent of countries that were severely food insecure in 2016 were also considered “fragile” or “extremely fragile.”

Fragility today is driven in no small part by displacement from violence, conflict and persecution, affecting entire regions of the world. Most countries hosting refugees and internally displaced people today are low-and middle-income countries that are the least equipped to cope with such pressures. In fact, developing regions host 85 percent of global refugees. Uganda, one of the smallest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, is hosting more than 1 million refugees from South Sudan and other neighboring countries. Meanwhile, Lebanon, a middle-income country, is hosting more than 1 million Syrian refugees, representing 20 percent of the country’s population of 4.5 million. The average length of refugee displacement is 17 years. These countries are providing a global public good, yet face considerable challenges in meeting the immediate needs of their own citizens.

While the state of hunger and fragility continues to evolve, so too has the nature of conflict. After declining in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War proxy conflicts, the number of conflicts in the world is again on the rise. According to a new World Bank and United Nations publication, the number of major violent conflicts has tripled since 2010. The Council on Foreign Relations is currently monitoring 32 global conflicts affecting U.S. strategic interests. The nation-state—which has reigned sovereign in the international system since the 17th century—has further surrendered its exclusive position as the main belligerent in war. Today, domestic conflicts and civil wars are far more common than interstate violence. Furthermore, non-state conflicts—conflicts in which the state is not involved as a combatant—have increased by 125 percent since 2010, and now represent the largest category of conflict. Non-state actors, sometimes motivated by extremist ideologies and facilitated by improved recruiting capability, have occupied an increasingly larger space in the international system. A main “weapon” of modern conflict is information, allowing non-state actors to undermine traditional nation states in more consequential ways, attacking their legitimacy rather than—or in addition to—their military power. Non-traditional security threats like food insecurity can create the conditions for instability. Such threats cannot be addressed through military responses alone.

## HUNGER AND INSTABILITY: THE ANECDOTAL BASE

The instruments of U.S. foreign policy are sometimes referred to as the “3D’s”—defense, diplomacy and development. Within the “development” sphere, the U.S. has increasingly adopted a comprehensive approach to global food security. Throughout the history of U.S. food assistance and agricultural development programs, the United States has acted on a triad of moral, economic and security grounds. Moral justification implores the United States to lead with its values, relying on the power of its example, rather than the example of its power. Ensuring that no child goes hungry is consistent with our values and represents the best of who we are as Americans. We also invest in global food security for economic benefit. Over 95 percent of consumers live outside of the United States. In fact, 11 of our 15 top trading partners were former recipients of food assistance. Food assistance and global agricultural development programs, at their core, are investments in the American economy, building a world of consumers for American products and stable environments for American businesses. Investing in global food security for stability purposes—the third rationale—has traditionally received less attention. This is the “gap” that *Winning the Peace* set out to fill.

Political and military leaders have long recognized the importance of “smart power” in the form of foreign assistance, especially food assistance and agricultural development. “Show me a nation that cannot feed itself,” remarked Senator Pat Roberts, “and I’ll show you a nation in chaos.” Perhaps the most widely cited development-security reference comes from the current U.S. Secretary of Defense, General James Mattis. In Congressional testimony in 2013, when he was serving as Commander of U.S. Central Command, the General remarked, “If you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.” Senator Lindsey Graham, meanwhile, has commented in a State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee markup: “And we are going to deal with these kids now—help them get back on their feet—or fight them later.” Consequently, development—and food security, specifically—has become an increasingly strong consideration in stabilization and countering violent extremism efforts from the United States.

Food insecurity is both a consequence and a driver of global instability. The former—food insecurity as a byproduct of war—is well understood. People living in conflict-affected countries are more than 2.5 times more likely to be undernourished than people living in other settings. “War,” after all, as famously stated by Paul Collier, “is development in reverse.” Conflict displaces people, topples markets and destroys critical infrastructure, each undermining agricultural production and access to food. WFP, in an analysis of food prices in conflict-affected countries, *Counting the Beans: The True Cost of a Plate of Food*, estimates that the cost of a simple meal valued at \$1.20 in New York would cost \$321.00 in South Sudan. WFP estimates that the increased costs of its operations as a result of instability, lack of access and poorly functioning food systems amounted to \$3.45 billion in 2015.

That war, instability and violence adversely affect food security is widely documented. However, the other direction of causation is decidedly more complex. Given that food insecurity is intimately related to other forms and causes of extreme poverty and deprivation, the relationship between hunger and instability is most often cited anecdotally. The failure to respond adequately to drought conditions, for example, is widely accepted as a contributing factor to political regime change in Ethiopia both in the 1970s and the 1980s. More recently, food price riots contributed to the toppling of governments in Haiti and Madagascar in 2007 and 2008 and violent protest in at least 40 other countries worldwide. Production shocks and price spikes in 2011 were similarly linked to the social unrest of the Arab Spring, and the ongoing Syria crisis has clear links to prolonged, historic drought conditions affecting food supplies. Meanwhile, the War in Darfur has been branded the “first climate change conflict” by many observers.

## RESULTS

Yet with rigorous analysis, we can move beyond the anecdotal with respect to the relationship between food insecurity and instability. In the production of *Winning the Peace*, the Web of Science academic database was accessed—containing 90 million peer-reviewed journal articles—to exhaustively catalogue the relevant literature. Our word search combinations yielded 3,000 articles with varying degrees of proximity to the desired topic. This sample was reduced to 564 priority articles describing the relationship in both directions (i.e. instability causing food insecurity and food insecurity leading to instability), and 53 high-priority articles that explicitly test the relationship between food insecurity and instability, in that direction of causation. The results of the review demonstrate that 77 percent (41 of 53) of

high-priority studies determine food insecurity and instability to be positively correlated, 17 percent (9 of 53) partially correlated, and 6 percent (3 of 53) without correlation. Importantly, almost 75 percent of these studies were published in the last 5 years, in the period between 2012 and 2016. While these 53 studies are invaluable on their own, it is when they are combined into a comprehensive, collective body of work that results become most useful in understanding this complex phenomenon. Across these studies, *Winning the Peace* surfaced 11 unique drivers of food insecurity examined by researchers—from land competition and food price spikes to rainfall variability—linked to nine separate types of instability—ranging from peaceful protest to violent interstate conflict.

These results demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between food insecurity and instability. Modern conflicts are almost never driven by a single cause. Sometimes the responses to food insecurity can be a more powerful driver of food-related instability than shock-events themselves. For example, in an increasingly globalized food system, actions taken by governments to alleviate their own domestic food insecurity—like reduced import tariffs and export restrictions and other market distortions—can inadvertently undermine the stability of other nations. The social, political and economic drivers of food-related instability also vary widely between contexts. Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, is home to a complex colonial past, ongoing ethnic strife and persistent poverty—each of which can serve as a primary driver of instability that is multiplied by food insecurity (i.e. food insecurity as a “threat multiplier”). These results also serve to warn against the dramatic oversimplification that “all hungry people are violent and all violent people are hungry.” Food-related instability is not limited to instances of violence, let alone violent extremism. Food price protests, for example, among the most common manifestations of food-related instability, can be non-violent and often occur among more affluent populations suffering from transitory food insecurity, but not chronic hunger. The world’s chronically hungry, meanwhile, are disproportionately located in rural areas characterized by vast geographies and limited communication technology—these populations very often suffer in silence. In short, food-related instability occurs in both urban and rural settings; manifests in violent and non-violent ways; and occurs across various geographies and levels of economic development.

While local context must always be considered, instances of food-related instability can be broadly categorized according to three main drivers of food insecurity and three interrelated individual motivations that prompt people to engage in social unrest or violence. Drivers include: (1) agriculture resource competition; (2) market failure; and (3) extreme weather. Motivators, meanwhile, include: (1) grievance; (2) economic or “greed;” and (3) governance. A combination of drivers and motivators create the conditions for every instance of food-related instability to occur.

#### DRIVERS OF FOOD-RELATED INSTABILITY

##### *Agricultural Resource Competition*

The first driver is agricultural resource competition. In the last half century, some 40 percent of civil wars have been linked to natural resource competition. Across much of the developing world, and especially sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture constitutes a large percentage of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs up to 80 percent of the rural population. When permanent resources like land and water (i.e. lakes, rivers and aquifers) are inadequate to sustain agricultural livelihoods, the risk of instability rises markedly. This commonly manifests in conflicts between pastoral and sedentary agricultural communities, but also through land grabs, inadequate land tenure laws and state-run land redistribution measures, among others. Resource competition is exacerbated by increased human migration, especially between ethnically diverse communities.

Land competition has long manifested in conflicts between pastoral and sedentary communities. Nomadic herders traditionally operate in territory unfit for sedentary agricultural production. Pastoralists rely on their mobility as a coping mechanism against short-term weather and market variations. Yet as long-term climatic conditions deteriorate and lands become further degraded, pastoralists—especially in the African Sahel—are encroaching on agricultural lands where rains are more reliable and temperatures more suitable for livestock production. Widespread drought erodes nomadic adaptation strategies like clan-based support since a large swath of the population is affected simultaneously. The relationship between resource competition and migration is mutually reinforcing. Migration can place new stresses on rural economies and resources, and resource competition can, in turn, lead to increased migration. Recent research with migrants from East and West Africa, Asia and the Middle East by WFP’s Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit shows that for every 1 percent increase in food insecurity, there is a 2 percent rise in migration.

In a salient example of agricultural resource competition, in the decades leading up to the 2003 outbreak of the war in Darfur, the Sahel region of northern Sudan had witnessed the Sahara Desert advance southward by almost a mile each year and a decrease in annual median rainfall of 15 to 30 percent. These long-term climatic trends had significant consequences for Sudan's two predominant—and sometimes competing—agricultural systems: Smallholder farmers relying on rain-fed production and nomadic pastoralists. Agriculturalists in Sudan are predominantly ethno-African, while pastoralists are disproportionately of Arab ethnicity. These factors led then U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to comment in 2007, “Almost invariably, we discuss Darfur in a convenient military and political shorthand—an ethnic conflict pitting Arab militias against black rebels and farmers. Look to its roots, though, and you discover a more complex dynamic. Amid the diverse social and political causes, the Darfur conflict began as an ecological crisis.” Importantly, the risk of agricultural resource-based instability is magnified with each consecutive growing season lost.

Resource competition is not always driven by natural phenomenon, however. Proposed large-scale land acquisitions by Daewoo, for example, led to the toppling of the government in Madagascar in 2009, currently the first example of an agricultural “land grab” contributing directly to political instability. Similarly, re-distributional land reform has been historically responsible for considerable unrest, with at least one study in *Winning the Peace* showing that the risk of coup rises considerably when policy changes like land reform are introduced. Notable examples include Soviet agricultural collectivization and land reform in China’s “Great Leap Forward,” but land reform-related unrest has also been documented in North Korea, Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Cambodia and Guatemala, among others. Finally, while we intuitively think of social and political unrest resulting from agricultural resource scarcity, the likelihood and duration of conflict can be partially dependent on the abundance of resources. Supplying a successful rebellion is a resource-intensive process, and even if rebels have the motive to fight, they also require the means; after all, “an army marches on its stomach.” Several authors in this review identified resource abundance as a condition for certain types of conflict onset and duration.

#### *Market Failure*

The second category of food-related instability is market failure. The global food price spikes of 2007–2008 and 2011 have increased the profile of this form of food-related instability, especially food price riots. Between 2000 and 2008, global wheat prices tripled and corn prices doubled, accelerating rapidly in late 2007 and leading to social unrest in at least 40 developing and middle-income countries in what has been termed the “silent tsunami.” Food price spikes are widely recognized as leading to regime change in Haiti and Madagascar during this period. A second wave of price spikes owing to agricultural commodity production shocks on the Eurasian continent in 2011 has also been linked to the rise of the Arab Spring in the Middle East. The relationship was thrust into the media with the dramatic protest of Mohammed Bouazizi, a vegetable vendor in Tunisia whose immolation epitomized the desperation felt by many in the region and served as a catalyst for wider unrest. Food riots are an intuitive result of commodity price fluctuations given the relative economic inelasticity of food—there is no substitute for food, even when prices are high. Yet food price spikes and social unrest are mediated by a variety of factors, including import dependence, cultural significance of the affected food commodities and political regime type, among others.

Food price riots, for example, are more likely to occur in urban areas of countries with high reliance on food imports. Riots in response to price shocks are enabled by the high density of people living in urban centers with adequate channels of communication that allow for mass organization—this is often referred to as the “contagion effect.” The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) imports over half of the food it consumes, the highest import dependency on the planet. That production shortages in one part of the world can affect social and political instability in another is what Sternberg refers to as the “globalization of drought.” In the direct aftermath of the 2007–2008 food price crisis, 31 percent of 105 surveyed countries put in place export restrictions and half reduced food import taxes. Foods that tend to have cultural significance, especially those consumed by the rich and the poor alike, are also more likely to incite widespread unrest. This is why staple products of national significance—e.g. the “pasta riots” in Italy or “tortilla riots” in Mexico—often lend their names to social unrest. In the Middle East, bread has considerable cultural significance across social strata, meaning the rise in global wheat prices (and high import reliance in MENA) was especially predictive of conflict in this setting. Political regime type (i.e. democracy versus autocracy) also plays an important

role in mediating the relationship between food price and social unrest. Short-term unrest is more likely to occur in democracies with permissive political opportunity structures that allow for popular uprising and government protest. This demonstrates the point that not all instability is bad, especially if it leads to meaningful social change. While the likelihood of demonstrations and riots is reduced in oppressive regimes, more organized persistent forms of conflict are more likely to occur in these settings.

Ultimately, the link between food price shocks and instability is dependent upon the country, the level of import dependence, the perceived reason for the price increase, the agricultural commodity, the model of government and the level of pre-existing social grievance, among other considerations. Even so, while the conditions that determine the relationship between food prices and stability are complex, the dynamic is not devoid of causation. When the globalization of crises meets with burgeoning urbanization and the contagion effect facilitated by widespread access to mass communication, the potential for conflict rises considerably.

#### *Extreme weather*

The third category of food-related instability is extreme weather. This driver underpins agriculture resource competition and market failure, but represents a sizeable body of literature in and of itself. Agriculture is an obvious interlocutor between climate and conflict given that the sector is strongly affected by climatological conditions like rainfall variations and temperature fluctuations. It is estimated that 80 percent of agricultural production in developing countries does not employ any form of irrigation. Furthermore, the impacts of climate change will be most severe in low-latitude countries in tropical, equatorial environments, disproportionately affecting the Global South.

Extreme weather events as a driver of food-related instability is apparent in a variety of modern-day conflicts. In the lead-up to the civil war in Syria, for example, the country experienced “the worst long-term drought and most severe set of crop failures since agricultural civilizations began in the Fertile Crescent many millennia ago.” In the 3-year period from 2006 to 2009, more than 1 million farmers were affected by crop loss. This long-term drought—combined with government policies on well-water pumping—placed unsustainable pressure on groundwater aquifers. As a consequence, the southwestern city of Dara’a, situated in one of the traditionally fertile areas of Syria, saw a large influx of migrants and was one of the first sites of social unrest in the country in 2011. Meanwhile, the rise of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria has been linked by several authors to prolonged drought conditions in the Lake Chad Basin area of West Africa. In recent decades, the water surface of Lake Chad has shrunk by over 90 percent compared with its size in the 1960s, contributing to a loss of livelihoods and threatening food security in the region.

Since 2010, the United States has recognized climate change as a “threat-multiplier” in its Quadrennial Defense Review. Meanwhile, the United Nations estimates that approximately 1.3 billion people in the world also live on ecologically fragile land. While the defining challenge facing the humanitarian system today is the proliferation of violent conflict, each year some 22.5 million people are displaced by climate-related extreme events, in part because of inadequate responses, a lack of safety net protection systems or insufficient investments in resilience-building and disaster risk reduction. It is estimated that climate change could force as many as 122 million people into poverty by 2030.

#### *Motivators of food-related instability*

While it is one thing to correlate two variables, it is entirely another to identify the individual rationale for observed human behavior. Truly understanding the hunger-instability nexus means first answering the fundamental question: Why do food-insecure people resort to violence or other forms of social unrest? In the food-related instability literature, several causal mechanisms are identified, often summarized as “grievance, economic, or governance” motivations. While individual motivations for involvement in food-related social unrest and violence vary between contexts and people, they generally fall into these interrelated categories.

First, the “grievance” motivation refers to actions motivated by a perceived injustice. The grievance motivation is especially potent when food insecurity provides an impetus for the airing of longstanding societal divisions, allowing a population to cleave along pre-established lines. When food insecurity “breaks the camel’s back,” exacerbating longstanding tensions, the grievance motivation is at play. A food-related instability event—like price riots or pastoral encroachment on sedentary agriculturalists—provides an opportunity for groups to settle preexisting conflicts or disagreements. Research by Mercy Corps with youth in Afghanistan, Colombia and Somalia found that experiences of injustice, like discrimination and corruption, were

among the strongest drivers of conflict. It is also true that one of the strongest indicators of the likelihood of violent conflict is a history of it. Over 40 percent of countries that have experienced civil war will see it again within a decade. This is sometimes referred to as the “violence trap.”

Second, the economic motivation occurs when there is a clear economic advantage to resorting to violence. This motivation is often reduced to a simplified equation: Does engaging in violent conflict or revolt yield a higher economic and social return than the status quo (i.e. is there a compelling opportunity cost of inaction)? This often plays out with rebel groups paying wages—or offering food—as a recruitment incentive, effectively taking advantage of the desperation felt by those unable to feed themselves or their families. Reflecting this commonly held view, former U.S. Senator Richard Lugar remarked, “Hungry people are desperate people and desperation can sow the seeds of radicalism.” In other words, that there is an important distinction between involvement with an armed group and being an “extremist.” In Somalia in 2011, while denying access to international humanitarian agencies, al-Shabaab was reported to offer cash-payments or even salaries in exchange for enlistment to its movement. In fact, former militants describe al-Shabaab enlistment as a commercial venture, not an ideological one. Meanwhile, in Colombia, the FARC provided protection to local farmers and guaranteed a minimum price for a variety of agricultural products. This same phenomenon has played out in Syria, northeast Nigeria, and Sudan, among other settings.

Third, the governance motivation occurs in the context of unachieved expectations or a failure of the state to prevent food insecurity. Additionally, when the state’s ability to enforce rule-of-law is diminished or non-existent, it is easier for economic or grievance-motivated individuals to make the decision to engage in conflict without fear of punitive repercussion. Many parts of the developing world, in particular, are home to huge tracks of ungoverned, lawless spaces existing outside of the policing arm of the state. These places are simultaneously unreachable by social services and lack investments in critical infrastructure. In agricultural-based economies, the food production shocks that can initiate rebellion simultaneously reduce the state’s ability to respond appropriately through a loss in the agricultural tax base. The governance motivation is further reinforced by interviews conducted by the United Nations Development Programme with 495 individuals that voluntarily joined extremist groups in Africa. The results of their analysis demonstrate that while religious and economic motivators are strong drivers of recruitment, a lack of trust in government (e.g. police, politicians or the military) is the single strongest driver, especially when a family or friend is killed or arrested by the government.

#### SEVERING THE LINK

Since the drivers of food insecurity and instability are many—ranging from calorie availability to more structural issues around land tenure and livelihood opportunities—disrupting the link between food insecurity and instability requires a diverse toolbox of integrated actions. In other words, we must meet complexity with complexity. In practice, this means investing more heavily in development and humanitarian activities (i.e. meeting immediate lifesaving needs); implementing comprehensive food security programs that address the many faces of hunger; and pursuing improved communication between defense, diplomacy and development efforts so as to break the cycle and vicious feedback loop between hunger and instability.

First, we must meet the immediate lifesaving needs of those suffering from hunger as the result of conflict and natural disasters. Food assistance and agricultural development programs can be especially effective tools in preventing extremism from taking root. We must respond to humanitarian crises before they become something else entirely. At present, the global community is simply not meeting the immediate lifesaving and stability-producing needs of vulnerable people around the world. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) consolidated appeal—the most comprehensive of assessment of annual humanitarian funding needs—increased by over 62 percent between 2011 and 2018, from \$8.5 billion to \$22.5 billion, with the 2018 appeal becoming the largest in history. Needs are growing faster than contributions. On average over the past decade, OCHA appeals have been funded at only 64 percent, leaving many vulnerable populations without assistance. Specific to emergency food assistance, WFP’s 2017 operational requirements were funded at only 76 percent (approximately \$6.8 of \$9 billion). In analysis ranging back to 2010, WFP has never had the entirety of its operational needs met by donors.

Second, we must implement comprehensive global food security programming. There are several food-specific strategies that can break the food insecurity-instability relationship. The response has to be comprehensive, commensurate with the



complexities of food-related instability and addressing emergency food assistance, agricultural development, child nutrition and social safety net systems. U.S. assistance programs should focus increasingly on the special needs of conflict-affected fragile states. U.S. humanitarian assistance has traditionally taken a lead role in U.S. response to the needs of vulnerable people in conflict situations. U.S. development aid, however, has not always been sufficiently available to fragile states seeking long-term solutions to their underlying food security and development challenges. Only when immediate humanitarian assistance is combined with appropriate medium- to long-term development programs can we build resilience and reduce the risk of future state fragility and conflict. The U.S. has made significant strides in this regard with the passage of the Global Food Security Act (GFSA) and associated strategy. The GFSA is up for reauthorization in 2018, and ensuring that this important legislation continues to guide U.S. food security policy should remain a top priority for Congress.

Emergency food assistance provides immediate relief from the impacts of man-made and natural crises, serving as the last line of lifesaving assistance to those in need and decreasing the desperation felt by people suffering from extreme hunger. When administered effectively, food assistance can reduce food price volatility and uncertainty, building trust in food systems; can provide livelihood opportunities that increase the “cost” of engaging in violent conflict; and can be effective tools in the battle for hearts and minds (e.g. U.S. food aid is branded “From the American People”). Food assistance has also been successfully deployed as a means to entice combatants to lay down their arms and reintegrate into society.

Food assistance alone cannot prevent conflict or the re-emergence of conflict once peace has been achieved. Almost half of the world’s hungry are subsistence farmers. GDP growth in the agricultural sector is more than twice as effective at reducing extreme hunger and poverty than growth in other sectors in developing countries. Investments in subsistence farmers—especially women—can have a deep impact in reducing hunger and extreme poverty and improving self-sufficiency, with positive spillover effects into the wider economy. Agricultural development, for its outsized effect on economic growth, can be especially effective at deterring recruitment for violent uprisings and delivering peace dividends.

Early childhood nutrition can have lifelong effects on health and prosperity. Lacking proper nutrition at an early age, physical growth and intellectual development can be permanently damaged, leading to long-term consequences on individual achievement as well as broader economic growth and stability. More than 50 percent of those displaced from their countries by conflict, violence and persecution are under the age of 18. Children who do not receive adequate nutrition face physical, emotional and economic “stunting” that plagues them throughout their lives and makes them more prone to violence and aggression.

School meals are a particularly effective way of ensuring children receive proper nutrition and social protections. One of the strongest incentives for sending a child to school is the promise of a school meal. These programs have been demonstrated to increase school enrollment and attendance (especially for girls), and improve nutrition, health and cognitive development of children. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is WFP’s largest multi-year donor to school meals programs, providing on average \$80 million per year through the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. Through this support, WFP reached 2,260,791 children in FY2016. Cost benefit analysis conducted in over 15 countries where WFP is providing school meals demonstrates that every dollar invested in these programs yields a return of \$3 to \$10 dollars from improved education and health outcomes. When food for school meals programs is purchased from local farmers (i.e. home-grown school feeding), this has the added benefit of supporting local agriculture and establishing supply chains that can serve as an exit strategy for donor assistance.

School meals are just one form of safety net. Safety net systems—the predictable transfer of basic commodities, resources or services to poor or vulnerable populations—protect against societal shocks and episodic bouts of food insecurity, allowing people to preserve productive assets and preventing vulnerable populations from further descending into extreme poverty. “Food-for-work” asset-building initiatives have been promoted as effective deterrents of terrorist recruitment, providing viable livelihood opportunities for vulnerable populations. Food and cash transfers have also proved successful in deterring riots, as evidenced in the 2007–2008 food price crisis where most affected countries that had cash-or food-based social safety nets in place avoided widespread food riots.

Third, while we should pursue improved communication between defense, diplomacy and development actors, we must also recognize that they have distinct roles to play. The “firewall” between the military and humanitarians, in particular, exists

to ensure humanitarian worker's neutrality and safety and ability to respond to objective need—they must not be seen as an extension of U.S. political or military force. Acknowledging the security dividends of humanitarian assistance does not simultaneously imply that we abandon our core principles for providing international assistance based on objective need, neutrality and impartiality. In the U.S. and beyond, the rationale for supporting food assistance programs has been predominantly based on moral and economic considerations. Acknowledging the security dimension of food assistance does not elevate this rationale above others, but is simply a recognition of food insecurity's contribution to global instability and the security of all nations.

The "3D's" of U.S. foreign policy must, at the very least, learn to speak the same language. Defense, diplomacy and development are too often perceived as iterative steps—one to be followed after another. When diplomacy fails, we deploy kinetic force, at which point development actors are tasked with rebuilding. While we have often said that "today's humanitarian crises do not have purely humanitarian solutions," it can also be said that today's military engagements do not have purely military or kinetic solutions. As noted in a 2012 USAID report, *Frontiers in Development*, "the security challenges posed by fragile and failing states and the deprivation that accompanies them makes it all but inevitable that soldiers and humanitarians, diplomats and development experts will find themselves operating in increasing proximity to one another, often addressing the same issues with different tools and for complementary purposes." There is evidence that this is beginning to occur. USAID has humanitarian and development advisors at each of the U.S.'s six Geographic Combatant Command centers. Furthermore, an institutional structure is being established with cooperation between U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, USAID's Office of Civilian-military Cooperation, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Civil Affairs Units. These steps are important and should be further shepherded. It is imperative that we see food security as fundamental to peace and security. One of the best investments we can make in peace and security is to help people who cannot feed themselves or their families.

Thank you Chairman Young and Ranking Member Merkley for the opportunity to testify on this important topic. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Dr. Sova.  
Lieutenant General Castellaw.

**STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED) JOHN CASTELLAW, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, CROCKETT MILLS, TN**

General CASTELLAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Merkley. I will try to reduce this to a frag order, which I am sure you are familiar with, Chairman Young.

If I were to summarize my career, I would say that I was in the post-Vietnam generation that included Jim Mattis, and what we did was we saw the demise eventually of the Soviet Union and symmetrical warfare, and what we saw was asymmetrical warfare, which we are dealing with now. I have seen this in the Horn of Africa, in West Africa, the Lake Chad Basin, in the Asia Pacific.

It is clear that food security should be an element of our national security. And when we talk about diplomacy, development, and defense of our military, we should look at how we balance our expenditures, our allocation of resources, how we take a strategy that puts all this together.

The number, the piece of information that is most important to me, comes in the casualty figures. Ten thousand Americans have been killed in the global war on terror. Over 50,000 have been wounded. They constitute the most precious treasure we have in the United States, which is the blood of the men and women who serve. Anything we can do that eliminates the requirement for them to do what they are willing to do, which is give up their lives, is worth the money. To think about cutting the international devel-

opment budget by 30 percent, I would submit to you, is unacceptable.

One of the great things—and I have had the opportunity over the last day or two to talk to a number of senators and Administration officials—is the fact that now we are starting to see Jim Mattis at Defense, hopefully we will see the new Secretary of State and then people like Mark Green at AID come together, sit down, look at what the situation is, and together come up with a strategy that includes food security and allocates the resources accordingly.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Castellaw follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN CASTELLAW, USMC (RET.)

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the importance of global food security to our national security, and for your strong support for America's development and diplomacy programs.

FOOD SECURITY IS CRITICAL TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY

The United States faces many threats to our National Security. These threats include continuing wars with extremist elements such as ISIS and potential wars with rogue state North Korea or regional nuclear power Iran. The heated economic and diplomatic competition with Russia and a surging China could spiral out of control. Concurrently, we face threats to our future security posed by growing civil strife, famine, and refugee and migration challenges which create incubators for extremist and anti-American government factions. Our response cannot be one dimensional but instead must be nuanced and comprehensive, employing "hard" as well as "soft" power in a National Security Strategy combining all elements of National Power, including a Food Security Strategy.

An American Food Security Strategy is an imperative factor in reducing the multiple threats impacting our National wellbeing. Recent history has shown that reliable food supplies and stable prices produce more stable and secure countries. Conversely, food insecurity, particularly in poorer countries, can lead to instability, unrest, and violence. Food insecurity drives mass migration around the world from the Middle East, to Africa, to Southeast Asia, destabilizing neighboring populations, generating conflicts, and threatening our own security by disrupting our economic, military, and diplomatic relationships. Food system shocks from extreme food-price volatility can be correlated with protests and riots. Food price related protests toppled governments in Haiti and Madagascar in 2007 and 2008. In 2010 and in 2011, food prices and grievances related to food policy were one of the major drivers of the Arab Spring uprisings.

These conclusions are based on my decades of experience while serving as a Marine around the world and from a lifetime as a steward of the soil on my family farm in Tennessee. I see food security strategy in military terms as either being "defensive" or "offensive". "Defensive" includes those actions we take to protect our agricultural infrastructure including crops, livestock and the food chain here in the United States. Conversely, the "Offensive" side of food security takes the initiative to deal with food security issues overseas and this is where I will spend most of my time today.

There is a good reason for our success on the "defensive" here at home in ensuring our own food security. As my good friend and former Tennessee Deputy Agriculture Commissioner Louis Buck points out to me, American agriculture has always been about public/private enterprise. The Morrill Act of 1862—showing our Country's foresight and confidence in the future even in the dark days of our Civil War—created our Land Grant University model of teaching, research and extension. And equally importantly, we have a private sector that values individual initiative, unleashing an unparalleled vitality. With that vitality driving innovation, our farmers and ranchers leverage the expertise and information from the public sector to manage risks and seek profits from deployed capital. But above all, American farmers and ranchers are our "citizen soldiers" on the front lines here at home fighting to guarantee our food security.

America is also blessed with fertile soil, water availability, moderate climate, and the advanced technology to successfully utilize our abundance. Whether I walk the corn fields of Indiana or the cotton fields of Tennessee, I see agricultural technology in use that is amazing. Soon after I retired from the Marines and came home to

the family farm, I climbed into the cab of a self-propelled sprayer. Settling into the seat was like strapping into the cockpit of one of the aircraft I flew, except the sprayer had more computing power and better data links. All these factors, public and private, natural and manmade, hard work and innovation, combine to provide the American people with the widest choices in the world of wholesome foods to eat and clothes to wear.

#### ENORMOUS CHALLENGES FACE US AROUND THE WORLD

But sadly, the world now faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the end of the World War II, with over 800 million hungry, 500 million of them in countries in conflict, 65 million displaced from their homes, and more than 30 million people living on the brink of starvation. For the first time in a decade, deteriorating humanitarian conditions have led to an increase in the number of hungry people in the world. The conditions are going to get worse with total world population growing to over 10 billion, and with a “youth bulge” in the most fragile and food insecure countries. These conditions lead to hopelessness and despair among the most at risk populations.

Senators, during my military career I have seen those looks of hopelessness and despair in the faces of men and women scavenging in piles of garbage to find food for their families. These daily personal struggles to survive do create the incubators for terrorists and their supporters. According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), “the overall risk of food insecurity in many countries of strategic importance to the United States will increase during the next 10 years . . . In some countries, declining food security will almost certainly contribute to social disruptions and political instability.”

It was not that long ago, in our own country, that we had armed clashes over grazing rights and competition for water between crop and livestock communities. In fragile and conflict affected states, access to water, pasture, and agricultural land is often the spark that ignites conflicts between ethnic groups, tribes and clans. The lack of farming income, in turn, forces young men off the land and into urban slums, where their alienation makes them willing recruits for extremist organizations. Food insecurity is also a lever for those same extremist groups to exert control over the population and gain financial advantage from their control of food resources. I saw this in the early 90s during the conflict in Bosnia where groups with guns exercised power by seizing food supplies and controlling the distribution to the population.

We can see this in play today in such places as the Lake Chad Basin where a growing conflict between cattle herders, farmers, and fishermen competing for ever decreasing water resources brought on by climate change and misuse of water sources is providing openings for Boko Haram to establish themselves. I recently flew over Lake Chad and the decrease in lake’s area from the last time I visited is more than alarming.

Executives surveyed at the World Economic Forum highlighted in their 2016 Global Risk Assessment the likely impact of climate change on food security and noted that the “simmering tensions between social groups are more likely to boil over into community violence. Armed non-state actors, including insurgencies and terrorist groups, will be able to leverage this new source of insecurity (stresses on water and food) as an additional grievance on which to build their narratives, finding new recruits among those made destitute.”

This is an especially serious issue in the Middle East and North Africa. The Center for Climate and Security, a non-partisan think tank of national security and military experts—where I serve as a member of its Advisory Board—identified a significant connection among climate change, drought, natural resource mismanagement, food security and conflict in the region in its seminal “Arab Spring and Climate Change” report. In that region, a “Catch 22” phenomenon is occurring. Egypt, for example—heavily dependent on the global wheat market—is highly vulnerable to bread price spikes that result from countries like China panic-buying in the wake of their wheat harvests being devastated by extreme weather events (and countries like Russia cutting off wheat exports for the same reasons). Other nations in the region, like Syria under Assad before the outbreak of civil war, have tried to grow wheat locally and unsustainably, to avoid Egypt’s dilemma. But that hasn’t worked.

Coupled with climate change-exacerbated extreme drought from 2007–2010, Syria’s agricultural practices (and malpractices) decimated the country’s water table, left millions of Syrians “extremely food insecure,” and displaced around 1.5 million farmers and herders, heightening the likelihood of tension and conflict in the country.

## EMPOWERING ALL OUR NATIONAL SECURITY TOOLS

I grew up in the Marine Corps with now Defense Secretary Jim Mattis; there is no one in whom I have more personal confidence and trust as a steward of our Nation's security than him. He has time and again forcefully advocated using the totality of American power—diplomacy, development, and military—to prevent conflicts and ensure our security.

Another fellow Marine, General Joe Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chief of the Staff sets the tone for those continuing to serve in uniform; he has said, "There's no challenge that I'm currently dealing with that the primary factors in our success won't be diplomatic, economic. And certainly, even in our campaign in Iraq and Syria, USAID plays a critical role in stabilization, to secure the gains that our partners are making on the ground in Syria and Iraq, as one example. But, every place I've been over the past 15 or 16 years, in Iraq and Afghanistan, a key partner has been USAID."

Our other military leaders are following their lead. There is a strong consensus that America's civilian programs—as key interagency partners—must not only be adequately resourced but also empowered to more effectively engage private sector expertise and investment. Military officers are speaking up in support of funding for the State Department and USAID because they recognize that the military alone is not sufficient to ensure our national security, sustain global economic growth, and tackle development challenges like the growing food insecurity.

The 2016 Rand Corporation Report: "Lessons from Afghanistan" provided lessons learned on the Pentagon's Task Force on Business and Stability Operations and noted: "For an innovative, entrepreneurial organization within government, success is about finding a delicate balance—between freedom to take risks and necessary oversight, between quick-turn project delivery and long-term development outcomes, and between pursuing a disruptive business model and remaining a team player. Thus, we recommend that the U.S. policy community plan for future organizational solutions to address the lessons from Afghanistan." In the words that a Marine would use, we need all our national security partners empowered to be more agile with an improved capability to "improvise, adapt, and overcome" the challenges faced.

In addition to our nation's highest-ranking officers currently serving, I joined more than 150 retired three- and four-star flag and general officers—all members of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition's National Security Advisory Council—in writing to Congress to urge support for the International Affairs Budget and renewed American global leadership. For us the bottom line is our diplomatic and development professionals, public and private, have the expertise and resources to help tackle the root causes of conflict—by empowering smallholder farmers to increase their productivity, improving maternal and child health, and helping rebuild dysfunctional economies among other important efforts.

And it is not just about employing our own national programs, it is also about participating as a member of the global community. I recently traveled with a U.N. Foundation group to observe the United Nations employment of hard and soft power against a simmering conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR). There the combination of international development programs (soft power) as well as military force (hard power) is addressing the root causes (population, climate change, extremism, food insecurity) of conflict. Support by the United States of such world community efforts reduces the need to deploy our own military forces. We must remember that American Military interventions require the expenditure of our most precious national resource—the blood of those who serve.

## FOOD SECURITY ADVANCES AMERICA'S ECONOMIC INTERESTS

Food security is critical to reducing conflict, but it is also vital to establishing economic security. Almost no country—from South Korea to India to the United States—has achieved rapid economic development without first investing in agricultural development. And we know from our experience that smallholder farmers can become productive and escape poverty once they gain access to education, markets, and technologies.

That is also my personal story—in my family's history this step enabled my grandparents and parents to rise from a lineage of small-acreage subsistence farmers to the American Middle Class, to feed and educate our family, and to live with dignity. American and world efforts to tackle global poverty have been successful. Since 1990, global extreme poverty has been more than halved with over a billion people lifted out of poverty.

These efforts pay dividends for the U.S. economy. Today, 11 of our top 15 export markets, including Germany, Japan and South Korea, are former recipients of U.S.

foreign assistance, as well as being among our staunchest allies. Many of the fastest growing economies reside in the developing world and those markets comprise almost 60 percent of global GDP, a threefold increase since 1990. These developing countries also account for more than half of all U.S. agricultural exports.

In 2016, the U.S. exported nearly \$135 billion of agricultural products supporting 1.1 million full-time American jobs, making these developing markets an important source of our jobs and economic growth. When our economy is strong, it amplifies the awesome power of our military might while deterring our enemies from undermining America's national security and economic interests abroad.

#### MAINTAIN U.S. LEADERSHIP IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Today, America is well positioned to maintain our global leadership in the fight against hunger and poverty, ultimately helping to bring much needed peace and stability to a volatile world. To achieve this goal, the United States should sustain America's focus and investment in agricultural development and do it in the right way over the long term.

While serving in the Pacific, I traveled to the island of Ponape in the Federated Republic of Micronesia, formerly the Caroline Islands in the South Pacific, to attend, as the U.S. military representative, the inauguration of their new President. These islands were the scene of much combat in World War II and afterward the United States was heavily involved in reconstruction and development. However, the people were soon plagued with diabetes and other food related health issues. When I asked the reason, the American consul replied that instead of helping the people develop a healthy, sustainable agricultural and fishing-based economy, we taught them how to open cans of imported food which created massive unintended consequences.

We know that a robust agricultural support system requires constant "care and feeding." Failure to establish and maintain such infrastructure and services as irrigation systems, soil conservation programs, storage and transportation facilities, and research and extension services, because of threats or lack of funding, can exacerbate food insecurity, increase instability, and intensify conflict.

As another expert in business development, Gerry Brown, who served on the Department of Defense's Task Force on Business and Stability Operations with Louis Buck, notes, farming is not just a profession but a way of life. Part of fighting and winning against violent extremists is convincing the local population that the government cares about, and will defend, the local population and their homes and possessions from their enemies. For example, crops such as dates in Iraq and raisins in Afghanistan have significance beyond the income they generate for the farmers. They are national symbols and restoring and protecting them can convince local populations that the government has their best interests at heart.

I also spent some time in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, where I saw an example of how infrastructure, even the most basic, can have a major impact on reducing the conditions for insurgency. We were in heavy combat in Afghanistan at the time with a limited amount of forces available for deployment to the Horn requiring an Economy of Force operation there. One of the most effective military task forces, at the least cost, I have seen employed was one composed of a well drilling attachment and a veterinarian team. The task force operations began by drilling a well closer to the village reducing the time and effort required for the women of the village to obtain water for their families. The veterinarian vaccinated the goats reducing disease and the mortality rate while increasing the health and value of the herds. The combination of easier access to water and an increase in the economic base generated confidence in the government reducing the conditions for building an insurgency.

Continuing in this vein, let me talk about "Feed the Future", a current program that is contributing to our national security. It is America's global hunger and food security initiative and was signed into law with widespread bipartisan support from Congress. It has helped smallholder farmers increase production and productivity through country-led, results-based strategies. Feed the Future has helped lift more than 9 million people out of poverty and prevented the lack of food in childhood from permanently stunting the growth of nearly 2 million children. In FY2016, the initiative helped nearly 11 million farmers in developing countries adopt new technologies like high-yielding seeds. As a result, these farmers made more than \$900 million in new agricultural sales and stimulated nearly \$630 million in new agricultural loans.

With farming accounting for nearly 55 percent of total employment in places like sub-Saharan Africa—and the agricultural sector representing the single largest employer of the labor force in lower middle-income countries—empowering smallholder farmers in developing countries is the most effective way to reduce hunger and pov-

erty, build resilience, generate inclusive economic growth, and achieve long-term stability.

Actions taken now to increase agricultural sector jobs can provide economic opportunity and stability for those unemployed youths while helping to feed people. A recent report by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs identifies agriculture development as the core essential for providing greater food security, economic growth, and population well-being. Repeatedly, history has taught us that a strong agricultural sector is an unquestionable requirement for inclusive and sustainable growth, broad-based development progress, and long-term stability.

In summary, a food security strategy is critical to our overall national security. While many challenges face us, America and our global partners have the capability to meet those challenges by employing all the elements of our national power to include diplomatic, developmental, economic, and, yes, military when required; a balanced, thoughtful melding of soft and hard power. Now is the time to take a long-term approach, make the needed changes in agencies and organizations supporting our overseas engagements, address climate change, and support and sustain our commitment to global food security. By doing so, we can help countries transition from aid-recipients to full-fledged partners, moving toward the day when they will no longer depend on foreign aid.

In my view, failure to act will jeopardize the progress we have made, risk continual recurring food crises that grow terrorists, and allow development of conflicts that will eventually require deploying the men and women of our military.

Thank you again to the Chairman, Ranking Member and the Committee for inviting me to speak. I look forward to your questions.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, General. I think we are breaking through on this issue from the national security standpoint, and we are grateful for your leadership.

Ms. Nunn.

**STATEMENT OF MICHELLE NUNN, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CARE USA, ATLANTA, GA**

Ms. NUNN. Chairman Young and Ranking Member Merkley, thank you for the opportunity to be here today and to be with this terrific panel.

I represent CARE, which traces its roots back to 1945 when a small group of Americans invented the original CARE packages, food rations for starving survivors of World War II in Europe. And today the CARE package is an icon of American generosity. It is inspiring to consider the compassion that let us not only support our allies but also our former enemies. And it was part of a multi-pronged effort that ensured a stable and prosperous Europe as a critical U.S. ally and partner.

From the delivery of those first CARE packages, CARE's work has evolved and now stretches across 94 countries, reaching more than 62 million people annually.

In addition to emergency aid, our programs now focus on long-term development and building resilience among populations to permanently lift people out of poverty. We prioritize the empowerment of women and girls in our work because we know they are disproportionately affected by poverty, and they are the key to overcoming it.

In my testimony I want to share why we invest in women, the proven impact of U.S. investments, the consequences of a world without U.S. leadership, and a path forward.

So, why women? When food is in short supply, women and girls are often the most impacted and are regularly the last to eat. Girls' poor access to food results in stunting and much worse during pregnancy. In times of crisis, girls are the first to be pulled out of

school to help with household chores or earning an income. Also in times of drought, famine, or natural disaster, families often seek to safeguard their daughters by placing them in child marriages, which, of course, dramatically diminishes their future. Finally, women are often denied the same basic rights as men, such as owning land or having access to inputs as small-holder farmers, which compounds their vulnerability and diminishes the overall security of families.

But while women are the most impacted, they also have the capacity to create disproportionate change. We know, for instance, that if women had the same access to resources as men, there would be 150 million fewer hungry people in the world. At CARE, we have seen how building food security and prioritizing women's empowerment can transform communities.

In Ethiopia last year, just as some areas of the country began to recover, they were hit again by a devastating drought. Yet famine was never declared. This was not only because the U.S. leveraged emergency assistance but also because of investments in long-term resilience, such as those included in the Feed the Future Initiative. These resilience programs, including CARE's GRAD program in Ethiopia, improved participants' skills, provided financial literacy, and diversified livelihoods. We have seen tremendous results. For instance, within 5 years, annual household income increased by 87 percent, and 62 percent of GRAD families have graduated off government assistance altogether. These results show that we can break the devastating cycles of extreme food insecurity through long-term investments in resilience and capacity building, and this is the best spirit of America's leadership.

Yet despite these clear and well-documented results, the President's latest budget proposes severe cuts to programs that build resilience, including Feed the Future. These cuts could translate to more than 5 million farmers losing access to programs that help them grow their way out of poverty.

It does not take much to imagine what will occur should these proposals become a reality. Without resilience programs droughts, floods, and climate disruptions will wreak havoc on small farms. It will drive up food insecurity and poverty. We know that these vulnerable populations are most at risk of falling into crisis and instability.

There is another path forward, and it is imperative that we take it. With last year's passage of the Fiscal Year 2017 omnibus, Congress made clear that the U.S. will continue to lead in responding to crisis and in the fight to end extreme poverty. And the work being done through Feed the Future shows us that we can end poverty for good.

Congress can continue their commitment by reauthorizing the Global Food Security Act, which is set to expire this year. The Global Food Security Act assures that the great work being done through Feed the Future and the U.S. Government's Global Food Security Strategy continues.

I look forward to your questions, and thank you very much for the opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Nunn follows:]



## PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHELLE NUNN

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Merkley, and members of the Subcommittee, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

CARE traces its roots back to 1945, when a small group of American citizens galvanized 22 organizations to join forces to rush emergency food rations to the starving survivors of World War II in Europe. They invented the concept of the “CARE Package”—an icon of American generosity. It is hard to imagine both the compassion and farsightedness that called upon the American public to invest not only in our hungry former allies but also our hungry former enemies. It was a part of a multi-pronged effort that ensured a stable, secure, and prosperous Europe as a critical U.S. ally and partner.

From the delivery of those first CARE packages, our work has evolved and now stretches across 94 countries, reaching more than 62 million people in 2017. In addition to humanitarian response, our programs now focus on long-term development and building resilience among populations to permanently lift people out of poverty. We prioritize the empowerment of women and girls in our work because we know they are both disproportionately affected by poverty, and they are the key to overcoming poverty and unlocking transformation within communities.

## WHY WOMEN

In countries throughout the world, when food is in short supply and families experience times of need, women and girls are often the most impacted. They are regularly the last to eat, jeopardizing their health, nutrition, and well-being. Girls’ poor access to food is responsible for stunting and other forms of malnourishment that impact their health and ability to participate in other endeavors, such as education or livelihoods. Pregnant women and their babies, when poorly nourished, are at significantly higher risk.

In times of crisis, girls are the first to be pulled out of school to help with household chores, feed the family, or earning income, which impedes them from reaching their full potential. Also, in times of drought, famine, or natural disaster, families may seek to help their daughters avoid hardship by placing them into child marriages with wealthier or more secure men. Additionally, women are often denied the same basic rights as men, such as the right to own land or access inputs as smallholder farmers, which all compounds their vulnerability and diminishes the security of their families. At the same time, we know that if women had access to the same resources as men, there would be 150 million fewer hungry people in the world.

## THE IMPACT OF U.S. INVESTMENTS

U.S. Government investments and our work on the ground have given us a first-hand look at how building food security and prioritizing women’s empowerment can transform communities and the trajectory of nations. Take Ethiopia—last year, just as some areas of the country began to recover from the most devastating drought in 50 years, another drought hit. Yet famine was never declared. This is not only because of the actions of the Ethiopian government and the U.S.’s ability to leverage emergency assistance, which was delivered in time to prevent the worst consequences, but also in large part due to investments in long-term resilience programs, such as those included in the Feed the Future Initiative.

These resilience programs helped local Ethiopian farmers increase their yields and incomes, created fortified grains to combat malnutrition in children, and expanded agricultural businesses to create job opportunities. A USAID study found that households in communities reached by these resilience programs were able to maintain their levels of food security in the face of drought, whereas households in communities outside the program areas experienced a 30 percent decline in food security.

CARE’s GRAD program in Ethiopia worked to improve participants’ skills, provide financial literacy training, and diversified livelihoods. Within 5 years, annual household income increased by 87 percent, and 62 percent of GRAD families had graduated off government assistance. 90 percent of women participating in GRAD reported having an increased role in decision-making, and 61 percent of women reported greater equality in their homes.

From 2012 to 2016, another CARE program in Ethiopia, called LINKAGES, focused on food security, women’s empowerment, and access to markets. Farmers earned a \$3.27 return for every dollar invested. At the end of the 4-year program, families increased their annual income by 80 percent, and 66 percent of families in the program were able to graduate off food assistance.

These results show that we have the opportunity to break devastating cycles of extreme food insecurity through long-term investments in building the capacity and resilience of local communities. This is in the best of the spirit of American leadership, and it also generates economic benefits, as we have seen with countries like South Korea—once a war-torn nation and aid recipient, their annual trade with the U.S. now totals more than \$43 billion.

South Sudan offers a different type of example. With a famine declared in February 2017, and the conflict entering its fifth year in 2018, 7 million people, or approximately half of the population, are in urgent need of food assistance. This declaration prompted Congress to generously and appropriately provide almost \$1 billion in supplemental funding to South Sudan and similarly affected countries—funding that played a key part in rolling back famine 4 months after it was declared.

The United States has always been a catalytic leader in responding to crises and helping populations in need. Our actions and responses encourage other countries to act and provide their own support. We were one of the first to respond to Ethiopia's drought 2 years ago, which mobilized other donors and was instrumental in preventing a famine declaration. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the U.S.'s declaration of a disaster in the Kasai regions spurred the U.N. and other governments to elevate the level of their responses. We see consistently that when the U.S. leads, other countries follow.

#### PROPOSALS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Despite these clear and well-documented results, the President's budgets for FY18 and FY19 proposed eliminating programs that provide emergency food aid, such as Food for Peace, and severe cuts for programs that build resilience, including Feed the Future.

In fiscal year 2016, almost 11 million farmers were reached with improved technologies, management practices, and increased market access. A funding cut of 48 percent to Feed the Future programs, as proposed by the Administration, could translate to approximately 5.28 million farmers being cut from or losing access to programs that help them grow their way out of poverty and decrease dependency.

Also in fiscal year 2016, approximately 56.1 million people were reached with emergency food aid through the Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP) and through emergency Food for Peace programming. Under the Administration's proposal to eliminate Title II food aid and only provide \$1.5 billion for the EFSP, approximately 20 million people in crisis could lose access to lifesaving food assistance as compared to fiscal year 2016.

#### A WORLD WITHOUT U.S. LEADERSHIP

It doesn't take much to imagine the local, regional, and global impacts should these cuts become a reality. In 2015, the regional needs emanating from the conflict in Syria rapidly outpaced available resources. The World Food Programme was forced to halt aid to 230,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan living outside of camps. Those who were not wholly cut off from WFP assistance received \$7 per person per month. Without the ability to meet the most basic needs of their families, countless Syrian refugees found their way to Turkey, climbed into rafts, crossed the Mediterranean, and then walked from Greece to Germany and other European destinations. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians arrived that year in Germany and applied for asylum, with the simple hope of finding a way to support their family's most basic needs.

#### A PATH FORWARD

But it doesn't have to be this way. With last year's passage of the FY17 omnibus, Congress made clear that the U.S. will continue to lead in responding to crises and in the fight to end poverty. And the work being done through Feed the Future and programs like LINKAGES show us that we can end poverty for good.

Congress can continue their commitment by reauthorizing the Global Food Security Act (GFSA), which is set to expire this year. The GFSA assures that the great work being done through Feed the Future and the U.S. government's Global Food Security Strategy continues. At CARE, we stand ready and willing to continue our partnership with the U.S. government to end global hunger and poverty.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you, Ms. Nunn.

I am going to request that our witnesses answer my questions over the next few minutes fairly concisely in light of time constraints.

Dr. Sova, I want to congratulate you on the publication of your World Food Programme USA report, "Winning the Peace: Hunger and Instability." You sought to examine the link between food insecurity on the one hand and global instability on the other, and you found a very direct link. Surveying all the research, 53 peer-reviewed journal articles—

Dr. SOVA. That is correct.

Senator YOUNG. —you discuss the reasons why food-insecure people sometimes resort to violence or other forms of social unrest, identifying several causal mechanisms in the scholarly literature, including grievance, economic, or governance motivations.

General Castellaw, does Dr. Sova's research, drawing that linkage between food insecurity on the one hand and global instability on the other, reflect your real-world experience as a United States Marine?

General CASTELLAW. Sir, it certainly does. Whether we are talking about what we saw in the Horn of Africa, what we have seen in Syria, what is developing in Venezuela, all of it shows at least one of the contributing factors is food insecurity. I will always remember being in Southern Africa, watching men and women scavenge on piles of garbage to find stuff to feed their family. The looks of depression and hopelessness are what drives instability.

Senator YOUNG. Ms. Nunn, when combined with the moral imperative, from your perspective what are the policy implications of this clear link between food insecurity and instability or violence?

Ms. NUNN. We absolutely also experience and see this correlation between food insecurity and instability on the ground in the countries where we work. In particular, what we see is how displacement due to food insecurity is often a trigger for further insecurity that is destabilizing and must be addressed in order to really ensure stability.

Senator YOUNG. And a softball here for either Ms. Nunn or the General. What are the implications of these conclusions for the international affairs budget and for the food security programs within it?

General CASTELLAW. Terrible. What we have to do is make sure they are fully funded in order to reduce the opportunity that may occur later to have to introduce our forces. It is absolutely essential.

Ms. NUNN. I think we just have to ensure—and we know what works. We have evidence that if we invest early in resilience, that we can prevent not only human suffering but also future conflict.

Senator YOUNG. So, I cannot resist, General Castellaw. As the Chairman's prerogative my time is winding down, but I am going to shoehorn one more question in. Just give me your unadulterated Marine Corps language, a sense of what the impact would be on our nation's security, as we conventionally define it, if we have a powerful and well-resourced military without equally effective diplomatic and developing capabilities.

General CASTELLAW. I think it is pretty clear, those of us that have spent our lives in defense of our country understand that it is not just about guns and bullets. It is also the human factor. And when we are talking about a situation where we have the youth bulge, we have people who are hungry, the instability that comes

from it, all the bullets in the world are not going to be able to deal with that.

Senator YOUNG. Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. General, in that context, we do not have nominees for some places like Somalia and DRC, the Democratic Republic of Congo, that are very complex, very riven by both food insecurity and strife. Would you recommend to the Administration that they forward nominees for us to consider here?

General CASTELLAW. One of the privileges that I have had is to work with individuals from other agencies, including the Department of State, as well as other agencies. What we need to ensure is that we give them the resources, that we provide the good people, make their ability to act agile with those resources. So we have to have those people in place.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. You wrote in a U.S. News editorial in February, the Blue Helmet piece, that keeping operations are more affordable and sometimes more effective as compared to the commitment of U.S. Armed Forces to conflict areas.

The GAO, Government Accounting Office, did a study, and they found that U.S. contributions to peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic is about an eighth of what it would cost for us to deploy the U.S. military for the same purpose.

So we have a proposed budget cut of \$710 million to international peacekeeping operations. In your opinion, should we continue to maintain our current investment, or possibly increase it?

General CASTELLAW. We need to maintain it. I have been to the Central African Republic. I have been among those U.N. peacekeepers. They are capable. They need the resources to do it.

Again, I go back to the fact that our most precious resource is the blood of the men and women who serve. When we can get others to go and share the burden, then we reduce the need to send our sons and daughters.

Senator MERKLEY. I am just going to ask one last question because we are in the middle of a vote right now, assuming it started.

Senator YOUNG. It started.

Senator MERKLEY. Ms. Nunn, thank you so much for your leadership of CARE. You mentioned addressing some of the challenges for women. One of the programs that you have supported has been assisting women through their pregnancies and the early stages of childhood to give those children a good start in life. There are many other challenges that can come beyond that, but have you found that to be an effective strategy that we should continue to invest in?

Ms. NUNN. We know that investing in the first thousand days of a child's life, and ensuring that mothers have antenatal and postnatal care, is critical to child survival and also to their thriving and success. We also know that stunting can have long-term implications not only on the child but also on the capacity for economies and nations to thrive.

So these are very smart, low-cost investments that have tremendous return.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, I love that way of framing it, the first thousand days. I was trying to remember what the title was, and that was it. That certainly gets kids launched into life and supports

the mothers, and thank you for the tremendous work that CARE is doing.

Ms. NUNN. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Well, there are no further questions from the panel.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here today. I want to thank you for your leadership, and we look forward to continued dialogue so that we can improve existing programs, make sure that those programs which are effective remain effective, and we prevent this linkage which has been identified from groundbreaking research between food insecurity on the one hand and instability on the other.

So, thank you all. Have a great day.

I will add that, for the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Friday, including for members to submit questions for the record.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:56 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

##### RESPONSES OF THE HONORABLE DAVID BEASLEY TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* In your prepared testimony, you note that you have visited Yemen. The World Food Programme is active there and has helped feed millions. Can you provide an update on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, has humanitarian access improved, and what challenges does WFP continue to confront there?

*Answer.* The war that began in March 2015 has destroyed people's livelihoods and the ability to purchase food, making it difficult for many Yemenis to meet minimal food needs. Food insecurity levels continue to rise, with a record 17.8 million Yemenis (61 percent of the population) estimated to be food insecure. Out of these, approximately 8.4 million people (29 percent of the population) are estimated to be severely food insecure. That's up from 6.8 million in 2017, a worrying 24 percent increase.

WFP food assistance has prevented Yemen from falling into a full famine. We are now scaling up assistance to eventually provide help to 7.6 million people per month. But the scale of food insecurity now means a significant portion of the Yemeni population has virtually exhausted all coping strategies, putting them on the brink of famine. Yemen is also grappling with outbreaks of cholera—more than 1 million suspected cases in the largest-ever outbreak in a single year—and diphtheria.

Moreover, since the blockade, there have been no commercial fuel tankers allowed to berth and discharge in the Red Sea northern ports of Yemen. The lack of fuel has become a major risk factor for humanitarian operations and the delivery of basic services.

WFP is also facing a funding shortfall. For April–September 2018, the emergency operation's shortfall is USD \$364 million. This means WFP must prioritize resources, such as providing full rations to only the areas where the most food-insecure people live. Under this mechanism, about half of beneficiaries are receiving 60 percent rations.

*Question.* In your prepared testimony, you note that Yemen, South Sudan, northeast Nigeria, and Somalia are filled with hungry people because of man-made conflict. While we will continue to do all we can in the meantime, would you agree that significant and durable improvement in the humanitarian crisis in Yemen will require an end to the civil war?

*Answer.* The short answer is yes. We simply cannot completely end the humanitarian crisis in Yemen without ending the war.

It is abundantly clear—not just in Yemen, but around the world—that conflict is one of the main causes of food insecurity and hunger globally today, forcing millions of people to abandon their land, homes and jobs and putting them at risk of hunger

or even famine. Elsewhere in the world, where there is more stability and peace, countries are making significant progress toward reaching Zero Hunger—including in some of the world’s poorest and least developed nations. So we know that progress is possible, and we are working to find ways to accelerate and amplify that progress. But if conflict continues, it will reverse progress, making it truly impossible to reach our goals.

At the same time, there is a growing understanding that hunger may contribute to conflict when coupled with poverty, unemployment or economic hardship. Food is foundational. Food shortages deepen existing fault-lines and fuel longstanding grievances. Addressing food insecurity is therefore paramount in the pursuit of stability and peace. If we want to end hunger, we have to end conflict. But the reverse is also true—if we truly want to end conflict, we have to fight hunger at the same time.

*Question.* In your prepared testimony, you argued that one of the biggest challenges you confront is the “siloed nature” of donors. You note that the World Food Programme is “trying to break down barriers between donor countries, so money that comes to WFP can encourage, not discourage, long-term strategic planning and execution.” Can you further describe these barriers between donor countries? How can we encourage better coordination among donors?

*Answer.* We will never truly beat back hunger unless we can build long-term resilience in countries facing severe, chronic food insecurity. To do that, we design and develop programs that are multiyear, multisectoral and multipartner. Through this approach, we are achieving success, for example in Niger, where we work with multiple partners to deliver an integrated package of support across different sectors for a sustained time period. The results are clear: Agriculture production in areas where we are working on these programs has been doubled and in some cases tripled, young men from poor families are migrating less or even not at all, and land vegetation is increasing dramatically. But donor approaches—too often divided into silos of “development” and “humanitarian” sectors, and/or focused on shorter-term project cycles—have not evolved to support this kind of integrated programing, where investment in humanitarian support, in addition to alleviating immediate suffering and hardship, also works toward longer-term development objectives. Some of our donors are doing their own resilience programs in isolation—and not achieving the results we are seeing. Funding mechanisms should encourage long-term and multi-partner approaches, rather than pursuing goals in isolation.

*Question.* In your prepared testimony you note that “More than 90 percent of the money [WFP receives] is earmarked, not just for specific countries, but specific activities within them.” While I know WFP is grateful for the donations, how could WFP make better use of the money and better address food insecurity if there were fewer restrictions on how the money is spent? How can we work together to encourage commonsense reforms in this area and encourage more donors to follow America’s lead in flexible funding for WFP?

*Answer.* When contributions have fewer restrictions, WFP has greater ability to respond rapidly and maximize its efforts for the largest short- and long-term impact. Flexible funds enable proper planning, including investing in early warning and emergency preparedness systems that enable a more rapid and cost-efficient response. Also, with more predictable funding that includes fewer restrictions, operations are not subjected to “start-stop” resource flows and food procurement comes with lower transaction costs. These funds also contribute to higher cost efficiency in areas such as staffing contracts and partner agreements. The United States is one of the leading donors committed to the principles of what is called the Grand Bargain, which was signed at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. In that agreement, donors committed to progressively reduce earmarking, with an aim of achieving a global target of 30 percent of humanitarian funding with fewer restrictions by the year 2020.

*Question.* In your prepared testimony, you made clear that we must break the cycle between hunger and conflict. You write, “We must work together on a proactive, strategic plan that creates stability and security.” Later, you write, “What is needed is a properly funded, coordinated strategic plan—one that involves work from other U.N. agencies, NGOs and national governments alike.” How can we play a constructive role in encouraging the development of this type of strategic plan that you think is necessary? Do you have any specific suggestions?

*Answer.* Continued support and flexibility from the United States toward this type of approach would be most welcome. We need to demonstrate that, working together, the international community can break that cycle through a focused effort, where a multipartner team focuses on one specific area with a multipronged,

multiyear program that receives significant funding from public and private sectors. This approach would require both the commitment to a coordinated and well-resourced multi-sector program to tackle humanitarian and development challenges, and also the sustained political engagement needed to end the conflict or insecurity at the root of that crisis. The program should be designed so it achieves the ultimate aim: the end of need for major international humanitarian assistance in that locale. The world is so very distracted these days, and I believe that in our distractions, we end up doing too little in too many places. But with a laser-targeted, strategically focused effort, maybe even in just one country, we could truly prove what beats back hunger, what creates stability, what saves lives and changes lives.

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RESPONSES OF MR. MATTHEW NIMS TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* In your prepared testimony, you discussed the humanitarian situation in Burma and Bangladesh with respect to the Rohingya. What are your key humanitarian concerns for the Rohingya?

I also note in your prepared testimony you wrote, “Lack of humanitarian access and ongoing population movement have left an unknown number of people in need of immediate food assistance in Rakhine State.” It is noteworthy that USAID doesn’t know how many are in need in Rakhine State and it underscores your point about humanitarian access. Can you speak to the lack of humanitarian access in Rakhine State, and what is your message to the Burmese government regarding humanitarian access?

*Answer.* The United States’ priorities for the humanitarian crisis in Burma are ensuring access for humanitarian partners so they can provide life-saving assistance to those who need it; preventing and responding to protection violations, such as gender-based violence; and promoting accountability.

While USAID partners in Burma continue to provide nutrition, protection, health, food, and water, sanitation and hygiene services wherever possible, humanitarian access in northern Rakhine State remains unacceptably restricted. These restrictions impede USAID’s partners from adequately assessing the needs and responding appropriately. USAID strongly encourages the Government of Burma to provide humanitarian actors immediate, unfettered access in order to assess needs and appropriately respond in Rakhine, especially in northern Rakhine State.

In addition to supporting vulnerable populations inside Burma, USAID is also assisting the influx of approximately 671,000 Rohingya who have arrived in Bangladesh since August 25, in addition to assisting the estimated 303,070 Rohingya who were already in country. This population is highly vulnerable and living in conditions well below humanitarian standards. Malnutrition, overcrowding, disease, poor sanitation, trafficking, and protection issues are of particular concern.

In addition, the U.N. estimates that up to 200,000 refugees in Cox’s Bazar are living in flood and landslide-prone areas, at risk of losing shelter, loss of access to life-saving services, and loss of life during the upcoming April–October monsoon and cyclone seasons. Additional assistance, including decongestion of camps and relocation of vulnerable households, is urgently needed to safeguard lives and infrastructure during this precarious timeframe.

The magnitude of the crisis has also placed an enormous burden on Bangladeshi host communities in Cox’s Bazar. In some areas where host community populations are now far outnumbered by refugees, they are facing increased competition for labor and other livelihoods opportunities, while seeing market prices increase and wages decrease.

*Question.* In your prepared testimony, you mention Yemen, continuing to call it “by far the largest food security emergency in the world.” Can you provide an update on the humanitarian situation in Yemen? Would you agree that we will not make significant and durable progress in the humanitarian crisis in Yemen if we cannot bring the civil war to a close? In order to bring that about, would you agree both sides in the civil war must come to the negotiating table and make concessions?

*Answer.* The humanitarian situation in Yemen remains dire. More than 75 percent of the population—22 million people—require humanitarian assistance and nearly 18 million people are severely food insecure. Despite ongoing interventions, the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance increased by nearly 3.5 million in the past year as a result of escalating violence, port restrictions, and the resultant deterioration of food security conditions and basic service provision.

Import levels at Yemen's Red Sea ports have yet to recover following November 2017 Coalition-imposed closures, as shipping companies remain concerned about the potential reinstatement of port restrictions. The risk of famine remains persistent in areas heavily reliant on Red Sea imports. Decreased purchasing power, rising staple food and fuel prices, and the continued depreciation of the Yemeni rial have made basic food commodities too expensive for many food-insecure households, prompting some to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as forced marriage. Many Yemenis will likely continue to face Crisis-level food insecurity in 2018.

In addition, Yemen's incapacitated health system and lack of routine vaccinations are driving the resurgence of previously contained diseases. Since April 2017, Yemen has been impacted by the world's largest cholera outbreak, which has resulted in nearly 1.1 million suspected cases and 2,300 deaths. A diphtheria outbreak that began in August 2017 has now affected nearly 1,400 people.

Only an end to the conflict will end the humanitarian crisis. We stand with the humanitarian community in calling on all parties to the conflict to safeguard civilians and aid workers, minimize casualties, and bring an end to this devastating conflict.

We welcome the arrival of the new U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths, and believe the international community must give Special Envoy Griffiths a chance to work toward political progress. We echo U.N. Secretary-General Guterres' statement that a negotiated political settlement through inclusive intra-Yemeni dialogue is the only way to end the conflict and address the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

*Question.* In addition to any necessary delays associated with the U.N. Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM), does the Saudi government (or the Evacuation and Humanitarian Operation Cell (EHOC)) continue to impose additional delays on vessels carrying vital cargo (including food, fuel, and medicine) into Yemen's Red Sea Ports? What kind of additional delays are being caused by the Saudis, and what can be done to reduce or eliminate those unnecessary delays?

*Answer.* UNVIM commits to processing all clearance requests within 48 hours of receipt. During February, UNVIM clearances took up to 36 hours. Because shippers typically submit clearance requests en route to but prior to arriving at port, this processing time does not necessarily translate into any delays for the ship. However, the Saudi-led Coalition continues to conduct its own clearance process through EHOC. During the week of March 28, this clearance process took an additional 55 hours on top of the UNVIM process. In addition, there are sometimes delays in EHOC communicating the clearance to the Saudi-led Coalition ships controlling the holding area, and some ships face delays receiving Coalition permission leaving port.

Many of these delays can be reduced through better coordination between UNVIM and EHOC and more efficient EHOC communications processes. The Saudi-led Coalition, UNVIM, and U.N. OCHA have improved their coordination in recent weeks and were able to identify concrete steps the Coalition can take to reduce delays. The Coalition also committed to processing clearances with 78 hours. While not all of these steps have been implemented, we are seeing signs of progress; during the week of March 14, the EHOC clearance process took 92.5 hours, an improvement from the 55 hours it took the week of March 28. Unfortunately, this has not yet translated into an increase in traffic to Hudaydah and Saleef ports, where food imports in particular remain low.

*Question.* In your prepared testimony, you note that Jordan is one of several countries that is hosting an enormous number of refugees from Syria. Jordan is a close and important ally, and Amman is helping the international community (providing a global common good) in hosting these refugees. Can you describe the refugee situation in Jordan, the resulting strain on the government and society there, what we are doing to help, and what more we can do to help?

*Answer.* Jordan hosts nearly 660,000 UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees. The Government of Jordan (GOJ) estimates the number of Syrians in Jordan is as high as 1.4 million.

USAID supports the GOJ to address these issues and to build more resilient host communities, in addition to providing significant humanitarian resources for refugees which has a secondary positive impact on the local economies of host communities. USAID has reoriented existing programs to account for the refugee situation and has dedicated additional funding to help the GOJ focus on the stresses caused by the Syria crisis.



Since the beginning of the crisis, the United States has provided nearly \$1.1 billion in humanitarian assistance through Department of State and USAID to support Syrian refugees in Jordan. This includes support to activities like the World Food Programme's electronic voucher program, which has not only provided life-saving food assistance to 500,000 vulnerable refugees but has also injected over \$581 million into Jordan's economy.

USAID assistance in economic growth, democratic governance, education, water, and health supports the GOJ and host communities in areas that face the greatest challenges in responding to the influx of refugees. USAID strengthens economic stability in host communities in northern Jordan by providing training for Jordanians with micro- and small-sized enterprises and supporting their access to finance. USAID also supports the GOJ in its efforts to decentralize, strengthening the capacity of municipal governments to identify and respond to the needs of their communities.

To ensure access to quality education for Jordanian and Syrian students alike, USAID is expanding, building, and renovating schools to accommodate additional students and training teachers. To address the psychosocial and remedial needs of students returning to school after fleeing conflict, USAID has trained over 4,000 teachers in psychosocial support. To expand access to quality health services for Jordanians and Syrians, USAID is financing and renovating health facilities, such as the expansion of the emergency department of the largest public hospital in Jordan, which serves 50,000 emergency patients per month. USAID addresses the dire water needs of the country, providing access to clean, safe water by supporting the construction of 27 of Jordan's most critical water supply facilities and networks, and through the construction and rehabilitation of eight wastewater treatment facilities.

On February 14, 2018, the United States signed a new 5-year (FY 2018–FY 2022), non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the GOJ, which indicates our support for providing a minimum of \$1.275 billion per year in U.S. bilateral foreign assistance to Jordan.

*Question.* In your prepared testimony, you note that according to the Aid Worker Security Database, 131 aid workers died in 2017, primarily in conflict areas. Syria and South Sudan—both protracted conflicts—were the deadliest locations (with 48 and 28 aid worker deaths, respectively). Can you discuss the targeting of aid workers in Syria and South Sudan? In both countries, who is primarily responsible for targeting aid workers?

*Answer.* In Syria, both targeted and indiscriminate violence continues to affect humanitarian and stabilization workers and facilities, particularly in opposition-controlled areas. The Syrian Arab Republic Government (SARG) and the Government of the Russian Federation have consistently conducted airstrikes which have impacted civilian infrastructure and humanitarian missions, most notably medical facilities. There has been a pattern of SARG attacks against health workers dating back to the earliest days of the conflict. At least 12 aid workers have been killed thus far in 2018 in Syria.

Aid workers in South Sudan continue to risk their lives to deliver humanitarian assistance, battling harassment, threats, intimidation, violent attacks, and expulsion. Attacks against relief workers are rarely an attempt to stop the delivery of humanitarian assistance, but are either the result of the broader violence between armed groups that continues to plague most parts of South Sudan, or due to rising criminality as a result of economic collapse. Non-governmental organizations and their employees are often seen as a source of money, food, or equipment and commodities that can be sold or consumed in an environment where nearly half of the population faces severe food insecurity and the economy has collapsed. Attacks against aid workers occur in both government- and opposition-controlled areas and in a context of impunity. Three aid workers have been killed thus far in 2018 in South Sudan, all in the midst of wider attacks.

Targeted and indiscriminate violence against aid workers in Syria and South Sudan effectively curtails access for humanitarian actors to respond to the populations' needs. Aid actors in both contexts must constantly think about mitigation measures to keep their facilities, staff and beneficiaries safe from attacks due to the lack of protection. The rampant violence and dangerous environment for humanitarian personnel and assets has deprived the Syrian and South Sudanese populations from safely seeking access to aid amidst the dire humanitarian situation.